

**SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY SENATOR ELLIS**

**Introduced: 2/13/06**

**Referred: Health, Education and Social Services, State Affairs**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services to seek authority and**  
2 **funding from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a system**  
3 **allowing Alaska veterans treatment in both public and private Alaska facilities.**

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

5 **WHEREAS** approximately 72,000 veterans make Alaska home; and

6 **WHEREAS** Alaska veterans deserve top-quality health care in their communities; and

7 **WHEREAS** the state has a moral obligation to ensure that state citizens who serve in  
8 the military receive appropriate medical care at home; and

9 **WHEREAS** many veterans who currently require medical services must leave their  
10 communities and the state to receive care from United States Department of Veterans Affairs  
11 facilities; and

12 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Veterans Affairs spent \$2,057,222 on  
13 airfare during 2004 to fly Alaska veterans out of the state to receive medical services; and

14 **WHEREAS** many of the medical services received by veterans are available at public  
15 and private medical facilities in the state; and

1           **WHEREAS** the value of medical services available in the state but provided out of  
2 state is a significant loss to the economy of the state and undercuts the viability of the state's  
3 medical services industry; and

4           **WHEREAS** forcing veterans to leave their communities for treatment unnecessarily  
5 disrupts the veteran and the veteran's family; and

6           **WHEREAS** public and private facilities that can perform necessary services often  
7 exist in a veteran's community; and

8           **WHEREAS** increased interaction between United States Department of Veterans  
9 Affairs doctors and hospitals and public and private medical facilities in the state would result  
10 in reduced costs and increased efficiency for veterans' care; and

11           **WHEREAS** allowing veterans to obtain care from doctors and hospitals other than  
12 United States Department of Veterans Affairs doctors and hospitals allows greater choice and  
13 flexibility for veterans;

14           **BE IT RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that the Alaska Department of  
15 Health and Social Services is urged to seek authority and funding from the United States  
16 Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a system allowing Alaska veterans to be treated in  
17 public or private facilities in the state whenever possible; and be it

18           **FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that the United States  
19 Department of Veterans Affairs is urged to give authority, funding, and management to the  
20 State of Alaska to ensure that every Alaska veteran has the option of receiving services as  
21 close to home as possible; and be it

22           **FURTHER RESOLVED** by the Alaska State Legislature that the United States  
23 Department of Veterans Affairs is urged to implement a system that uses veterans medical  
24 identification cards like an insurance card for billing the United States Department of  
25 Veterans Affairs.

26           **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable R. James Nicholson, United  
27 States Secretary of Veterans Affairs; the Honorable Karleen Jackson, Commissioner,  
28 Department of Health and Social Services; and the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable  
29 Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,  
30 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.