

EDUCATION

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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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Senate Joint Resolution 17: Extend Deadline for ARP-HCY Funds

Sponsor Statement

Alaska is experiencing an unprecedented rise in youth experiencing homelessness, with 14 percent more students identified as homeless in the 2022-23 school year, totaling approximately 3,000 students statewide. These numbers are most likely an undercount of the students needing housing support. Housing instability leads to dramatically higher dropout rates for these students, impacting their future success in our community – dropping out of high school can lead to not only higher unemployment and lower earnings, but also worse health outcomes and higher rates of criminal activity.

In 2021, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act was signed into law and \$2.3 million additional dollars were provided to Alaska school districts to support students experiencing homelessness. School districts in Alaska can apply for grants to use these funds for a wide variety of activities to support students experiencing homelessness and improve their outcomes in our schools. These activities range from direct student tutoring to medical referrals to staff training on how to identify and support students.

Under the current timeline, funds need to be obligated by September 2024 and 40 percent of the American Rescue Plan – Homeless Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) funds remain available. An extension will allow a measured and thoughtful dedication of these funds, instead of requiring schools to obligate them rapidly.

We urge your support in asking our congressional delegation to allow school districts this necessary additional time to obligate the remaining ARP-HCY funds.