

March 16, 2016

Donald E. Roberts Jr.
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Alaska House Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska House Finance Committee

RE: Support for HCR 21 – Respond to Adverse Childhood Experiences

Members of the Alaska House Health and Social Services and Finance Committees, my name is Don Roberts, I have lived in Alaska Since May of 1997. I offer my unequivocal support for HCR 21 which “urges Governor Walker to establish policy and programs to address the public and behavioral health epidemic of adverse childhood experiences (ACES)”.

You’ve heard that “an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure”? Acknowledging and addressing adverse childhood experiences is that “ounce of prevention.” And while prevention is not always possible, being able to resolve these experiences early is far more effective than waiting, or worse, doing nothing.

Without delving too far into my personal life my childhood was rife with such experiences: domestic violence, racial violence, parental separation, family sickness (my mother had Multiple Sclerosis and had gran mal seizures – something I had to experience and help my mother with as my parents were separated) and childhood poverty. Now at the age of 58 I am dealing with a number of health issues, many of which could have been prevented (or assuaged had the resources been available to me) and I would not be languishing in poverty.

As the ACES studies have been around since the late 1980s I think it’s time for Alaska to catch up to other states and makes use of the research and resources available so that other people will not live in perpetual ill-health and poverty.

Thank you.

Donald E. Roberts Jr.