

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 19
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI

Introduced: 2/19/08

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services, Finance

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to implementation of the recommendations of the Governor's Summit on Early**
2 **Learning.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** Alaska was one of only 10 states awarded a prestigious grant in 2007
5 from the National Governors Association to hold a Governor's Summit on Early Learning;
6 and

7 **WHEREAS** over 150 legislators, other policymakers, and statewide leaders from a
8 variety of sectors participated in the summit to ensure Alaska's future economy will be
9 supported by an educated, productive workforce; and

10 **WHEREAS** research has documented that nearly half of Alaska children enter school
11 unprepared to be successful learners, setting them up for failure before they even start
12 kindergarten; and

13 **WHEREAS** experts attribute this lack of preparation in large part to the lack of
14 preschool education available in Alaska; and

15 **WHEREAS** Alaska is one of only 10 states without a state-funded statewide
16 preschool system; and

1 **WHEREAS** the national trend is toward voluntary early childhood education for all
2 children; and

3 **WHEREAS** 87 percent of Alaskans think it is important for state government to
4 provide financial support for early childhood education and child care; and

5 **WHEREAS** attendees at the governor's summit drafted recommendations to ensure
6 that all children, especially those most in need, have access to quality early childhood
7 education opportunities; and

8 **WHEREAS** the recommendations of the governor's summit echo the findings of the
9 2006 Alaska Ready to Read, Ready to Learn task force, which recommended that Alaska
10 develop a comprehensive system of affordable and voluntary early childhood education; and

11 **WHEREAS** early childhood education has shown documented results that include

- 12 (1) significantly less grade repetition in later years;
- 13 (2) major reductions in placement in special education programs;
- 14 (3) substantially higher high school graduation rates;
- 15 (4) dramatic increases in college attendance;
- 16 (5) substantially fewer arrests;
- 17 (6) much less reliance on public assistance; and
- 18 (7) significantly higher employment rates; and

19 **WHEREAS** research indicates that early childhood education yields a return on
20 investment that far exceeds the return on most public economic development projects; and

21 **WHEREAS** key workforce skills, including motivation, persistence, and self-control,
22 are developed most cost-effectively and efficiently in preschool children;

23 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges Governor Sarah Palin to
24 work closely with the legislature to implement the recommendations of the Governor's
25 Summit on Early Learning; and be it

26 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports implementation
27 of a rating system to help parents evaluate early childhood education programs and to guide
28 program improvement, professional development opportunities, qualifications for early
29 childhood educators, and incremental development of a statewide system of voluntary and
30 affordable early childhood education with options available for children and families in all
31 communities.