

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 26

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES KERTTULA, Miller

Introduced: 2/22/12

Referred: Health and Social Services, Judiciary

A RESOLUTION

1 **Designating January 21 - 25, 2013, as Reproductive Rights Awareness Week.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** women make up more than half of the population of the United States;
4 and

5 **WHEREAS** women who plan their pregnancies are more likely to seek prenatal care,
6 improving their own health and the health of their children; and

7 **WHEREAS** the United States ranks 30th in the world in the rate of maternal mortality
8 and has one of the highest rates of maternal mortality among all developed nations; and

9 **WHEREAS** family planning services improve health care outcomes and wellness for
10 women and families; and

11 **WHEREAS** access to family planning is directly linked to declines in maternal and
12 infant mortality rates, and women who do not receive prenatal care are three to four times
13 more likely to die after a live birth than women who have received even minimal prenatal
14 care; and

15 **WHEREAS** contraception enables a woman to prevent unintended pregnancy and to
16 plan for pregnancy when she wants to have a child; and

1 **WHEREAS** publicly funded contraceptive services and supplies prevent nearly
2 2,000,000 unintended pregnancies each year in the United States; and

3 **WHEREAS** nearly half of all unintended pregnancies end in abortion, and abortion
4 rates in the United States increase during times when contraception is less accessible to low-
5 income women; and

6 **WHEREAS** the United States has one of the highest rates of unintended pregnancy
7 among the world's developed nations, half of all the pregnancies in the United States are
8 unintended, and half of unintended pregnancies occur in women who are not using
9 contraceptives; and

10 **WHEREAS**, in addition to the primary purpose of allowing women to plan and
11 prepare for pregnancy, other health benefits of contraception include reduced risk of
12 endometrial and ovarian cancers, ectopic pregnancy, iron deficiency anemia related to heavy
13 menstruation, osteoporosis, ovarian cysts, and pelvic inflammatory disease; and

14 **WHEREAS** racial and ethnic health disparities, including disparities in rates of
15 contraception usage, unintended pregnancies, maternal mortality, and sexually transmitted
16 infections, are particularly pronounced in reproductive health, and those disparities reveal
17 significant barriers to access to sexual health care, including contraception, and to medical
18 care, and medically accurate sexuality education;

19 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature designates January 21 - 25,
20 2013, as Reproductive Rights Awareness Week and encourages public awareness of,
21 conversation on, and support for reproductive rights and justice.