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BY FOURCHOT, SUND, NAVARRE,
 DAVIDSON, ELLIS, GRUSSENDORF,
 BOYER, BROWN, SWACKHAMMER,
 GRUENBERG AND HOFFMAN

1 IN THE HOUSE

2 HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 2

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 Relating to the University of Alaska
 6 community college system.

7 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

8 WHEREAS the community colleges in the state contribute tremendously to
 9 the educational and economic well-being of the state and its residents; and

10 WHEREAS the missions of the community colleges are distinct in the
 11 programs they provide for career training and higher education; and

12 WHEREAS community colleges meet the local needs in their particular
 13 communities and regions for specific higher education and maintain open-
 14 door admissions; and

15 WHEREAS the community colleges offer community service courses and
 16 activities as well as vocational and technical training; and

17 WHEREAS Alaska's community colleges are essential human development
 18 agencies and integral parts of their communities; and

19 WHEREAS the community colleges are the most cost-efficient and produc-
 20 tive education units in the state; and

21 WHEREAS the legislature during territorial days established community
 22 colleges in the state through the Community College Act; and

23 WHEREAS the legislature, since 1970, has been supportive of legisla-
 24 tion to strengthen and develop the unique mission of community colleges;
 25 and

26 WHEREAS the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education has supported
 27 in its studies and reports the distinct community college mission; and

28 WHEREAS a restructuring of the University of Alaska as proposed by
 29 President Donald O'Dowd diminishes the mission and goals of the community

1 colleges; and

2 WHEREAS the university plan does not clearly preserve the identity,
3 structure, or budget essential to the maintenance of the state community
4 colleges; and

5 WHEREAS the proposed merger of the Anchorage, Mat-Su Valley, Kenai
6 Peninsula, Kodiak, and Prince William Sound Community Colleges and their
7 extension centers and the University of Alaska - Anchorage into a single
8 new Anchorage institution would significantly reduce citizen involvement,
9 diminish educational opportunity, and jeopardize accreditation standards;
10 and

11 WHEREAS the proposed merger of the Tanana Valley, Kuskokwim, Kotzebue,
12 and Northwest Community Colleges and their extension programs into a single
13 entity within the University of Alaska - Fairbanks would significantly
14 reduce citizen involvement, diminish educational opportunity, and jeopar-
15 dize accreditation standards; and

16 WHEREAS the proposed merger of the University of Alaska - Juneau with
17 the Ketchikan, Sitka, and Juneau-Douglas Community Colleges and their
18 extension programs into a single new Juneau institution would significantly
19 reduce citizen involvement, diminish educational opportunity for students,
20 and jeopardize accreditation standards; and

21 WHEREAS specific details of the restructure are as yet undetermined
22 and it is not clear that an open-admissions policy and other policies
23 essential to the continuation of the mission of community colleges would be
24 maintained; and

25 WHEREAS continued budget cuts could lead to further reduction in the
26 availability of nondegree courses; and

27 WHEREAS merging community colleges into four-year schools could poten-
28 tially lead to students from community colleges competing for seats in
29 courses with university students; and

1 WHEREAS Alaska citizens have made it clear that they want their commu-
2 nity colleges preserved and strengthened;

3 WHEREAS public opposition to the reorganization has been evidenced by
4 public testimony, numerous editorials, resolutions adopted by local govern-
5 ment bodies, and both private and public interest groups; and

6 WHEREAS the legislature believes that cost savings are obtainable and
7 needed in the current University of Alaska system; and

8 WHEREAS the legislature believes there are reasonable and meaningful
9 alternatives to the proposed restructuring of the state's postsecondary
10 education system that would effect significant cost savings and would not
11 adversely affect the unique missions of either the community colleges or
12 four-year institutions;

13 BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives respectfully requests
14 the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska to reconsider the proposal
15 to restructure the University of Alaska and examine alternatives that would
16 preserve the unique goals and functions of the community college system
17 within the University of Alaska's structure.

18 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the members of the Board of
19 Regents of the University of Alaska; and to Donald O'Dowd, President of the
20 University of Alaska.