# Alaska State Legislature

Senator Lora Reinbold, Chairwoman Session: Capital Room 427 Juneau, AK 99801 (907) 465-3926



Senator Mike Shower, Vice Chair Senator Shelley Hughes Senator Robert Myers Senator Jesse Kiehl

# Senate Judiciary Committee

### SJR4 CONST. AM: ABORTION/FUNDING

## **Public Testimony**

*Up to April 15, 2021* 

From:	
To:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	SJR 4
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 8:07:27 PM

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

Amending the State of Alaska Constitution must only be undertaken with careful consideration, with equity and necessity. Our framers intentionally enshrined privacy from state interference as a most sacred right. SJR 4 unjustly steals the medical privacy of Alaskans based solely on their gender, violating the constitution of our nation and our state. Vote down this harmful interference in medical care. Thank you for your consideration,

Voter and Constituent of HD21-SDK Karen Pletnikoff

I oppose SJR 4.

SJR4 is a rolled-up newspaper in the hands of an old, tired patriarchy attempting to control women's bodies. Conservatives rail against excess government regulation, yet SRJ 4 represents government intervention of the worst sort: imposition of personal religious values on the governed, politicizing the delivery of health care, and creating a public battleground inside a woman's body.

SJR 4 will enable Alaska to take out a junior membership in the dwindling group of governments that prohibit abortion, such charming bastions of liberty as the Dominican Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Iraq, Nicaragua, and Senegal. As my grandmother used to say, you're known by the company you keep.

Lynn Escola Petersburg, Alaska

From:	
To:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	SJR 4
Date:	Wednesday, April 14, 2021 11:32:06 AM

My name is Kaylee Greener. As a second generation Alaska I take great pride in where I come from. Alaskans are know for having strong values and beliefs. Standing ram rod straight in order to defend and protect these beliefs. When I heard about Alaskan constitution laws in regards to letting Alaskans make decisions that relate to healthcare funding, abortions, and legislative related issues it deeply saddened me. Us Alaskans should be allowed the right to decide on these issues. The Alaskan people should be allowed to lift up and speak our voices. Not the Alaska Supreme Court striking down these laws, and speaking their voice instead of ours.

Us Alaskans need to stand up for our rights and beliefs. We need to start speaking up for us, and for the future generations that will be following in our footsteps. We should be offered the opportunity to decide and vote on these very beliefs. I say all of this as a statement of support to Senator Shelley Hughes. And I offer my support and backing to Senator Hughes in her SJR 4 amendment.

Thanks,

Kaylee Greener

I do no support SJR4.

It is cruel to force a mother to birth a child into a home in turmoil. Or, even worse, to a homeless situation.

The pro-life movement just means pro fetus. There is little appetite amongst this group to make sure the child born to a woman <u>who knew she was not able to care for her child</u> has the best chance for a good and productive life.

Come up with a bill that is pro-mothers and <u>existing babies and youth</u>. You will achieve much better results.

Another positive action would be to make birth control FREE and easy to access. Stop trying to defund Planned Parenthood.

Síncerely,

Constance Fredenberg

Palmer, AK 99645

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Richard Cole <rtmdcole@yahoo.com> Date: April 8, 2021 at 2:33:48 PM AKDT To: "Senator.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov" <Senator.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov>, "Senator.Mike.Shower@akleg.gov" <Senator.Mike.Shower@akleg.gov>, "Senator.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov" <Senator.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov>, "Senator.Robert.Myers@akleg.gov" <Senator.Robert.Myers@akleg.gov>, "Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov" <Senator.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>, "Senate.Judiciary@akleg.gov" <Senate.Judiciary@akleg.gov> Subject: Public testimony on SJR1

Alaska State Legislature Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in support of SJR1 and apposed to all other Bills being put forward that steal the PFD.

I ask that you vote to pass this through committee and allow the Senate to Vote.

I would like to thank those of you who are fighting hard to protect Alaskans Constitutional Rights, Those of you who are standing strong for Freedom and have tried to increase communications, have been an inspiration to watch and I'm praying that God gives you strength to continue.

I should also note, that I am a private citizen and in no way benefit from government overspending or special interest group funding.....I'm pretty sure the people who want to steal the PFD cant say the same...

I appreciate your time,

Misty Cole Nikiski Alaska



I am writing in opposition to bill SJR 4, which will be heard by your committee on April 16th, 2021. I have been a Fairbanks resident since 1994. I attended UAF for both bachelors and M. S. degrees and currently run my own computer consulting business. I oppose this bill not because I undervalue human life, but because I value equal opportunity for women and men to pursue successful and productive lives where they can contribute to society. Pregnancies are terminated for very good, very private reasons. Removing that option unilaterally without understanding, evaluating and mitigating the social and economic consequences to Alaskan society, specifically women, is irresponsible and extremely arrogant.

A more responsible pro-life approach to saving unborn babies would be legislation similar to what has recently passed in the state of Utah. In that state, they made the genetic father legally responsible for 50% of the financial responsibilities related to pregnancy and giving birth. I would like to see this equality for both genetic parents expanded to beyond pregnancy, when education, jobs and ultimately career paths are affected by the need to care for an un-planned child.

When accountability is equal for both people responsible for creating life, then hopefully there will be a decrease in the need for abortions afterward.

Thank you and feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Kalin Seaton

From:To:Subject:RE: AMAC Support for SJR 4Date:Friday, March 26, 2021 8:54:36 AMAttachments:image001.png

Oops, I realized I sent that last email from the Senator's email, not mine-my apologies! At least I had the right signature block.

Also, when I said letters of support, I also meant letters of opposition too, of course.

It's been a l o n g week.

Happy Friday! Lisa

From: Sen. Shelley HughesSent: Friday, March 26, 2021 8:32 AMTo: sjud@akleg.gov; Kelli Toth <Kelli.Toth@akleg.gov>Subject: FW: AMAC Support for SJR 4

Hello Kelli,

With SJR 4 moving to Judiciary, I'll be forwarding emails of support (e.g. see attached) to your office. Would you prefer that I send to you directly, or another member of staff, or to <u>SJUD@akleg.gov</u>?

Let me know your preference, I'm happy to comply.

Thank you and hope you have a wonderful day!

Respectfully,

Lisa

#### *Lisa Hart JD, MPA* Legislative Aide Office of Senator Shelley Hughes Alaska State Legislature Senate District F

#### Lisa.Hart@akleg.gov

#### State Capitol Office

Room 30 Juneau, Alaska 99801 907-465-3743

#### Mat-Su Legislative Information Office

600 E. Railroad Avenue Wasilla, Alaska 99654 907-376-3725

From: Andy Mangione <amangione@amac.us>
Sent: Friday, March 26, 2021 6:39 AM
To: Sen. Shelley Hughes <sen.shelley.hughes@akleg.gov>

**Subject:** AMAC Support for SJR 4

Dear Senator Hughes,

Thank you for standing up for life by proposing SJR 4. We appreciate your efforts to protect the unborn and are pleased to support your resolution.

Best regards, Andy Mangione

Andrew J. Mangione Jr Senior Vice President AMAC Action Association of Mature American Citizens Office: 888-262-2006, ext. 2007 amangione@amac.us www.amacaction.org Follow us on Twitter: @MatureAmericans Parler: @AMACforAmerica

"There is no limit to the amount of good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit." ~ Ronald Reagan



Dear Judiciary Member,

I am opposed to SJR 4.

An abortion is not a mandated procedure for anyone. It is a personal choice. Yet some believe they have the right, based on their personal beliefs, to take that choice away from those who do not share the same beliefs.

To take abortion rights away from women by ammending the Alaska Constitution? It is not only disturbing but borders on authoritarianism. This sets a precedent. What next, legislation to limit the number of girls or boys to be born?

A pregnancy is very much a women's health concern and does not belong in the political or governmental arena. The decision to terminate a pregnancy is a private concern between the woman and her health care provider.

At the rate child support services are reduced, the hypocrisy cannot be ignored. When an unwanted child is born our community bears the fiscal responsibility to provide services needed. As the adage goes, we pay now or we pay later.

Thank you for your kind attention to my concern.

Linda M. Blefgen Auke Bay, Alaska



#### From:

Sent: Friday, March 26, 2021 3:03 PM

To: Sen. Lora Reinbold <Sen.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov>; Sen. Mike Shower
 <sen.mike.shower@akleg.gov>; Sen. Shelley Hughes <sen.shelley.hughes@akleg.gov>; Sen. Robert
 Myers <Senator.Robert.Myers@akleg.gov>; Sen. Jesse Kiehl <Sen.Jesse.Kiehl@akleg.gov>
 Subject: SJR4

We support Senate Joint Resolution 4 as an amendment to the Alaska Constitution. Abortion is not a right, and this needs to be clarified.

Thank you.

Dr. and Mrs. Greg Bragiel

Dear Judiciary Committee,

I am very concerned about the proposal to ban abortions. I don't believe that we can judge pregnancy decisions and actions that a woman makes privately with her doctor any more than we can judge cancer or any other medical decisions.

If there was a focus instead on prevention, on providing free contraception to both men and women there would be less focus on abortion and less unintended side effects.

A friend who passionately works with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome children and adults tells me that about half of all pregnancies in Alaska are unexpected. Providing free contraception to all could possibly reduce this as well. This would be a better place to put your energies.

Please do not pass SJR 4. You are not doctors and have not walked in each woman's shoes.

Thanks,

Paula Davis

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

Thank you for hearing this very important constitutional amendment.

Two years ago, the legislature defunded publicly-funded abortions. You defunded abortions in Alaska because you agreed with the idea that taxpayer dollars should not be spent on abortions. This idea has long been held by most Americans and most Alaskans, as evidenced by the years-long Hyde Amendment at the federal level. But, radical, anti-life advocates sued the State of Alaska. They demanded that taxpayers fund abortions. And our own State Supreme Court actually agreed with them. Our State Constitution gives you, the Legislature, the power to fund or defund as you see fit. The Supreme Court ignored our Constitution and demanded that all of us pay for abortion, for death. This unbelievably absurd ruling has to be met with opposition.

This constitutional amendment would ensure that taxpayer dollars do not go to kill children in the womb, where they should be most protected. This amendment would protect your constitutional duty to control funding. This amendment would correct a radical decision by our State Supreme Court. I urge you to give it your highest support by not only voting Do Pass at the committee level, but becoming a co-sponsor at the next floor session. Join us in protecting the unborn and protecting our State Constitution.

Sincerely,

William Deaton Cordova, Alaska

From:	
To:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	Opposition to SJR 4
Date:	Thursday, April 15, 2021 10:40:32 AM

Senators of the Judiciary Committee:

I am a long-time Alaska resident and voter who strongly supports abortion rights and women's health issues. Please do not support this dangerous resolution that limits access to abortion and other health and reproductive services for Alaskan women.

Thank you.

Susan S. Faith



From:	
То:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	PLEASE STOP SJR
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:29:48 AM

Good morning Senate Judiciary Committee,

I'm emailing to help with the effort of stopping SJR 4. I am studying public health at the University of Fairbanks and I feel passionate about legislatively recognizing that public health is a multifaceted issue. Denying rights for abortion is not appropriate if we want the best public health in Alaska. SJR4 is an extreme bill that will put the people of Alaska's health and lives in jeopardy, leading to worse health outcomes for pregnant people, children, and families across the state. We know that states with more abortion restrictions tend to have poorer health outcomes for women and children than other states, including higher rates of maternal and infant mortality.

Alaska is already a nationwide leader in poor indicators of sexual and reproductive health, with some of the highest rates of unintended pregnancy, STIs, intimate partner violence, and sexual assault in the country.

Given these horrendous health outcomes, it is absurd that lawmakers are focusing on restricting access to care rather than on ensuring much-needed preventive health services.

Legislators should be focused on improving health outcomes for everyone in our state, not blocking access to health care.

Thanks for listening, Hannah To whom it may concern,

I am alarmed that this fundamental human right is in jeopardy.

The state of Alaska's citizens expect individual's freedom of choice. Currently the 'right to choose' is spilling over to other issues: wearing a mask in public and private establishments and even ATV access to state roadways.

And yet, abortion care continues to be in jeopardy.

The procedure of abortion is not going to go away. Removal of public access to abortion will only send the procedure to potentially unsanitary and unsafe conditions, and put those with the least means at the greatest risk.

I oppose this constitutional amendment and I hope you do too.

Please deny this amendment to the state's constitution.

Deborah Goodell

Judicial Committee

Pro Life laws are sweeping our nation because people realize that abortion is wrong. We need to protect the unborn and cement that into the Constitution of Alaska. Thank You Jeremiah and Lacey Hamrick Wasilla, AK Hello,

My name is Dalton. I am a lifelong Alaskan, who grew up with 4 sisters. Abortion has been a long-time issue, but today it is under attack by those of faith. We have seen during this pandemic many people say this is infringing on my personal rights and that the government is stepping in an telling me to wear a mask. But this same group of individuals are saying you cannot get an abortion because it is life. This is contradicting itself, because we are telling these women you cannot get an abortion because it is not right. This is putting government into a woman's life without choice.

Please tell me why, religion of one's belief plays a part in someone else's life. For example, having an abortion goes against my religion so I must then push my views on someone else. Let the person who wants an abortion get the understanding and options to pick from themselves. If we strip away their freedom of choice and force them to keep the baby, then we will see this child get abandoned from the parent.

We are targeting only women; Colorado is a great example of freedom of choice and privacy from government interfering. People across the nation support abortion at 61%, is our government officials supposed to listen to the people. We need to separate our values and beliefs in public held positions. Let us show the lower 48 that Alaska is not the same and that we are different just as our constitution states. A total of 1,270 abortions happened in 2019, less than the nation average. Instead of banning or stopping funding. Put resource towards things that helps with woman reproductive health. This is the land of the free, but in recent years we have become less of a democracy. Please stop putting your religious beliefs in other people's lives, and let them live and choose their life decisions.

Kindest regards,

Dalton H.

Senators,

As a women and an Alaskan resident, I strongly oppose any legislation to block access t o abortion. We must protect our right to privacy and our access to abortion.

Bonnie Landis Anchorage

From:	
To:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	Opposition to SJR 4
Date:	Thursday, April 15, 2021 10:40:32 AM

Senators of the Judiciary Committee:

I am a long-time Alaska resident and voter who strongly supports abortion rights and women's health issues. Please do not support this dangerous resolution that limits access to abortion and other health and reproductive services for Alaskan women.

Thank you.

Susan S. Faith



From:	
To:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	SJR 4
Date:	Wednesday, April 14, 2021 2:11:56 PM

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for reading my email. I appreciate your public service.

We must never allow our personal freedom to be taken away, including a woman's right to make medical decisions with her doctor. SJR 4 would amend the state constitution, setting a dangerous legal precedent that will erode our liberty. It is more important than ever that the Alaska Constitution protect everyone's right to medical treatment without government interference. I encourage the Judiciary Committee, and all senators, to oppose SJR 4.

Thanks for your time,

Cheryl Lovegreen Anchorage

From:	
То:	Senate Judiciary
Cc:	Sen. Bert Stedman
Subject:	Oppose SJR 4 - Proposing an amendment relating to abortion
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 12:19:02 PM

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee Members,

I oppose SJR 4 "SJR 4: Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Alaska relating to abortion," sponsored by Senator Hughes.

As a new mother of a very much wanted infant, I can tell you that no woman should ever be forced to undergo a pregnancy that isn't cherished. Nor should a woman have to continue a desired pregnancy where prenatal ultrasounds or tests reveal a horrible prognosis for the fetus. Every single woman that's ever been pregnant faces health and economic implications for choosing to bring life into the world.

*If you want to do something useful for women in this state, and want incentivize parenting over abortion, then fund childcare!* I've been on the waist list for only licensed childcare provider in my town which serves infants since I was about halfway through pregnancy last summer. Having more childcare would strengthen the economic security of women & families. But this bill? It would just embroil Alaska in expensive and unnecessary legal battles. What would you rather do: a) virtue signaling a position on a classic wedge issue or b) actually do the legwork to creating meaningful solutions for families?

Sincerely, Laurinda Marcello

Sitka, AK

From:	
To:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	SJR 4
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 10:24:39 AM

Dear members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

I am concerned for the safety of all Alaskan people of reproductive age when there is ever a move towards restricting or preventing necessary and life saving health care. The Alaskan constitution does an excellent job of protecting the privacy of all Alaskans, which is why the AK supreme court was able to uphold the rights of those who can reproduce.

To legislate "parental rights" or the rights of the unborn is to negate the autonomy of the person in question, regardless of their circumstances. Bodily autonomy is central to our laws protecting privacy. A person cannot be forced to have a medical procedure to save the life of another, and to infer judgment on why a person would refuse or choose a procedure is to invade their protected privacy.

If the goal is to end or decrease abortion rates then I would plead with the committee and all Alaskans to look towards preventative measures. Increasing access to birth control and preventative care and education leads to a decrease in unwanted pregnancies. Taking away abortion access does not prevent abortion, it only takes it underground as was done prior to legalization in 1973, and is occurring now in states with severe restrictions. Alaskan Native people are especially at risk due to lack of access and care in their villages as well as the violence and stigma of choosing to control their own reproductive journey.

Please protect our Alaskans and their right to choose when and how they reproduce.

Amber Michael, CNM, APRN

Senate Judiciary Committee,

While attending college in 1969 (before abortion became legal) my roommate's girlfriend had an abortion. Done in **unsterile conditions** in our rented apartment by someone **unlicensed in medicine**.

That story should scare anyone with a heart!

Women need abortions whether you pass SJR 4 or not.

I remind you that abortion care is a basic human rights issue. Keep your Republican laws off women's private lives.

Eric Muehling / Voter Fairbanks, Alaska Senate Judiciary Committee,

While attending college in 1969 (before abortion became legal) my roommate's girlfriend had an abortion. Done in **unsterile conditions** in our rented apartment by someone **unlicensed in medicine**.

That story should scare anyone with a heart!

Women need abortions whether you pass SJR 4 or not.

I remind you that abortion care is a basic human rights issue. Keep your Republican laws off women's private lives.

Eric Muehling / Voter Fairbanks, Alaska

From:	
То:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	Opposition to SJR 4
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 9:36:47 AM

Alaska was one of the first states to legalize abortion, consistent with our recognition of citizen's rights to privacy and individual freedom.

In these days of pandemic and difficulty maintaining an income to support a family, we need the freedom to decide whether we provide the expenditures that accompany raising a child. A state and nation that is not -- nor can afford to -- guarantying proper income, education, and health care from state/national funding should not insist that children be born to those who recognize they are in no position to guarantee proper support for their child.

From:	
То:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	Opposed to SJR 4
Date:	Thursday, April 15, 2021 11:23:59 AM

I am writing in opposition to bill SJR 4, which will be heard by your committee on April 16th, 2021. I have been a Fairbanks resident since 1994. I attended UAF for both bachelors and M. S. degrees and currently run my own computer consulting business. I oppose this bill not because I undervalue human life, but because I value equal opportunity for women and men to pursue successful and productive lives where they can contribute to society. Pregnancies are terminated for very good, very private reasons. Removing that option unilaterally without understanding, evaluating and mitigating the social and economic consequences to Alaskan society, specifically women, is irresponsible and extremely arrogant.

A more responsible pro-life approach to saving unborn babies would be legislation similar to what has recently passed in the state of Utah. In that state, they made the genetic father legally responsible for 50% of the financial responsibilities related to pregnancy and giving birth. I would like to see this equality for both genetic parents expanded to beyond pregnancy, when education, jobs and ultimately career paths are affected by the need to care for an un-planned child.

When accountability is equal for both people responsible for creating life, then hopefully there will be a decrease in the need for abortions afterward.

Thank you and feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Kalin Seaton

From:	
To:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	SJR-4 - Don"t pass it out of Judiciary
Date:	Tuesday, April 13, 2021 1:33:01 PM

Whomever proposed this enslavement is living the confederate's reality and aught be expelled/extracted from my State Legislature. If they are living/imagining a reality in which my body belongs to a misinformed public servant, they are living in a reality that does NOT recognize "liberty, justice, and freedom for ALL!"

Extradition from my Nation is the only future possible for any of this ilk without the ensconced moral fiber innate of American civility; one that cannot be had without the respect of free will, especially clear this is if the maker of SJR-4 is living a duplicitous hypocrisy behind a claim of Christian adherence.

"Morality" can only be shaped through maturation; it cannot be objectively taught or subjectively bestowed - contrary to what many of these schizophrenic political hacks might think! Which then only implies they themselves' are just enslaved to another, with no agency (free will!) of their own?

"Free-will" literally means I am not enslaved to another. I cannot be 'my brother's keeper' in commanding their lifestyle when it does not comport to my means - as if they were a "means to my end!" I can only influence his (or her, "brother" here, is metaphoric) way of thinking. SJR-4 proposes this Constitutional abrogation and in so doing, contradicts everything my State's Legislature was elected to preserve (and insure) for ALL of us! John S. Sonin



From:	
To:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	SJR 4
Date:	Wednesday, March 31, 2021 5:45:00 PM

I respectfully ask that you pass this important resolution to clarify our state's stance on the funding of abortion and the fact that our constitution does not provide any sort of protected right to abortion.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely, Tim Tillman



From:	
То:	Senate Judiciary
Subject:	public testimony for SJR4
Date:	Wednesday, April 14, 2021 12:03:50 PM

Dear Madams/Sirs,

As a registered voter in the state of Alaska, I urge you to give your full support to this proposed amendment. This bill would rightfully hand power back to the people and give us a chance to have a say in what legislation gets passed regarding the many issues surrounding abortion. As it stands, Alaska's historically pro-choice Supreme Court regularly throws out bills regarding abortion without even giving our people a chance to pass or fail it in voting. This is a blatant censorship of voices who are either pro-life or are even pro-choice but oppose the lack of regulations (such as not letting a thirteen year old get an abortion without neither parental knowledge nor consent). So regardless of your personal feelings on the topic of abortion, as a young women voter and lifetime resident of Alaska, I urge you to pass this bill simply for the fact that voices are being stifled and our government is dictating what our laws are to be without consent of the people. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Hannah Utic