

30-LS0277\D
Glover
5/16/17

CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2()

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES TARR, Spohnholz, Parish, Tuck, Gara, Drummond, Ortiz

A RESOLUTION

Urging Governor Bill Walker to join with the Alaska State Legislature to respond to the public and behavioral health epidemic of adverse childhood experiences and childhood trauma by establishing a statewide policy and providing programs to address this epidemic.

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

WHEREAS more than two-thirds of adults surveyed in the state report experiencing adverse childhood experiences at a rate higher than other states that have conducted surveys; and

WHEREAS adverse childhood experiences are traumatic experiences occurring during childhood that may have a profound effect on a child's developing brain and body and may result in poor health during the person's adulthood, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, and household dysfunction, such as domestic violence, separation or divorce involving household members, and substance abuse, untreated mental illness, or incarceration of a household member; and

WHEREAS research over the last two decades in the evolving fields of neuroscience,

1 molecular biology, public health, genomics, and epigenetics reveals that experiences in the
2 first few years of life build changes into the biology of the human body that, in turn, influence
3 the person's physical and mental health over the person's lifetime; and

4 **WHEREAS** strong, frequent, or prolonged stress in childhood caused by adverse
5 childhood experiences can become toxic stress, affecting the development of a child's
6 fundamental brain architecture and stress response systems; and

7 **WHEREAS** adverse childhood experience studies have also found a strong
8 correlation between the number of adverse childhood experiences and a person's risk for
9 disease and negative health behaviors, including suicide attempts, cancer, ischemic heart
10 disease, diabetes, smoking, substance abuse, depression, obesity, unplanned pregnancies,
11 workplace absenteeism, lower educational achievement, and lower wages; and

12 **WHEREAS** approximately one in four adult Alaskans has experienced four or more
13 adverse childhood experiences; and

14 **WHEREAS**, according to data collected through the Behavioral Risk Factor
15 Surveillance System, when compared to an adult in the state with zero adverse childhood
16 experiences, an adult in the state with four or more adverse childhood experiences is 2.6 times
17 more likely to use Medicaid, 2.7 times more likely to be unable to work, 2.3 times more likely
18 to be a current smoker, 2.6 times more likely to have not graduated from high school or
19 received a general education development diploma, 4.7 times more likely to have ever been
20 diagnosed with a depressive disorder, 1.9 times more likely to be a heavy drinker, 2.9 times
21 more likely to use a government food program, and 4.2 times more likely to have experienced
22 hunger in the previous year; and

23 **WHEREAS**, in research conducted outside the state, when compared to an adult with
24 zero adverse childhood experiences, an adult with four or more adverse childhood experiences
25 is 2.4 times more likely to have a stroke, 2.2 times more likely to have ischemic heart disease,
26 2 times more likely to have chronic pulmonary obstructive disease, 1.9 times more likely to
27 have a type of cancer, 1.6 times more likely to have diabetes, 12.2 times more likely to
28 attempt suicide, 10.3 times more likely to use injection drugs, and 7.4 times more likely to be
29 an alcoholic; and

30 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Mental Health Board and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism
31 and Drug Abuse have estimated the direct and indirect cost to the state of adverse childhood

1 experiences in six categories (adult Medicaid, current smoking, diabetes, binge drinking,
2 arthritis, and obesity) to be approximately \$774,000,000 annually; and

3 **WHEREAS** the life expectancy of a person with six or more adverse childhood
4 experiences is 20 years shorter than the life expectancy of a person with no adverse childhood
5 experiences; and

6 **WHEREAS** early childhood offers a unique window of opportunity to prevent and
7 heal the effects of adverse childhood experiences, toxic stress, and trauma on a child's brain
8 and body; and

9 **WHEREAS** the emerging science and research on adverse childhood experiences,
10 toxic stress, and childhood trauma have uncovered evidence of a growing public health crisis
11 for the state with implications for the state's educational, juvenile justice, criminal justice,
12 public health, public safety, labor, and commerce systems; and

13 **WHEREAS** Nobel-prize-winning economist James Heckman has found that high
14 quality programs for disadvantaged children between birth and five years of age can deliver a
15 13 percent annual return on investment realized through better outcomes in education, health,
16 social behaviors, and employment; and

17 **WHEREAS** it is more effective and less costly to positively influence the architecture
18 of a young child's developing brain than to attempt to correct poor learning, health, and
19 behaviors later in life; and

20 **WHEREAS** early intervention and investment in early childhood years and effective,
21 trauma-informed services and systems for people throughout the course of life are important
22 strategies to achieve a lasting foundation for a more prosperous and sustainable state through
23 investing in human capital;

24 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the policy decisions of the Alaska State Legislature
25 acknowledge and take into account the principles of early childhood and youth brain
26 development and, whenever possible, consider the concepts of early adversity, toxic stress,
27 childhood trauma, and the promotion of resilience through protective relationships, supports,
28 and services; and be it

29 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that
30 the Governor join with the Alaska State Legislature to address the presence of adverse
31 childhood experiences and childhood trauma as factors for many societal issues by

1 establishing a statewide policy, providing programs, and funding research for statewide
2 solutions.