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1 IN THE SENATE

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SENATE BILL NO. 379(efd add)

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IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

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FIFTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

A BILL

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For an Act entitled: "An Act providing for the establishment of the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies within the University of Alaska; and providing for an effective date."

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

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* Section 1. FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

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

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

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

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

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

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(6) Alaska is an especially appropriate location for such an

1 institute because the state represents the only presence of the United
2 States in the circumpolar region; and

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

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

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

14 (b) The institute shall

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

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

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

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

29 * Sec. 2. This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).