

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session

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Senate Resources Committee

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Senate Special Committee on Energy
Senate Special Committee on World Trade,
Technology & Innovation

Member

Senate Judiciary Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee

SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE

SPONSOR STATEMENT

SCR 1: BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH: MARCH 2008

SCR 1 aims to raise awareness about traumatic brain injuries and the impact they have on Alaskans and their families.

A traumatic brain injury (TBI) is when a blow or jolt hits the head hard enough to cause the brain to move within the skull or the skull breaks and the brain is directly hurt. When this happens, the injury disrupts the normal functioning of the brain. A traumatic brain injury can result in both short-term and long-term problems that involve impairment of cognitive abilities, physical functioning, or both.

Brain injury is very complex because no two injuries are the same. How each person may react to the same type of trauma is unknown. The cause, location and severity also are factors in how a person will react to a brain injury.

The State of Alaska is number one per capita for brain injuries and TBI is one of the leading causes of death of young people in the state. Over 800 TBIs are reported annually and an estimated 12,000 Alaskans have suffered a TBI. It is unknown how many people suffer from traumatic brain injuries (TBI) who do not receive medical assistance.

These injuries are often life altering and consequently place a tremendous strain on TBI survivors and their families. Survivors often live with permanent disabilities and the tragedy of TBI is exacerbated by the fact that most TBIs are preventable.

The Brain Injury Association of America recognizes March of each year as Brain Injury Awareness Month. SJR 1 comports with national recognition by making March 2009 Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month in Alaska.

Because TBI incidence in Alaska is on the rise, raising TBI awareness is more important now than it has ever been. TBIs are one of the most common injuries incurred in military combat today and as injured military personnel return home to Alaska the rate of TBIs is increasing sharply -- with no signs of slowing.

According to a task force on traumatic brain injury created by the Army Surgeon General, as many as one in five U.S. combat troops who fought in Iraq or Afghanistan leave with signs they may have had a TBI. The Walter Reed Army Medical Center reports that 60% of arriving service members from Iraq have a TBI from blasts, severe falls, and motor vehicle accidents. TBI screening at the National Naval Medical Center shows that 83% of wounded Marines treated at that facility have some form of temporary or permanent brain damage.

Rising TBI rates in Alaska is another reason why it is so important to bring attention to this silent epidemic. So please join us in support of brain injury awareness, prevention, and treatment by supporting SCR 1.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR MCGUIRE

Introduced: 1/21/09

Referred: Health and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to establishing March 2009 as Brain Injury Awareness Month.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** traumatic brain injury is a leading cause of death and disability among
4 children and young adults in the State of Alaska; and

5 **WHEREAS** an estimated 12,000 people in the State of Alaska have suffered a
6 traumatic brain injury; and

7 **WHEREAS** approximately 800 people in the State of Alaska report traumatic brain
8 injuries each year; and

9 **WHEREAS** the number of Alaskans with a traumatic brain injury is increasing
10 significantly as military service members injured overseas return home to Alaska; and

11 **WHEREAS** 20 percent of traumatic brain injuries result in death; and

12 **WHEREAS** many people who suffer traumatic brain injuries live with permanent
13 disabilities; and

14 **WHEREAS** most cases of traumatic brain injury are preventable; and

15 **WHEREAS** the lack of public awareness is so vast that traumatic brain injury is
16 known in the disability community as the nation's "silent epidemic"; and

1 **WHEREAS** the Brain Injury Association of America has recognized the month of
2 March each year as Brain Injury Awareness Month;

3 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the life-altering
4 effect that traumatic brain injury may have on people living with disabilities resulting from
5 traumatic brain injury and on their families; and be it

6 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the need for
7 enhanced public awareness of the effects of traumatic brain injury; and be it

8 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the designation
9 of March 2009 as Brain Injury Awareness Month and encourages the people of the state to
10 observe Brain Injury Awareness Month with appropriate programs and activities.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: SCR 1
 (S) Publish Date: 2/13/09

Identifier (file name): SCR1-LEG-COU-2-11-09 Dept. Affected: Legislature
 Title: Relating to establishing March 2009 as Brain Injury Awareness Month. RDU: Legislative Council
 Sponsor: Senator Lesil McGuire Component: Council and Subcommittees
 Requester: Senate HESS Committee Component Number: 783

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	Appropriation Required	Information						
		FY 2010	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Contractual	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Supplies								
Equipment								
Land & Structures								
Grants & Claims								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES								
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()								
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts								
1003 GF Match								
1004 GF	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1005 GF/Program Receipts								
1037 GF/Mental Health								
Other Interagency Receipts								
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2009) cost: _____

POSITIONS

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This legislation has zero fiscal impact on the Legislative Affairs Agency.

Prepared by: Karla Schofield, Deputy Director
 Division: Legislative Affairs Agency
 Approved by: Pamela Varni, Executive Director
Legislative Affairs Agency

Phone 465-6626
 Date/Time 2/11/09 12:32 PM
 Date 2/11/2009



Jill Hodges
Alaska Brain Injury Network
3745 Community Park Loop #140
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February 10, 2009

Senator Lesil McGuire
Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska

Dear The Honorable Lesil McGuire:

Thank you for your continued concern for safety for Alaskans, as well as prevention of injury and death. SCR 1 –Relating to establishing March 2009 as Brain Injury Awareness Month will help raise awareness about injuries to the brain and the effects brain injury has on the survivor, the family, the community and Alaska.

The Alaska Brain Injury Network is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 whose mission is to educate, plan, coordinate, and advocate for a comprehensive service delivery system for survivors of traumatic brain injury and their families. Our vision begins with prevention.

There are 800 Alaskans each year hospitalized for more than 24 hours with a moderate to severe traumatic brain injury (Alaska Trauma Registry). There is an estimated 3000 Alaskans that visit the Emergency Department each year (CDC). Falls, motor vehicle crashes, assault, ATV/Snowmachine and bicycle crashes are the leading causes of traumatic brain injury in Alaska. The Alaska Brain Injury Network, "10 Year Plan for TBI in Alaska" highlights Prevention, Advocacy, and Public Awareness on pages 49-57 (http://www.alaskabraininjury.org/documents_akbrain/10%20Year%20TBI%20Plan.pdf) with a specific objective "Participate in March Brain Injury Awareness Month activities through resolutions, proclamations, press kits and so forth." (attachment).

Success

In 2003, the Alaska Legislature passed legislation for a primary seatbelt law. The TBI rate due to motor vehicle crashes on the highway has decreased 38% from 2001 to 2005 (attachment). The Alaska Brain Injury Network will continue to study the data to see if TBI-disability among children and adults increases or decreases.

Potential Challenges

It is important to recognize traumatic brain injury, especially since there are service - members returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with brain injury. Highest rates of brain injury in civilians are among rural Alaskans and Alaska Natives. Many national guardsmen/women live in rural Alaska. A risk factor for a brain injury is history of brain injury; i.e. A national guardsperson is in an IED blast in Afghanistan. He/she returns to Alaska and may have challenges with balance, memory, attention, etc. He is riding his snowmachine and crashes, no helmet or maybe even with a helmet, he sustains an additional brain injury. There is potential for an influx of brain injuries in the next 5-20 years; a coordinated TBI prevention program and service delivery system would benefit all Alaskans.

ABIN Activities Promoting March as Brain Injury Awareness Month

The ABIN works closely with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, State of Alaska -Department of Health and Social Services, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. We are coordinating press conferences, newspaper advertisements, television commercials, and awareness among youth through internet media. ABIN is also working with the Veterans Clinic in Anchorage to host a public forum on brain injury.

Thank you for your concern and your untiring pursuit of keeping Alaskans healthy. You have our support.

Sincerely,

Jill Hodges

ATTACHMENT 1:

(Alaska Brain Injury Network “10 year plan for TBI in Alaska p. 55
http://www.alaskabraininjury.org/documents_akbrain/10%20Year%20TBI%20Plan.pdf)

Goal I:

Alaskans have knowledge of traumatic brain injury in Alaska.

Objectives

A. To inform Alaskans about TBI, causes, effective prevention, extent and resulting problems through public education campaigns and materials.

B. Strengthen the TBI information sharing network across the state.

Recommendations

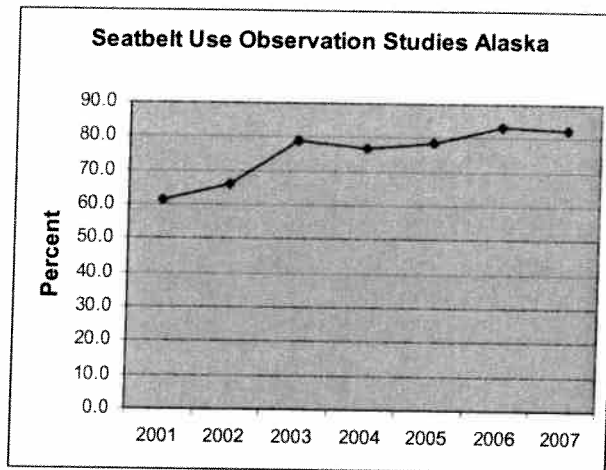
Years One-Ten

- Use injury surveillance data sets to describe TBI in Alaska.
- Provide TBI information through resources library, website, and conferences.
- Raise awareness of TBI through participation in the AMHTA Coordinated Communications Campaign.
- Participate in March Brain Injury Awareness Month activities through resolutions, proclamations, press kits and so forth.
- Recruit a self-advocate to put a face on TBI and serve as spokesperson.

ATTACHMENT 2:

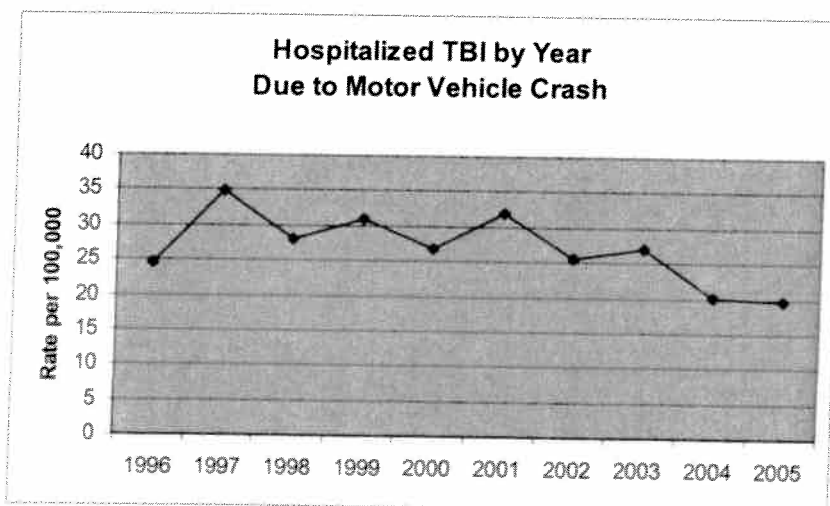
Primary Enforcement Seatbelt Law

On May 1, 2003 Alaska passed a law to change their seat belt law from secondary enforcement to primary enforcement state, ie. a vehicle can be stopped solely for seat belt non-use by an occupant. A study of Alaska has seen a steady increase in seatbelt use in the last decade. In 2007 the percent use as seen in the annual observations study was 82.4%. The national rate is 82%. The NHTSA goal is 95% use.



Source: Alaska Highway Safety Office

States with primary seat belt laws on average had seat belt use rates about 10 percentage points higher than States without primary laws in 2005. Wearing a seat belt is the best defense for an occupant in a motor vehicle crash and the single most effective measure to prevent serious traumatic brain injury. 56% of Alaskans with TBI resulting from a motor vehicle crash on the highway were not wearing seat belts. If every state with a secondary seat belt law upgraded to primary enforcement, about 1,000 lives and \$4 billion in crash costs could be saved each year.



State of Alaska > Governor > News > News Details

The Office of the Governor
SARAH PALIN



Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month

WHEREAS, an estimated 5.3 million Americans currently live with disabilities resulting from traumatic brain injury (TBI). Every year, 80,000 individuals experience the onset of long-term disability following a brain injury.

WHEREAS, brain injury can affect a person cognitively, physically, emotionally, and behaviorally. Consequences can include short and long-term memory loss, double or low vision, headaches or migraines, fatigue, increased anxiety, depression and mood swings, and impulsive behavior.

WHEREAS, the three leading causes of brain injury are motor vehicle accidents, violence, and falls.

WHEREAS, the effects of brain injury are devastating emotionally and financially to families.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health, the lead state agency for TBI, in close collaboration with the Alaska Traumatic Brain Injury Advisory Network, the Division of Public Health, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Alaska Mental Health Board, the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and the Alaska Commission on Aging are all working together toward the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of traumatic brain injury in Alaska.

WHEREAS, public awareness of the extent, consequences, and causes of brain injury is critical to the prevention of these injuries and will enhance the recovery process for persons with brain injury.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Sarah Palin, Governor of the state of Alaska, do hereby proclaim March 2009 as:

Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month

in Alaska, and encourage everyone to remember those with brain injuries and to become more informed about traumatic brain injury.

Dated: February 24, 2009

Printed on 3/02/09 at 12:11:33 PM by 146.63.16.195