

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 14
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Introduced: 5/8/92

Referred: Health, Education & Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the establishment of an interagency task force on adult protective services.

2 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

3 WHEREAS the Department of Health and Social Services, at the direction of the legislature, is
4 preparing to apply to the federal government for Medicaid waivers and options for home and community
5 based services that will significantly affect the delivery of long-term care to elderly and disabled adults;
6 and

7 WHEREAS the number of social worker positions available in the entire state for prevention,
8 intervention, and investigation of abuse and exploitation of the elderly has declined from 11 to three and
9 one-half in the past decade; and

10 WHEREAS the responsibility for providing services to elderly and disabled adults is spread over
11 nine separate divisions and three separate departments of state government; and

12 WHEREAS it is commonly acknowledged that the entire spectrum of adult protective services
13 in the state has been inadequately funded, beginning with the 1982 Elder Abuse Reporting Act, that
14 passed with no funding to implement its well-conceived provisions and protections; and

15 WHEREAS the state has experienced unprecedented growth of 93.7 percent in the 65 and older
16 population in the past decade, four times the national average, with some areas of the state exceeding
17 155 percent growth in this age bracket over that time period; and

1 **WHEREAS** the Department of Health and Social Services has requested the legislature, the
2 Department of Public Safety's Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Department of
3 Administration's Older Alaskans Commission, and the Department of Health and Social Services to
4 participate in a task force to address the shortcomings in adult protective services and explore the
5 development of a comprehensive program of service delivery to elderly and disabled adults; and

6 **WHEREAS** there is not a central phone number to call or one place to go for senior citizens and
7 disabled adults to acquire comprehensive information about the availability of services for them; and

8 **WHEREAS** there has developed an attitude and sense of hopelessness among some persons in
9 the state that reports of abuse are not adequately responded to and consequently not worth the effort of
10 reporting; and

11 **WHEREAS** there is not a central management information system in the state with the capacity
12 to monitor reports of harm made to the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Health and
13 Social Services, the number of cases of abuse prosecuted in the Alaska court system, the number of
14 clients receiving services, the number of needy individuals presently unserved or underserved, or the total
15 amount of money expended for these services, and this lack results in ill-informed decision making;

16 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the House of Representatives respectfully requests the Governor to
17 direct the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Public Safety, and the
18 Department of Administration to convene an interagency task force on adult protective services to

19 (1) analyze the overlapping and different jurisdictions of the departments for
20 investigating, licensing, and services related to disabled adults and senior citizens who could be victims
21 of neglect or abuse;

22 (2) propose statutory and regulatory or procedural changes that would better serve adult
23 victims of abuse while making the best use of public resources;

24 (3) analyze what new resources, if any, are needed to provide effective and
25 comprehensive services to victims of abuse who are elderly or disabled adults; and

26 (4) provide a report to the legislature concerning the task force's findings and
27 recommendations by February 15, 1993.