

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Mike Dunleavy
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Senate Joint Resolution 9 – Constitutional Amendment: Education Funding

Quick Reference

Purpose: The purpose of SJR 9 is to allow Alaskans to vote on amending their constitution to remove the prohibition of using public funds for private education. Primary goals include:

- ◆ To ensure that current educational practices within the state are constitutionally sound
- ◆ To open the door for future discussions on the distribution of state funds for educational purposes
- ◆ To measure the voter wishes on their public educational system including educational funding

Problem Statement

- ◆ Many Alaskan children are falling through the cracks of our current educational system. We have not been able to solve this problem by simply providing more funding. For decades we have been engaged in attempts to mitigate this issue through a multitude of programs, the legality of which has been questioned.
- ◆ Section 1, Article VII of the Alaska Constitution states: "No money shall be paid from public funds for the direct benefit of any religious or other private educational institution." Upon challenge, the Alaska Supreme Court has issued opinions to additionally disallow *indirect* funding although the framers of the constitution intentionally left the concept of "indirect" out of the constitution. Currently, millions of public dollars are going to private, for profit and religious affiliated institutions for educational purposes.

Alaskans are asking for more programs, more choices and more opportunities to ensure the best education possible for them and their families.