

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES GUTTENBERG, Kawasaki, Salmon, Kerttula, Gruenberg, Cissna. Wilson

Introduced: 1/30/09

Referred: House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs, State Affairs, Health and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Congress to improve health care for veterans.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** the Veterans Health Administration in the United States Department of
4 Veterans Affairs, the gateway to veterans' health care, is backlogged because of inadequate
5 resources; and

6 **WHEREAS** the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform is composed of
7 the American Legion, AMVETS, Blinded Veterans Association, Disabled American
8 Veterans, Jewish War Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of
9 America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America; and

10 **WHEREAS** the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform has found the
11 current funding mechanism for veterans' health care to be unreliable and vulnerable to
12 political posturing, cost cutting, and budget gimmickry; and

13 **WHEREAS** the number of veterans increases every day as members of the military
14 return from overseas and re-enter civilian life; and

15 **WHEREAS** the medical needs of returning veterans, especially those suffering from
16 traumatic brain injury and other combat-related psychological injuries, must be met; and

1 **WHEREAS** the Veterans Affairs Healthcare System facility in Anchorage and the
2 Veterans Affairs Community-based Outpatient Clinics in Fort Wainwright and Kenai provide
3 outpatient services for Alaska's veterans, but Alaska remains one of three states that does not
4 have a veterans' hospital that provides acute care inpatient services; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform Act of 2008, introduced in the
6 110th Congress, allows for a two-fiscal-year budget authority for veterans' health care
7 programs and requires the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the
8 adequacy and accuracy of baseline model projections for veterans' health care expenditures of
9 the United States Department of Veterans Affairs; and

10 **WHEREAS** the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform endorses the
11 Veterans Health Care Budget Reform Act of 2008;

12 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
13 Congress to provide adequate funding and resources to enable the Veterans Health
14 Administration to properly care for the health care needs of all veterans by adopting a method
15 similar to that proposed in the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform Act of 2008; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
17 Congress to provide the United States Department of Veterans Affairs with sufficient, timely,
18 and predictable funding for veterans' health care programs; and be it

19 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
20 Congress to increase funding for research into traumatic brain injuries; and be it

21 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
22 Congress to encourage the Veterans Health Administration to improve its electronic claims
23 filing process and its ability to use information contained in military records; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
25 Congress to establish veterans' hospitals in those states that do not have veterans' hospitals;
26 and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the United
28 States Department of Veterans Affairs to create a special health pass or "heroes health card"
29 to provide veterans with health care in local communities by coordinating care provided by
30 local doctors and community health care facilities with care provided by military doctors and
31 medical facilities.

1 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
2 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and
3 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Robert C. Byrd, President Pro Tempore of the
4 U.S. Senate; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the
5 Honorable Daniel Akaka, Chair of the U.S. Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs; the
6 Honorable Bob Filner, Chair of the U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs; the
7 Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs; the Honorable
8 Michael B. Donley, United States Secretary of the Air Force; the Honorable Pete Geren,
9 United States Secretary of the Army; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable
10 Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of
11 the Alaska delegation in Congress.