

Sheffield signs domestic violence bills

ANCHORAGE--A package of six bills strengthening Alaska's child protection and domestic violence laws were signed by Governor Bill Sheffield.

"This legislation renews our commitment to support the victims of domestic violence, abuse, and neglect," Sheffield said.

"Behind each of these bills are thousands of case histories of harm and neglect that hopefully will not be repeated. These bills will improve the tools we have at our disposal to help make our state a better place for our children."

The bills signed today are:

—HB 88, sponsored by Gover-

nor Sheffield, which strengthens existing child protection statutes and provides an additional \$2 million for hiring social workers, attorneys, and clerical staff to continue the state's fight against child abuse.

—HB 92, also sponsored by the Governor, which strengthens the state's ability to collect child and spousal support payments.

—HB 67, sponsored by representative Randy Phillips, which allows the use of hearsay evidence statements made by a child victim of a sexual offense, thus minimizing the number of times a victim must recount details of the assault.

—HB 19, sponsored by Representative Randy Phillips, which clarifies procedures for dealing with taking runaway and missing minors into protective custody.

—SB 29, sponsored by Senator Jan Faiks, which removes marriage as a defense in spousal rape cases, and enlarges the class of individuals who may seek relief under the domestic violence statutes.

—SB 172, sponsored by the Senate State Affairs Committee, which extends the life of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault until June 30, 1989.