

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 16

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR GIESSEL

Introduced: 1/17/12

Referred: State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Proclaiming May 2012 to be Celiac Disease Awareness Month.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** celiac disease is a genetic autoimmune disease that damages the lining of
4 the small intestine and may lead to malnutrition; and

5 **WHEREAS** people with celiac disease cannot tolerate gluten, which is found in
6 common cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and barley; and

7 **WHEREAS** when a person with celiac disease consumes food containing gluten, an
8 immune reaction occurs in the small intestine that damages the tiny projections known as villi
9 that line the intestinal wall and that prevents the villi from effectively absorbing nutrients; and

10 **WHEREAS** people with celiac disease suffer debilitating symptoms; and

11 **WHEREAS** celiac disease is associated with other disorders, including lupus,
12 Addison's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, Turner's syndrome, Sjögren's syndrome, liver disease,
13 Williams syndrome, Down's syndrome, and fibromyalgia; and

14 **WHEREAS**, if left undiagnosed and untreated, celiac disease can increase the risk of
15 cardiovascular damage, other autoimmune diseases, diabetes, malnutrition, vitamin
16 deficiencies, loss of calcium, osteoporosis, lactose intolerance, infertility, intestinal

1 lymphomas and other gastrointestinal cancers, depression, and neurological manifestations;
2 and

3 **WHEREAS** celiac disease is incurable; and

4 **WHEREAS** the only treatment for celiac disease is strict, life-long adherence to a
5 gluten-free diet; and

6 **WHEREAS** celiac disease is one of the most common genetic conditions in the world
7 and affects one in 133 people in the United States; and

8 **WHEREAS** 97 percent of an estimated 3,000,000 Americans have undiagnosed celiac
9 disease; and

10 **WHEREAS** the population of Alaska, according to the 2010 census, is 710,231,
11 which means that more than 5,000 Alaskans could have celiac disease; and

12 **WHEREAS** celiac disease affects both males and females and can occur in people of
13 all ages; and

14 **WHEREAS** first-degree relatives of people with celiac disease have an estimated one-
15 in-22 chance of developing celiac disease, and second-degree relatives have an estimated one-
16 in-39 chance of developing the disease; and

17 **WHEREAS** celiac disease is more commonly found in people who have autoimmune
18 thyroid disease, Down's syndrome, microscopic colitis, or type I diabetes; and

19 **WHEREAS** eight to 10 percent of people with type I diabetes also have celiac
20 disease; and

21 **WHEREAS** research indicates that celiac disease is twice as common as Crohn's
22 disease, ulcerative colitis, and cystic fibrosis combined; and

23 **WHEREAS** adults suffering from celiac disease experience an average delay of six to
24 10 years before being correctly diagnosed; and

25 **WHEREAS** the average cost of misdiagnosis of Alaskans with celiac disease is
26 \$5,000 to \$12,000 a year for each person, not including lost work time; and

27 **WHEREAS** the Celiac Disease Foundation provides support to people with celiac
28 disease through awareness, education, advocacy, and research programs and offers
29 scholarships to attend gluten-free summer camps to children with celiac disease; and

30 **WHEREAS** increased awareness of celiac disease would positively affect the lives of
31 Alaskans with the disease and promote early detection in adults and children so that they may

- 1 start on a gluten-free diet and more healthful living;
- 2 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature proclaims the month of
- 3 May 2012 to be Celiac Disease Awareness Month.