

Bill for teachers college introduced in Legislature

By SEN. FRANK FERGUSON

Last week I introduced Senate Bill 463, "An Act establishing the Alaska State Teachers College." Due to the high rate of turnover among the teachers throughout rural Alaska, and that there exists no institution of higher education to educate and train individuals to teach in the unique and demanding environment of rural Alaska, I introduced the bill.

The Alaska State Teachers College shall be located in Unalakleet and shall consist of the College of Education, and departments which may be estab-

lished including departments of telecommunications, and bilingual/bicultural education to promote a practical education for teachers who will be teaching in rural Alaska. The curriculum shall have culture emphasis.

The Alaska State Teachers College shall be governed by a Board of Control consisting of 5 members who shall be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the the majority of all members of the legislature in joint session. The members shall be from the following areas: the Northwest area, Arctic Slope area, Western area - meaning the Bering Straits area, South-

east area, and the Southwest area.

One full time student of the campus shall be an ex-officio member also appointed by the Governor.

Establishing the Alaska State Teachers College should alleviate the problems we have been facing with the high turnover rate of teachers, and it will help prepare the teachers for teaching in rural Alaska.

In addition, I introduced Senate Bill 497, making a special appropriation of \$9.386 million to the University of Alaska for a law school in Anchorage.

I cosponsored Senate Bill

444 making a special appropriation for a dental program for blind and disabled persons, and for low-incomed adults, age 60 and over, and a special appropriation for an evaluation of the dental program.

Rep; Adams and I chaired the justice budget and we increased the Village Public Safety Officers Program which was approved by the full Senate Finance Committee. The funding was approved at the level we suggested and will increase the number of VPSO's to 108 in rural Alaska.

The VPSO Program is designed to allow for individuals from Native villages to be selec-

ted for training, conducted by the Alaska State Troopers and return to their respective village to act as public safety officers.

The VPSO Program provides training to individuals in the areas of fire suppression, water satety, educational outreach for the prevention of crime and keeper of the peace.

I think the VPSO Program will allow Alaska Natives to participate in the law enforcement field where they didn't have the opportunity before. The public safety officers should provide village residents with the level of law enforcement they are seeking to combat alcohol and drug related crimes.