

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 17

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATORS TOBIN, Dunbar, Gray-Jackson, Hughes, Wielechowski, Kawasaki, Claman

REPRESENTATIVE Armstrong

Introduced: 2/19/24

Referred: Education

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Congress to extend the deadline for the state to obligate**
2 **American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief - Homeless**
3 **Children and Youth funds.**

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

5 **WHEREAS** child and youth homelessness is a growing problem throughout the state,
6 increasing 14 percent since the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic began; and

7 **WHEREAS** child and youth homelessness affects over 3,500 students in pre-
8 kindergarten through grade 12 in the state; and

9 **WHEREAS** homelessness among children and youth often occurs concurrently with
10 deep poverty, low parental educational achievement, unemployment, substance use disorders,
11 mental health disorders, lack of affordable housing, and family conflict; and

12 **WHEREAS** homelessness creates unique barriers in attending and succeeding in
13 school, leading to significantly higher rates of absenteeism and students who drop out of
14 school; and

15 **WHEREAS** lack of a high school diploma or a general educational development

1 diploma is the single greatest risk factor for homelessness in adulthood, making education a
2 critical intervention in preventing future homelessness; and

3 **WHEREAS**, led by Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, the United States
4 Congress passed a bipartisan amendment to the American Rescue Plan Act; and

5 **WHEREAS** that amendment made specific funding available to help schools identify,
6 and to support the identification, enrollment, and school participation of, children and youth
7 experiencing homelessness, including through wraparound services; and

8 **WHEREAS** that specific funding is known as the American Rescue Plan Homeless
9 Children and Youth (ARP-HCY) funds; and

10 **WHEREAS** the state later received \$2,300,000 in ARP-HCY funds, which can be
11 used flexibly to meet a wide range of needs and remove barriers to enrollment, attendance,
12 and success; and

13 **WHEREAS** 40 percent of the \$2,300,000 ARP-HCY funds remain available to the
14 state, according to publicly available federal data; and

15 **WHEREAS** ARP-HCY funds must be obligated by September 30, 2024, requiring
16 schools to spend rapidly rather than effectively and preventing schools from meeting needs as
17 they arise; and

18 **WHEREAS** a one-year extension of the deadline for the state to obligate ARP-HCY
19 funds would allow schools and the state Department of Education and Early Development to
20 use ARP-HCY funds more impactfully and equitably;

21 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature calls on the United States
22 Congress to extend, through at least September 2025, the deadline for the state to obligate
23 ARP-HCY funds; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature calls on Senators Lisa
25 Murkowski and Dan Sullivan and Representative Mary Peltola to lead efforts to extend that
26 deadline and continue to be champions for homeless children and youth in the state.

27 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the
28 Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Mary Peltola, U.S. Representative,
29 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.