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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 34

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
 TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES ROSES, Lynn**SENATORS Therriault, Bunde, Wagoner, Thomas, Dyson, French, Davis, McGuire, Wilken, Elton, Ellis, Green, Wielechowski****Introduced: 2/13/08****Referred: Judiciary****A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging the United States Congress to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant**
 2 **program.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** DNA technology is increasingly vital to ensuring accuracy and fairness
 5 in the criminal justice system, but is not yet considered a routine tool for criminal
 6 identification by law enforcement; and

7 **WHEREAS** over 50,000 law enforcement investigations have already been aided
 8 nationwide because of DNA matches made through the Federal Bureau of Investigation's
 9 Combined DNA Index System, bringing justice to victims and removing criminals from the
 10 streets; and

11 **WHEREAS** the Innocence Project has used DNA in over 200 cases to exonerate
 12 persons who were wrongfully convicted of crimes; and

13 **WHEREAS** Alaska and other states throughout the nation have significantly
 14 expanded their DNA programs to include a growing number of convicted and arrested felons
 15 to match against unsolved crimes; and

16 **WHEREAS** the demand for DNA testing in both violent and nonviolent crimes has

1 continued to increase as the reliability of this evidence is proven; and

2 **WHEREAS** many laboratories still maintain DNA backlogs of six months or longer
3 and are unable to meet the growing demand for DNA testing, despite funding commitments
4 from state and local governments; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program has permitted state and
6 local governments an opportunity to begin to maximize the full potential of forensic DNA
7 through backlog reduction, but much work remains to be done;

8 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature strongly urges the United States
9 Congress to reauthorize the Debbie Smith DNA backlog grant program at current or increased
10 levels.

11 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-
12 President of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi,
13 Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; and the Honorable Ted Stevens and the
14 Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
15 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.