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1 IN THE SENATE

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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 61

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IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

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SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

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Relating to persons immigrating to and

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requesting asylum in the United States.

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

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WHEREAS the Eastern Bloc countries of Hungary, Poland, East Germany,

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the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and

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Romania are moving away from communism towards democracy; and

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WHEREAS some individuals from these countries have requested political

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asylum and freedom in the United States; and

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WHEREAS the change from communism towards democracy in the Eastern

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Bloc countries is being considered by the Immigration and Naturalization

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Service when it evaluates the political asylum applications of persons from

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the Eastern Bloc countries, and this approach may prevent some persons from

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receiving asylum in the United States because they may not be considered to

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need political asylum any more; and

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WHEREAS elements of the military, police, and leadership in some of

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the Eastern Bloc countries still remain under the control of communist

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authorities and, if applications for political asylum from these countries

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are denied, the applicants fear persecution by the communist-controlled

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elements after they are deported from the United States; and

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WHEREAS, although the Alaska State Legislature supports glasnost and

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perestroika, it recognizes that the governments of the Eastern Bloc coun-

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tries will be unstable until the political changes are complete; and

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WHEREAS the United States is a strong supporter of human rights and

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was founded on the principle of the individual's right to life, liberty,

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and the pursuit of happiness; and

1 WHEREAS Alaska has benefited from the immigrants who have already come
2 to the state; and

3 WHEREAS Alaska can provide a sanctuary for persons who seek political
4 asylum in the United States;

5 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature

6 (1) declares that it welcomes immigrants from foreign countries
7 and is willing to serve as a sanctuary for persons who are seeking polit-
8 ical asylum in the United States; and

9 (2) urges the United States Immigration and Naturalization
10 Service

11 (A) not to use the recent political changes in the Eastern
12 Bloc countries

13 (1) to deny political asylum to persons from those
14 countries, even if an application for asylum was submitted before
15 the changes began; or

16 (ii) to revoke the political asylum already granted to
17 persons from those countries;

18 (B) to grant political asylum on humanitarian grounds to
19 each person who is on United States soil, who has submitted an appli-
20 cation for political asylum in the United States, and who would have
21 been eligible for asylum except for the recent political changes in
22 the Eastern Bloc countries.

23 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Gene McNary,
24 Commissioner-Designate of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service;
25 and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S.
26 Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the
27 Alaska delegation in Congress.