A RESOLUTION

Proclaiming April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month; proclaiming April 2018 as Child Abuse Prevention Month; and proclaiming April 6, 2018, as Go Blue Friday.

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

WHEREAS sexual assault affects women, children, and men of all racial, cultural, and economic backgrounds and occurs through acquaintance rape, stranger rape, sexual assault by a partner, child sexual abuse, incest, sexual harassment, prostitution, and pornography; and

WHEREAS the crime of sexual assault violates an individual's privacy, dignity, security, and humanity and leaves long-lasting physical and emotional scars that can influence every aspect of an individual's life; and

WHEREAS results from the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey show an estimated 33.1 out of every 100 Alaska women have experienced sexual assault within their lifetime; and

WHEREAS results from the 2015 Alaska Victimization Survey reflect alcohol- or drug-involved sexual violence dropped from 26.8 percent in the 2010 survey to 22.6 percent; and

WHEREAS, despite tremendous progress, Alaska still has the highest rates of sexual
violence in the nation; and

WHEREAS 2,126 children were evaluated by child advocacy centers in the state for possible sexual abuse last year; and

WHEREAS 1,625 adult victims of sexual assault sought services at rape crisis centers in the state last year; and

WHEREAS it is important to recognize the compassion, commitment, and dedication of the individuals who provide services to sexual assault survivors and work to reduce and eliminate sexual violence; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, 16 communities--Anchorage, Barrow, Bethel, Cordova, Dillingham, Eielson Air Force Base, Fairbanks, Fort Wainwright, Juneau, Kodiak, Kotzebue, Nome, Palmer, Seward, Unalaska, and Valdez--have sexual assault response teams to investigate more effectively crimes of sexual violence; and

WHEREAS research indicates the need to develop comprehensive sexual violence prevention programs that target multiple, interacting risk and protective factors in behaviorally relevant ways; and

WHEREAS communities across the state are taking up the challenge, implementing evidence-based prevention programs, such as Girls on the Run, Coaching Boys into Men, and Green Dot Alaska; and

WHEREAS, because one person, organization, agency, or community cannot, by itself, eliminate sexual violence, the citizens of Alaska need to work together to educate the entire population of the state about what can be done to eliminate sexual assault; and

WHEREAS schools across the state are implementing the Fourth R-healthy relationships curriculum in grades seven through nine, which has been shown to reduce adherence to rape myths and to enhance social and emotional learning focusing on self-management and responsible decision-making; and

WHEREAS positive healthy male role models are engaging boys through programs such as COMPASS to explore and adopt concepts of masculinity that include respect for women and nonviolent models of manhood; and

WHEREAS victims, survivors, and their families deserve support; by uniting in this effort, the citizens of this state can make a difference; last year over 3,100 volunteers devoted 48,483 hours of service in the state; and
WHEREAS the state currently has one of the five highest rates of child abuse in the United States; and

WHEREAS taking the life of an innocent preborn child through abortion is the ultimate form of child abuse, and, in 2016, according to the Department of Health and Social Services, the lives of at least 556 Alaska preborn children were taken through the State of Alaska medical assistance and Denali KidCare programs; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, 75 percent of the Alaska preborn children whose lives were taken through abortion whose mothers were 14 years of age or younger were taken through the Denali KidCare program; and

WHEREAS, in fiscal year 2015, the Department of Health and Social Services, Office of Children's Services, received more than 40,000 allegations of harm involving tens of thousands of children; and

WHEREAS, for every 1,000 children in the state, 42 are victims of abuse; and

WHEREAS more than 2,000 children in the state have been removed from unsafe homes and placed in foster care; and

WHEREAS child abuse and neglect leave cross-generational damage resulting in approximately 30 percent of abused or neglected children who will grow up to abuse or neglect their children; and

WHEREAS 36 percent of all women in prison and 14 percent of all men in prison were abused or neglected as children; and

WHEREAS children who experience child abuse or neglect are about nine times more likely to become involved in criminal activity than children who do not experience child abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS the long-term effects of child abuse include improper brain formation, an inability to trust, low self-esteem, and an increased vulnerability to post-traumatic stress disorder, sexually transmitted diseases, heart disease, cancer, and depression; and

WHEREAS every child deserves a loving family, a safe home, and the opportunity to grow into an upstanding and responsible member of society; and

WHEREAS we must work together to support the efforts of all those who take children into their homes and hearts because the community as a whole suffers in every case of child abuse and neglect;
BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature proclaims April 2018 to be Sexual Assault Awareness Month and encourages all of the residents of the state to observe Sexual Assault Awareness Month by taking action to prevent sexual violence; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature proclaims April 2018 to be Child Abuse Prevention Month in the state; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature proclaims April 6, 2018, as Go Blue Friday, a day to wear blue, the official color of prevention, and to work to keep the state's children safe and encourages all state employees and other residents of the state to participate; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports and encourages all state employees and other residents of the state to support child abuse prevention and education efforts.