

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 26, 2014

1:35 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Bert Stedman, Chair  
Senator Peter Micciche, Vice Chair  
Senator Kevin Meyer  
Senator Johnny Ellis

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Pete Kelly

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 13

Urging the governor to establish and support programs designed to eradicate the occurrence of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder from the state.

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 14

Relating to health and social service best practice models and identifying citizen networks to achieve solutions to health and social problems in the state.

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SCR 13

SHORT TITLE: FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) KELLY

02/07/14	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/07/14	(S)	HSS
02/26/14	(S)	HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SCR 14

SHORT TITLE: H&SS REGIONAL BEST PRACTICE MODELS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) KELLY

02/07/14	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
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02/07/14 (S) HSS  
02/26/14 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

HEATHER SHADDUCK, Staff  
Senator Pete Kelly  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented SCR 13 on behalf of the sponsor.

ARLENE BRISCOE, Member  
Alaska Nurses Association  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SCR 13.

RYAN RAY, Staff  
Senator Pete Kelly  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented SCR 14 on behalf of the sponsor.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

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**CHAIR BERT STEDMAN** called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Micciche, Meyer, Ellis, and Chair Stedman.

**SCR 13-FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDERS**

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CHAIR STEDMAN announced that the first order of business would be SCR 13.

HEATHER SHADDUCK, Staff, Senator Pete Kelly, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented SCR 13 on behalf of the sponsor.

CHAIR STEDMAN noted it is the first hearing on SCR 13. He said today the committee would hear from the sponsor, take public testimony, and set the bill aside.

MS. SHADDUCK referred to backup materials in members' packets.

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MS. SHADDUCK explained that the resolution was a product of last year's mental health overview in the Senate Finance Committee. The focus of that presentation was narrowed down to Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder (FASD) in the form of SCR 13. She pointed out that FASD is preventable and this resolution would address prevention.

She provided background information regarding FASD. Each child born with FASD costs the state between \$850,000 and \$4.2 million. She noted the numbers were provided by the Department of Health and Social Services. Currently, there are 112.9 children born with FASD for every 10,000 live births. She stressed the high cost of those children to the state and the services they may require.

MS. SHADDUCK related that 90 percent of women do not drink when they know they are pregnant. The focus of the resolution is on the other 10 percent. It hopes to raise a conversation. She showed the cover of the Anchorage Daily News on Sunday, February, 2014. The topic is raising the public awareness and the conversation.

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MS. SHADDUCK said the resolution hopes to change the hearts and minds of Alaskans and to eradicate FASD. It calls upon the Governor to establish and support programs designed to eradicate the occurrence of FASD and increase rapid screening, the first tool in a lengthy diagnosis.

She said the final action item in the resolution encourages the Governor to take action to expand residential substance abuse treatment services for women who are pregnant and to explore partnerships to prioritize the admission of pregnant women into homes operated by Indian Health Services.

CHAIR STEDMAN noted one zero fiscal note from the legislature.

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ARLENE BRISCOE, Member, Alaska Nurses Association, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SCR 13. She related that nurses daily see the devastation of alcohol and drug abuse to patients, their families, and to society. She described the unfortunate effects of alcohol and drugs on infants and children.

CHAIR STEDMAN closed public testimony.

MS. SHADDUCK noted that many people have stories about the human tragedy of FASD.

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CHAIR STEDMAN held SCR 13 in committee.

#### **SCR 14-H&SS REGIONAL BEST PRACTICE MODELS**

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CHAIR STEDMAN announced that the final order of business would be SCR 14. He said that the committee would hear from the sponsor, take public testimony, and set the bill aside.

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RYAN RAY, Staff, Senator Pete Kelly, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented SCR 14 on behalf of the sponsor. He said as an Alaskan, he believes that it is the most beautiful of states. However, Alaska continues to struggle with some of the most severe rates of social ills. Alaska leads the states in the rates of suicides, forcible rape, alcohol-related deaths, domestic violence, and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). He said that SCR 14 calls for the development of a grass roots community-based effort to create positive social norms and institute regional best practice models addressing Alaska's social challenges.

He shared statistics related to the cost of those social ills. He said FASD costs the state over \$100 million every year. According to the McDowell Group Report, the economic impact of alcohol and drug abuse was over \$1.2 billion a year in 2010. The report that came out in 2005 reported the cost to be \$738 million, which shows that the problem is growing at a rate of \$66 million a year. He called this "social train" that cannot stop, unacceptable.

MR. RAY explained that SCR 14 establishes an on-the-ground strategy for addressing Alaska's social challenges by accomplishing two things. The first is identifying and empowering "natural helpers," community leaders who are making a difference. The second step is to bring these natural helpers together to have a conversation, find solutions, and develop best practice models to address social issues. Best practice models can be shared with other communities. He said the goal is to come back to the state with best practice models and develop a strategic approach for spending and accountability measures.

He related that SCR 14 resolves four things. First, it encourages the identification and development of a citizen network involving natural helpers from the community. Second, the citizen networks will participate in the creation of a positive community and social norm related to the prevention of FASD, as well as other challenges. Third, it encourages the development of regional best practice models addressing the state's critical health and social challenges. Fourth, it encourages the Governor to support the development and usage of the regional best practice models in an effort to establish more effective and cost-efficient methods of addressing the state's critical health and social challenges.

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MR. RAY referred to a legislative research report on the public funding of programs in Alaska. From FY 2003 to FY 2012 over \$500 million in public funding was spent addressing health and social issues. The hope is that SCR 14 will provide the strategy and infrastructure to develop a community-based ground floor solution.

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CHAIR STEDMAN noted one zero fiscal note from the legislature.

CHAIR STEDMAN opened public testimony. Seeing no one interested in testifying, he closed public testimony.

MR. RAY thanked the committee for hearing the resolution.

CHAIR STEDMAN held SCR 14 in committee.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Stedman adjourned the Health and Social Services Committee at 1:53 p.m.