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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATORS WIELECHOWSKI, Therriault, Kookesh, Dyson, Thomas, Wagoner, Stevens, Bunde, Olson, Elton, McGuire, Wilken, Huggins, Ellis, Stedman, Hoffman, Green, Davis

REPRESENTATIVES Lynn, Johnson, Kerttula, Fairclough, Buch, Gardner, Olson, Dahlstrom, Ramras, Doogan, Roses, Gara, Hawker, Holmes

Introduced: 5/9/07

Referred: Health, Education and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

- 1 **Supporting federal funding for veterans' health care and urging the United States**
- 2 **Congress to ensure adequate funding for veterans' health care.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Veterans Affairs provides medical care
5 for veterans who have risked their lives to protect the security of the nation; and

6 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Veterans Affairs has the largest
7 integrated health care system in the United States; and

8 **WHEREAS** the missions of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs include
9 providing health care to veterans, educating and training health care personnel, conducting
10 medical research, serving as backup to the United States Department of Defense, and
11 supporting communities in times of crisis; and

12 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Veterans Affairs provides a wide range
13 of specialized services to meet the unique needs of veterans, including treatment and care for
14 spinal cord injury, blindness, traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder, amputation
15 injuries, mental health and substance abuse, and conditions requiring long-term care; and

16 **WHEREAS** federal discretionary funding for veterans' health care is controlled by the

1 executive branch and Congress through the budget and appropriation process; and

2 **WHEREAS** the United States Governmental Accountability Office report in 2005
3 highlighted the lack of resources and staffing available to the United States Veterans
4 Administration for processing an increasing backlog of veterans' claims; and

5 **WHEREAS** discretionary funding for the United States Department of Veterans
6 Affairs lags behind both medical inflation and the increased demands for services; for
7 example, the enrollment for veterans' health care increased 134 percent between fiscal years
8 1996 and 2004, but funding only increased 34 percent during the same period when adjusted
9 to 1996 dollars; and

10 **WHEREAS** former United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi has
11 publicly stated that the United States Department of Veterans Affairs has been struggling to
12 provide health care to the rapidly rising number of veterans who require health care;

13 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature expresses its profound gratitude
14 for the sacrifices made by veterans who suffer from medical or mental problems resulting
15 from injuries that occurred while serving in the United States Armed Forces; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
17 Congress to ensure adequate funding for veterans' health care.

18 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable George W. Bush, President
19 of the United States; the Honorable Richard B. Cheney, Vice-President of the United States
20 and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable R. James Nicholson, United States Secretary
21 of Veterans Affairs; and the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S.
22 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
23 Delegation in Congress; and to all other members of the 110th United States Congress.