

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS OLSON, Gardner, Begich, Stedman, Bishop, Egan

Introduced: 2/1/17

Referred: Community and Regional Affairs, Resources

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the Alaska Congressional delegation to introduce bills to provide for the**
2 **exemption of legally acquired walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory from laws that**
3 **ban the sale, use, and possession of ivory.**

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

5 **WHEREAS** the Marine Mammal Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 1361 - 1423h) explicitly
6 protects the right of coastal Alaska Natives to harvest walrus and use the walrus byproducts in
7 handicrafts for sale in the United States; and

8 **WHEREAS** the use by Alaska Natives of legally acquired walrus, mammoth, and
9 mastodon ivory to create tools, handicrafts, jewelry, and artwork is a longstanding tradition
10 that is a vital component of current Alaska Native culture; and

11 **WHEREAS** the sale of walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory tools, handicrafts,
12 jewelry, and artwork by Alaska Natives is an important source of income in the cash-limited
13 economy of rural Alaska; and

14 **WHEREAS**, in the effort to stop the poaching of African elephants, certain states in
15 the United States have passed laws banning the sale, use, and possession of all ivory, and

1 other states are considering enacting those laws; and

2 **WHEREAS** the laws banning the sale, use, and possession of ivory in certain states of
3 the United States do not distinguish between African elephant ivory and the legally acquired
4 walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory used by Alaska Native artists; and

5 **WHEREAS** the laws banning the sale, use, and possession of ivory may subject
6 residents of certain states to criminal charges for buying, owning, or bringing home legally
7 acquired walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory items from Alaska; and

8 **WHEREAS** the laws banning the sale, use, and possession of ivory in certain states
9 adversely affect those Alaska Native artists who depend on the sale of ivory handicrafts to
10 obtain the cash necessary to live in cash-limited local economies;

11 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature opposes the inclusion of walrus,
12 mammoth, and mastodon ivory in current and future laws that ban the sale, use, and
13 possession of ivory; and be it

14 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature requests that the Alaska
15 Congressional delegation introduce bills in the United States Congress to provide for the
16 exemption of legally acquired walrus, mammoth, and mastodon ivory from current and future
17 laws that ban the sale, use, and possession of ivory.

18 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the
19 Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
20 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.