

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 55

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE KERTTULA

Introduced: 2/11/00

Referred: House Special Committee on World Trade and State/Federal Relations

A RESOLUTION

**1 Urging the government of the United States to accede to the 1997 Mine Ban
2 Treaty.**

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

4 WHEREAS the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and
**5 Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, also referred to as the 1997 Mine
6 Ban Treaty, entered into force on March 1, 1999, without the participation of the United
7 States; and**

8 WHEREAS the Convention has been signed by 137 countries and ratified by 90
9 countries; and

10 WHEREAS a person is killed or maimed by a land mine every 20 minutes, resulting
11 in more than 25,000 victims each year; and

12 WHEREAS many of the victims of land mines are children at play or women seeking
13 food for their families; and

14 WHEREAS 110,000,000 land mines are scattered in 64 countries and pose a
15 continuing threat of violence to civilians long after warfare has ceased; and

16 WHEREAS, at the current rate of clearance, it is estimated that it will take 1,100

1 years to remove the 110,000,000 existing land mines if no more mines are laid; and

2 **WHEREAS** the number of land mines in use increases each year; and

3 **WHEREAS** land mines are widely deployed in developing countries in Asia, Africa,
4 and Latin America; and

5 **WHEREAS**, in the most seriously affected areas, land mines wreak havoc with the
6 economy, refugees cannot return home, farmers cannot till fields, relief shipments cannot be
7 delivered, animals cannot reach watering holes, unmined lands are overfarmed, health care
8 systems are overwhelmed, and mine clearance costs are exorbitant; and

9 **WHEREAS** the United States is one of the remaining 16 mine-producing countries in
10 the world and, with a stockpile of 11,300,000 anti-personnel land mines, has the fourth largest
11 mine arsenal in the world after China, Russia, and Belarus; and

12 **WHEREAS** many United States military leaders, including General Norman
13 Schwartzkopf, have confirmed that there is no need for anti-personnel land mines; and

14 **WHEREAS** the United States government has recognized the humanitarian cost of
15 anti-personnel land mines and is undertaking research to eliminate the need for them; and

16 **WHEREAS** more than 150 United States humanitarian organizations, including the
17 Red Cross, CARE, Save the Children, Catholic Relief Services, and World Vision, have joined
18 more than 500 humanitarian organizations around the world in calling for an immediate ban
19 on the production, stockpiling, use, and transfer of anti-personnel land mines; and

20 **WHEREAS** over 70 nations have put forth a United Nations Resolution calling for an
21 international ban on the production, stockpiling, use, and transfer of anti-personnel land mines;
22 and

23 **WHEREAS** the United States was an active participant in the 1997 conference in
24 Ottawa, Canada, at which the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,
25 Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction was formulated;
26 and

27 **WHEREAS** the parties to the Convention agree not to use, develop, produce,
28 otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain, or transfer anti-personnel land mines and agree to destroy
29 or ensure the destruction of anti-personnel land mines; and

30 **WHEREAS** the United States did not sign the Convention, and has not acceded to the
31 Convention, because it wants to continue to use anti-personnel land mines on the Korean

1 peninsula and to continue to use mixed systems that combine both anti-personnel and anti-tank
2 land mines; and

3 **WHEREAS** the United States has established an export moratorium on anti-personnel
4 land mines, but the moratorium does not fully comply with the Convention; and

5 **WHEREAS**, without the strong commitment of the United States to ban anti-personnel
6 land mines and the full participation of the United States in the Convention, recalcitrant
7 nations have an excuse for continuing to use anti-personnel land mines, and the humanitarian
8 tragedy caused by anti-personnel land mines will continue;

9 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests President
10 Bill Clinton to accede to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production
11 and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction on behalf of the United States;
12 and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
14 United States Senate to concur in the accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the
15 Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction
16 as soon as possible.

17 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the
18 United States; the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and President
19 of the United States Senate; the Honorable Madeleine K. Albright, United States Secretary of
20 State; the Honorable William S. Cohen, United States Secretary of Defense; the Honorable
21 Strom Thurmond, President Pro Tempore of the United States Senate; the Honorable Jesse
22 Helms, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the United States Senate; and to the
23 Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the
24 Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.