

# STATE OF ALASKA THE LEGISLATURE

## 2016

### Source

HCS CSSCR 1(EDC)

### Legislative Resolve No.

34



Relating to a legislative task force on civics education.

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

**WHEREAS** research shows that one of the most significant ways schools can foster youth civic engagement is by providing students with opportunities to engage in reflective civic action through their classes and cocurricular and extracurricular activities; and

**WHEREAS**, rather than providing a single course in civics, educators should provide civics learning activities from preschool through college, informed by best practices that develop civics knowledge based on an understanding of the values of the nation's founders as revealed in the nation's founding documents, including knowledge of our system of government and how it works, and civics skills, including intellectual and participatory skills necessary for an active civic life; and

**WHEREAS** opportunities for students to engage in real-world learning activities can enhance the civic development of students and provide authentic learning experiences; and

**WHEREAS** research suggests that educators who include in their pedagogy a component of civil service opportunities may better help students achieve greater levels of academic success and increased motivation; and

**WHEREAS** the state can help encourage schools to provide civil service opportunities for all students in a manner that complements the standards that schools set and the assessments and accountability measures the state chooses;

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that the Task Force on Civics Education be established as a joint task force of the Alaska State Legislature for the purpose of studying the current state of civics education and making recommendations for the improvement of civics education for students in the state; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the duties of the task force include

- (1) analyzing the current state of civics education in the state;
- (2) analyzing current civics education laws in other jurisdictions;
- (3) identifying best practices in civics education in other jurisdictions;
- (4) studying and making recommendations about how to increase and improve civics education in kindergarten through grade 12 in public schools in the state;
- (5) evaluating the merits of and implementation requirements for requiring high school seniors to take and pass the civics portion of the naturalization test used by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services under 8 U.S.C. 1446(b) as a prerequisite for graduating from high school;
- (6) reviewing the merits of and considering options for implementing the Every Student Succeeds Act, P. L. No. 114-95 (2015), as it pertains to civics education in the state;
- (7) making recommendations to the legislature relating to substantially increasing civics literacy and the capacity of youth to obtain the requisite knowledge and skills to be civically informed members of the public;
- (8) making funding recommendations related to the task force's recommendations to the legislature;
- (9) submitting a report to the secretary of the senate and the chief clerk of the house of representatives by January 19, 2017, summarizing the findings and recommendations of the task force and notifying the members of the legislature that the report is available; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force consist of 12 members as follows:

- (1) three members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of

the house of representatives, including one member of the minority organizational caucus;

(2) three members of the senate appointed by the president of the senate, including one member of the minority organizational caucus;

(3) the commissioner of education and early development or the commissioner's designee;

(4) five members of the public appointed jointly by the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate as follows:

(A) one active or retired high school teacher with significant teaching experience in civics or social studies education in the state;

(B) one member representing the Association of Alaska School Boards;

(C) one member who is a student enrolled in good standing in a public high school in the state who will be a senior in the school on the date of the first meeting of the task force; the student must demonstrate an interest in civics education and leadership;

(D) one member who is a judge or otherwise represents the judicial branch of state government;

(E) one member representing the University of Alaska; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that

(1) the speaker of the house of representatives and the president of the senate jointly appoint the chair of the task force from among the legislative members of the task force;

(2) a majority of the task force constitute a quorum;

(3) a vacancy on the task force be filled in the same manner as the original selection or appointment;

(4) the task force meet at the call of the chair;

(5) the task force may request data and other information from the Department of Education and Early Development, school districts, and other state agencies; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the staff of the legislator who chairs the task force provide administrative and other support to the task force; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that members of the task force serve without compensation

but be entitled to per diem and travel expenses authorized for boards and commissions under AS 39.20.180; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the task force expires on June 30, 2017.