

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 18

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY REPRESENTATIVES HUGHES, LeDoux, Muñoz, Reinbold, Costello, Holmes, Millett, Tarr,
Peggy Wilson, Isaacson, Keller**

Introduced: 2/19/14

Referred: Health and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Encouraging hospitals and birthing facilities in the state to participate in the Baby-**
2 **Friendly Hospital Initiative and to support breastfeeding; and recognizing the benefits**
3 **of breastfeeding.**

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

5 **WHEREAS** breastfeeding provides unique health benefits to babies, including
6 nutrients that support infant brain development and lower rates of illness and disease; and

7 **WHEREAS** numerous studies demonstrate that children who have been breastfed
8 have fewer and less serious illnesses than children who have not been breastfed; and

9 **WHEREAS** breastfeeding lowers the rate of acute otitis media by 40 percent, which
10 provides economic benefits to Alaskans by reducing the costs of medical care; and

11 **WHEREAS** breastfeeding reduces obesity over the lifetime of an infant by 50
12 percent, saving Alaska residents approximately \$229,000,000 a year; and

13 **WHEREAS** children who have been breastfed are less depressed, anxious, and
14 withdrawn, and experience fewer learning problems, fewer diagnoses of behavioral health and
15 conduct disorders, lower rates of delinquent, aggressive, and antisocial behavior, and a lower

1 need for mental health services; and

2 **WHEREAS** the immediate skin-to-skin contact in breastfeeding enhances the
3 emotional connection between the mother and infant that continues through the child's
4 adolescent years and reduces the susceptibility of a person to prostitution and incarceration;
5 and

6 **WHEREAS** breastfeeding for a total of 24 months over the mother's lifetime
7 decreases the occurrence of premenopausal breast cancer by 50 percent, eliminating an
8 average of \$52,560,000 of medical care costs in the state each year; and

9 **WHEREAS** breastfeeding decreases the incidence of insulin-dependent diabetes
10 mellitus by 40 percent over an infant's lifetime, saving Alaska residents approximately
11 \$321,785,600 a year; and

12 **WHEREAS** breastfeeding offers numerous health benefits to new mothers by
13 reducing the mother's risk of acquiring breast and ovarian cancers, and postpartum
14 depression; and

15 **WHEREAS** breastfeeding provides economic benefits to families by decreasing the
16 need to purchase infant formula; and

17 **WHEREAS**, based on the above health advantages, breastfeeding lowers the cost of
18 medical care for Alaskans; and

19 **WHEREAS** studies have shown that the baby-friendly hospital initiative can decrease
20 the likelihood of child abuse or neglect and a person's being at risk for sex trafficking; and

21 **WHEREAS** the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative crosses state and national
22 boundaries in an effort to encourage and recognize hospitals that offer an optimal level of care
23 for infant feeding; and

24 **WHEREAS** the defined term "baby-friendly" may be used only by maternity services
25 that have adopted assessment standards for the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative; and

26 **WHEREAS** hospitals and birthing facilities receive and retain the baby-friendly
27 designation by implementing the evidence-based program, Ten Steps to Successful
28 Breastfeeding; and

29 **WHEREAS** babies born in hospitals and birthing facilities that follow the Ten Steps
30 to Successful Breastfeeding program have significantly higher rates of initiating and
31 extending breastfeeding than the national average;

1 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the unique physical,
2 mental health, economic, and societal benefits that breastfeeding provides to babies, mothers,
3 families, and communities; and be it

4 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature strongly encourages
5 hospitals and birthing facilities in the state to receive the baby-friendly designation by
6 implementing the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding program.