

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON

Introduced: 4/2/25

Referred: Health and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Congress to pass the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act; and urging**
2 **lawmakers to advocate for policies that guarantee equitable access to vital healthcare.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act seeks to ensure that individuals born
5 with congenital anomalies, including cleft lip and cleft palate, have access to the medically
6 necessary treatment and care the individuals need throughout the individuals' lives; and

7 **WHEREAS** the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act aims to require private health insurance
8 plans to cover all medically necessary treatment, including surgery, therapy, and associated
9 care, for congenital anomalies, without imposing a lifetime or annual limit on that coverage;
10 and

11 **WHEREAS** an individual born with congenital anomalies often faces a lifetime of
12 surgeries, speech therapy, dental care, and other medical needs, making access to
13 comprehensive health care essential for the individual's well-being and quality of life; and

14 **WHEREAS** many families struggle to afford the high cost of necessary medical
15 treatments, especially if a family's insurance plan limits coverage for congenital anomaly care
16 or does not cover specific procedures, resulting in financial hardship and delayed or

1 inadequate care; and

2 **WHEREAS** the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act would provide critical protections for
3 families by ensuring that private health insurance plans cover medically necessary treatments
4 and services for congenital anomalies and prevent arbitrary limits on the duration of care; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act was brought to the attention of the
6 Anchorage Assembly by Emily Brubaker, who was an eighth grade student at Romig Middle
7 School at the time, when she was honored by the Anchorage Assembly for her significant
8 achievement as winner of the National Civics Bee contest; and

9 **WHEREAS** Emily Brubaker was born with a rare congenital anomaly called
10 hypohidrotic ectodermal dysplasia, which affects the development of skin, hair, teeth, nails,
11 and sweat glands; and

12 **WHEREAS** dental work for Emily Brubaker's condition is likely to cost her family
13 more than \$100,000; and

14 **WHEREAS**, at the age of six, Emily Brubaker began taking trips to Washington, D.C.
15 with her family to share her story with members of the United States Congress, encouraging
16 members to pass the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act, which would require private health
17 insurance plans to cover diagnosis and treatment of congenital anomalies and birth defects for
18 which some insurance companies deny coverage as dental care; and

19 **WHEREAS** the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act was last introduced in the 117th United
20 States Congress as H.R.1916 and S.754 and is currently being rewritten; and

21 **WHEREAS**, while the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act does not currently have a primary
22 sponsor in the United States House of Representatives, the Act may be introduced in the
23 119th United States Congress by Senators Joni Ernst and Tammy Baldwin;

24 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Alaska Congressional
25 Delegation to support the passage of the Ensuring Lasting Smiles Act to ensure
26 comprehensive, affordable, and uninterrupted medical care for state residents with congenital
27 anomalies; and be it

28 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges lawmakers to
29 continue advocating for policies that guarantee equitable access to vital healthcare for all
30 individuals.

31 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President

1 of the United States; the Honorable JD Vance, Vice President of the United States and
2 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the U.S. House of
3 Representatives; the Honorable Chuck Grassley, President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate; the
4 Honorable John Thune, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski
5 and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nicholas Begich, U.S.
6 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the
7 119th United States Congress.