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Governor Bill Walker STATE OF ALASKA

February 10, 2015

The Honorable Mike Chenault
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 208
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Speaker Chenault:

Under the authority of Article III, Section 18 of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill relating to the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act to update Alaska's laws on enforcement of family support orders. The Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) applies to actions relating to the establishment, modification, and enforcement of support orders and the determination of parentage in situations where the parties reside in different states or where one party resides in a foreign country.

In 1995, Alaska adopted the UIFSA (AS 25.25.010 - 25.25.903). In 2008, the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws (also known as the Uniform Law Commission) approved amendments to UIFSA to incorporate the provisions of the Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance (Convention), concluded at The Hague, November 23, 2007. The Convention contains provisions to establish uniform procedures for the processing of international child support orders.

In order to maintain compliance with federal law and treaty obligations and to continue to qualify for federal funding programs for child support matters, there is a compelling need to update Alaska's statutes this legislative session by adopting the 2008 amendments to the UIFSA.

The proposed bill is limited to amendments needed to integrate the 2008 updates to UIFSA into State law. The amendments must be effective by July 1, 2015, to comply with federal law

First, the bill would amend the UIFSA to remove the fiction that a "foreign country" is a state of the United States by amending existing text referring to a tribunal of this state to add "or a foreign country."

Second, the proposed bill would provide guidelines relating to the registration, enforcement, and modification of foreign support orders from countries that, like the United States, are parties to the Convention.

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A third component of the bill would improve the enforcement of United States child support orders abroad and would ensure that children living in the United States would receive financial support due them from parents, wherever the parents reside.

These amendments would benefit Alaska families by ensuring stable and predictable enforcement of Alaska family support orders in other states and abroad. Additionally, it would ensure that residents of this state would be able to enforce support orders in this state, regardless of where they originated.

Presently, 11 states have enacted the 2008 amendments to the UIFSA; this number will grow considerably this year as other states work to enact the 2008 amendments. In addition, at least 12 states have introduced legislation this year to enact the 2008 changes; we expect others will follow. This bill has the support of Alaska's child support enforcement agency.

Additional information on the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act 2008 amendments prepared by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws is available from my staff.

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,



Bill Walker
Governor

Enclosure