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1 IN THE SENATE

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SENATE BILL NO. 379

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act providing for the establishment of the Insti-

7 tute for Circumpolar Health Studies within the Uni-

8 versity of Alaska."

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

10 * Section 1. FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

11 (1) the severe health problems of depression, alcoholism, and
12 suicide are endemic to Alaska;

13 (2) millions of dollars and countless expenditures of energy and
14 time have been spent attempting to solve or at least adequately address
15 these problems in the state, but that major successes have not been
16 achieved and that a new approach to these problems is needed;

17 (3) other circumpolar areas and nations, including Canada,
18 Siberia, Greenland, and Scandinavia, also suffer from these problems, but
19 that Alaska has failed to exchange research and information with these
20 countries;

21 (4) the establishment of an Institute for Circumpolar Health
22 Studies within the University of Alaska would be a major new step toward
23 addressing and finding solutions to the health problems of Alaskans and
24 inhabitants of other circumpolar regions;

25 (5) establishment of the institute is a concept strongly sup-
26 ported by the International Union for Circumpolar Health and the American
27 Public Health Association's national Arctic health science policy;

28 (6) Alaska is an especially appropriate location for such an
29 institute because the state represents the only presence of the United

1 States in the circumpolar region; and

2 (7) establishment of the institute will result in direct health
3 benefits for every Alaskan, economic advantages and increased prestige for
4 the state and the university, and improved opportunities for training and
5 academic study in the state.

6 * Sec. 2. AS 14.40 is amended by adding a new section to read:

7 Sec. 14.40.088. ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTE FOR CIRCUMPOLAR
8 HEALTH STUDIES. (a) The University of Alaska shall establish an
9 Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies in an appropriate unit of the
10 university at its Anchorage campus. The institute shall consist of a
11 research and instruction branch and an administration and information
12 branch.

13 (b) The institute shall

14 (1) encourage international cooperation, especially among
15 circumpolar nations, with regard to research, studies, information,
16 and instruction relating to circumpolar health issues;

17 (2) serve as a center for the collection and exchange of
18 information and medical and health sciences data relating to circum-
19 polar health issues;

20 (3) provide a mechanism for communication and cooperation
21 between the university and the commissioner of health and social
22 services in addressing the needs of Alaskans for health care services,
23 opportunities for education in medical and health sciences, and other
24 mutual concerns of the university and the department; and

25 (4) conduct research and provide instruction and other
26 services consistent with the mission and goals of the University of
27 Alaska.