SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS RIEGER, Taylor, Adams, Ellis

Introduced: 2/15/95
Referred: HES

A RESOLUTION

Supporting the Alaska Humanities Forum and the National Endowment for the Humanities; endorsing federal legislation reauthorizing and funding the National Endowment for the Humanities; requesting the United States Congress to fund the National Endowment for the Humanities at a fair and reasonable level; and urging the President of the United States to support legislation reauthorizing and funding at a fair and reasonable level the National Endowment for the Humanities.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS the Alaska Humanities Forum was founded in 1972 to create a dialogue among Alaska citizens through the methods and perspectives of those disciplines collectively known as the humanities in order to encourage the peoples of Alaska to learn from one another and explore what it means to be human; and

WHEREAS the humanities include, but are not limited to, the disciplines of history, anthropology, linguistics, archaeology, philosophy, and comparative religion, but the humanities expand beyond these disciplines that are usually seen as the province of scholars...
and academic institutions, and the humanities are in fact rooted in the everyday experiences
and concerns of ordinary individuals; and

WHEREAS in the years since its inception, the Alaska Humanities Forum has awarded
more than $7,000,000 to nonprofit organizations and has committed individuals to engage in
humanities projects of direct significance to Alaska citizens; these projects range from
videographic documentaries on Alaska Native tradition bearers and speakers of nearly extinct
languages, to public meetings on northern architecture and the financing of state government,
and to youth summits meant to give the next generation of Alaska citizens a better focus on
and control of their destinies; and

WHEREAS, in 1993, more than 75,000 Alaska citizens participated in projects and
programs supported by the Alaska Humanities Forum; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Humanities Forum encourages the development of local
community support for worthwhile endeavors by requiring grant recipients to match or exceed
the amount they are granted, and in the 1994 fiscal year the Forum’s awards of $262,000
stimulated more than $1,400,000 worth of other community support, demonstrating how
effectively Forum support acts as seed money attracting private sources to support humanities
activities; and

WHEREAS a project recently funded by the Alaska Humanities Forum, "Anne Frank
in the World, 1929 - 1945: Picture a World without Prejudice," was considered so outstanding
and exemplary by the national Federation of State Humanities Councils that it was awarded
the prestigious Schwarz Award as the year’s best community initiated public humanities
project in the entire country; and

WHEREAS when all Alaska citizens are given a clear opportunity to learn, minds are
opened by education, attitudes can change for the better, and stereotypes that hurt society can
disappear; and

WHEREAS the continued life of the Alaska Humanities Forum is at the heart of the
efforts of Alaska citizens to apply traditional wisdom to current concerns, to search as
individuals and as a society for a sense of place and personal and group identity, to explore
divergent points of view, and to engage in community based discussions of the many facets
of our lives; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Humanities Forum works closely with churches, historical
groups, libraries, museums, universities, and interested individuals and organizations to provide
the greatest single source of financial support for humanities projects in Alaska; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Humanities Forum is a private, nonprofit corporation affiliated
with the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Forum depends on financial support
from the National Endowment for the Humanities as well as grants from private corporations,
foundations, and individuals for its continued existence; and

WHEREAS the Alaska Humanities Forum has raised increasing amounts of private
donations to fund its operations and programs in recent years, realizing the necessity to
diversify its bases of support so its support is as diverse as the projects supported, and to
minimize its reliance on public funds; and

WHEREAS the new Republican leadership of the United States Congress is firmly
committed to scrutinizing all components of the federal budget in order to eliminate
unnecessary expenditures, making it essential that the tremendous value of programs supported
by the National Endowment for the Humanities be made clear to all members of the Congress,
as they fulfill their duties as public servants dedicated to reducing the immense size of the
federal budget; and

WHEREAS, while the Alaska Humanities Forum creates and refines a plan for making
the transition to a future where it is funded more and more by private donations from
individuals, corporations, and foundations, and less and less by federal appropriations, during
the years needed to make the transition, the Forum’s existence depends on the existence of
the National Endowment for the Humanities; and

WHEREAS the United States Congress and President of the United States must hear
from the people of the country in order to know what agencies and programs are valued for
the positive effects they have on individual lives;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature endorses legislation
reauthorizing the National Endowment for the Humanities because the Endowment’s support
of the Alaska Humanities Forum is essential to the Forum’s work in support of the humanities
in Alaska; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
United States Congress to fund the National Endowment for the Humanities at a fair and
reasonable level; and be it
FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the President of the United States to support legislation that would reauthorize the National Endowment for the Humanities and fund its operations at a fair and reasonable level.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Strom Thurmond, President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable Robert Dole, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.