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To the Honorable Members of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee,

Good afternoon,

I am honored to have the opportunity to write you today regarding Bill SJR16 a proposal to support the Congressional Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act.

As an Orthodontist that has been practicing in Alaska for 14 years, I strongly urge the committee to pass this resolution, underscoring the crucial need to address disparities in coverage for medically necessary treatments of congenital anomalies and birth defects.

The Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act is not just about dental or oral care—it is about ensuring comprehensive medical coverage for individuals who face lifelong health challenges due to conditions like cleft palate, ectodermal dysplasia, and other craniofacial anomalies. These conditions often require repeated surgeries and interventions, yet current insurance policies frequently deny coverage for essential treatments under the pretense of being “cosmetic” in nature. This lack of coverage places an insurmountable financial burden on families, limits access to care, and jeopardizes the health and well-being of countless individuals.

By supporting this resolution, Alaska has an opportunity to champion fairness and equity in healthcare, affirming our commitment to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community. This action will send a strong message to Congress that our state stands firmly behind policies that prioritize health outcomes, alleviate financial hardships, and empower individuals to live healthy and productive lives.

Thank you for your consideration of this vital resolution. I am confident that together, we can pave the way for lasting smiles and brighter futures for those who need it most.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Devin Johnson", is written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Devin Johnson, DMD, MS