



REPRESENTATIVE ALYSE GALVIN

Serving Alaska House District 14
Anchorage: Roger's Park, Midtown, Tudor, and Spenard

Sponsor Statement: House Joint Resolution 17 Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act April 22, 2025

House Joint Resolution 17 urges the United States Congress to pass the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act (ELSA). Currently, individuals born with congenital anomalies, such as cleft lip, cleft palate, and other conditions, can be denied coverage by private medical insurance companies for treatment that is medically necessary. ELSA will close the federal loophole that allows insurance companies to deny coverage to individuals who are faced with a lifetime of surgeries, speech therapy, dental care, and other medical needs.

Families in Alaska with children who have congenital dental anomalies are faced with an extraordinary cost burden. The financial costs can exceed \$100,000 with care denied based on the misconception that the dental work is cosmetic. Dental health impacts overall health and well-being. Missing or malformed teeth, cleft lip and cleft palate, cause a myriad of health problems. Missing teeth can affect speech patterns and the ability to chew food, potentially resulting in nutritional deficiencies. Cleft lip and cleft palate can lead to difficulties with speech, feeding, and breathing. Congenital dental anomalies also carry a large psychological impact and may contribute to social isolation and negative self-perception.

All individuals should be able to access necessary medical and dental care without the fear of an excessive financial burden. I ask for the Alaska State Legislature's support of HJR 17 and urge the Alaska Congressional Delegation to champion this legislation to close the federal loophole that denies essential dental treatment to individuals affected by congenital anomalies.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alyse Galvin".

Representative Alyse Galvin