



# Alaska State Legislature

## Senator Matt Claman

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### Senate Concurrent Resolution 1

#### Sponsor Statement – Version A

*“Relating to the procedure that the Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature will use to reconsider bills and items vetoed by the governor.”*

According to article II, section 16 of the Alaska Constitution, "Upon receipt of a veto message during a regular session of the legislature, the legislature shall meet immediately in joint session and reconsider passage of the vetoed bill or item." The Alaska Constitution does not mention a vote about whether to meet in a joint session; the Constitution states the legislature "*shall meet immediately*."

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 clarifies the importance of following the "*shall meet immediately*" language in the Alaska Constitution. The legislature has taken different approaches in the past about how to proceed following a governor's veto. To override a veto, article II, section 16 of the Alaska Constitution requires the House and Senate to meet in a joint session to reconsider the legislation. In the early years of statehood, the legislature met promptly in joint session to reconsider vetoed legislation. In later years, each body would vote separately about whether to meet in a joint session. If either body voted against holding a joint session, they did not hold a joint session and the vote to override did not occur.

In 1976, voters amended the Alaska Constitution to provide clarity on the process for a veto override if the veto occurs after adjournment. The Constitution states that "bills vetoed after adjournment of the first regular session of the legislature shall be reconsidered by the legislature sitting as one body no later than the fifth day of the next regular or special session of that legislature" (article II, section 16). If a bill is vetoed after adjournment of the second regular session, it can only be reconsidered in a special session, but there is no obligation for the legislature to call a special session.

Alaskans deserve to have predictability and certainty regarding the process to override a veto. SCR 1 will establish consistency and clarity for all Alaskans and ensure that the legislature carefully considers all vetoes moving forward.