7-LS1047\A

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 21

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR COLLINS

Introduced: 3/27/91
Referred: L&C, Finance

A RESOLUTION

Establishing a Task Force on Safety in the Workplace.

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

WHEREAS the social and economic consequences of workplace injuries are enormous, estimated by the National Safety Council to have been $42,400,000,000 in 1987 nationwide; and

WHEREAS many Alaskans are involved in industries that traditionally have high accident rates; and

WHEREAS the state has one of the highest workplace accident rates of any state and has the highest fatality rate of any state attributable to accidents in the workplace, approximately 34 fatalities per 100,000 workers; and

WHEREAS for over 10 years approximately one out of every 11 Alaskan workers in private industry suffered a recordable injury or illness during employment; and

WHEREAS in the state the total estimated lost workdays due to job related injury or illness in the private sector in 1987 amounted to the equivalent of a full year of work for 337 employees at a cost equal to nearly $9,000,000, and in the public sector total estimated lost work days amounted to the equivalent of 58 employee years at a cost equal to approximately $1,800,000; and

WHEREAS occupational injuries and illnesses impose a real burden upon the Alaskan economy

since, for the worker, being absent from work due to an accident may represent a significant wage loss and, for the employer, accidents result in lost production time, increased operating costs from higher insurance premiums, and equipment damage; and

WHEREAS the best way to control these costs is through an effective safety program; and

WHEREAS when the United States Congress passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) in 1970 it was to "assure . . . so far as possible, every working man and woman in the Nation safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve our human resources"; and

WHEREAS despite the lofty objective of OSHA the tragic toll taken in the workplace in lives and health continues; and

WHEREAS the Americans with Disabilities Act, passed by the Congress last year, sets out standards that the state must address; and

WHEREAS in the state many safety standards have not been updated since they were originally developed and laws related to safety standards are in need of revision; and

WHEREAS a unified effort is needed to update safety standards with input coming from management and labor;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that the Task Force on Safety in the Workplace is established with the primary purpose of creating a model workplace safety program for the state with emphasis on prevention of injuries in the workplace, and that in creating the program the task force may

(1) examine the historical workplace safety record of the state;

(2) determine the causes for the state's high rate of injuries;

(3) review the state's current workplace safety laws and OSHA;

(4) consult with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health and with the American National Standards Institute;

(5) propose legislation to implement the program; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, one of whom shall be designated by the president as co-chair;

(2) two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, one of whom shall be designated by the speaker as co-chair;

(3) one employee of the Department of Labor appointed by the Governor;

(4) one person who represents management, one person who represents labor, one safety

engineer, one medical professional, and one member of the Alaska Safety Advisory Council, all of whom are appointed by the members listed in (1) - (3) of this resolve;

(5) at the option of the members listed in (1) - (4) of this resolve and appointed by them, one person who represents the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that, within funds made available for the purpose, the task force may hire staff, contract for services under the procurement procedures adopted by the Alaska Legislative Council with approval of the council, and cover other expenses; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the legislature by the day of the convening of the First Regular Session of the Eighteenth Alaska State Legislature, and that the task force is terminated on that same day at 11:59 p.m.