

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 8
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR ELTON

Introduced: 3/1/01

Referred: State Affairs, Judiciary

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging Alaska's political parties to use a State of Alaska freedom of choice blanket**
2 **primary election.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** 51 percent of registered Alaska voters list their political party affiliation
5 as "undeclared," "nonpartisan," or "other"; and

6 **WHEREAS** only 17 percent of Alaska's voters participated in the August 22, 2000,
7 partially closed primary election despite unprecedented voter turnout efforts; and

8 **WHEREAS** the partially closed primary election cost \$250,000 more than a freedom
9 of choice blanket primary; and

10 **WHEREAS** holding a freedom of choice blanket primary election with one ballot is
11 less expensive than holding other types of primaries that require more than one ballot; and

12 **WHEREAS** the State of Alaska pays the costs of running a primary election even
13 though it does not have a constitutional obligation to conduct a primary election on behalf of
14 political parties; and

15 **WHEREAS** the Alaska division of elections received many calls from Alaska voters
16 who were unhappy with the partially closed primary election that was conducted under

1 emergency regulations; and

2 **WHEREAS** Alaska first instituted a freedom of choice blanket primary in 1947,
3 following a referendum, to ensure that the voices of a broad cross-section of voters would be
4 heard; and

5 **WHEREAS**, in 1967, a bill introduced at the request of Governor Walter J. Hickel
6 was passed into law restoring the freedom of choice blanket primary after the freedom of
7 choice blanket primary was replaced by the legislature in 1959 with an open primary; and

8 **WHEREAS** the experience in Alaska, Washington, and California has been that
9 freedom of choice blanket primaries increase voter participation in primary elections; and

10 **WHEREAS** not allowing the use of a freedom of choice blanket primary protects the
11 rights of partisan political parties over the rights of individual Alaska voters; and

12 **WHEREAS** some primary election regimes other than the freedom of choice blanket
13 primary empower voters registered with a political party more than they empower voters who
14 register their party affiliation as "undeclared," "nonpartisan," or "other"; and

15 **WHEREAS** the State of Alaska may conduct a freedom of choice blanket primary
16 election if recognized Alaska political parties agree to the freedom of choice blanket primary
17 format;

18 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges all recognized Alaska
19 political parties to establish by party rule that party candidates for the general election ballot
20 shall be chosen by a freedom of choice blanket primary.

21 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to Mark Chryson, Chair, Alaskan
22 Independence Party; Scott Sterling, Chair, Democratic Party of Alaska; Rachel Garcia and
23 Chris Kutsch, Co-Chairs, Green Party of Alaska; Len Karpinski, Chair, Alaska Libertarian
24 Party; Ray Metcalfe, Chair, Republican Moderate Party, Inc.; and Randolph A. Ruedrich,
25 Chair, Republican Party of Alaska.