



## ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

# Representative Genevieve Mina

Chair, House Health and Social Services Committee

*Serving House District 19: Airport Heights, Mountain View, & Russian Jack*

### **HJR 9 Sponsor Statement**

Supporting and encouraging the continued recruitment and retention of international educators on J-1 and H-1B visas in the state.”

Alaska faces difficulties recruiting and retaining teachers, especially in rural and remote communities. HJR 25 acknowledges the essential role and contributions of international educators working under J-1 and H-1B visas towards educational stability and high-quality instruction for Alaska’s students.

While the state works to grow our own educators and recruit teachers from out-of-state, many school districts across Alaska have turned to international recruitment as a practical, effective solution. School districts in western Alaska, Kodiak, and the North Slope have relied heavily on international educators to fill school vacancies. In some cases, over 60% of teaching staff have been filled by international hires. These educators not only bring professional expertise, but a strong commitment to their new community, and enrich the classroom with global perspectives.

However, despite their vital role, international educators often face challenges related to immigration status, uncertainty in visa durations, limited job mobility, and delays in paperwork processing. These obstacles threaten the stability of the very schools they support and jeopardize the state’s ability to provide consistent, high-quality education.

HJR 25 urges the Alaska Legislature, local school districts, higher education institutions, and federal leaders to recognize and support international educators as an essential part of Alaska’s educational workforce. These actions include policies that provide greater visa security, improved mobility, and pathways to long-term stability for educators on J-1 and H-1B visas. The resolution also fosters collaboration among stakeholders to create sustainable strategies for recruiting and retaining skilled international teachers.

Along with American teachers in Alaska's school districts, international educators are valued professionals whose dedication, resilience, and contributions are vital to the future of Alaska’s education system. Their contributions extend far beyond the classroom, bolstering local economies, and supporting community life. By supporting this resolution, the State of Alaska affirms our commitment to ensuring every student has access to the quality education they deserve, no matter where they live.

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