

SJR

35



3200 PROVIDENCE DRIVE
P.O. BOX 196604
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
99519-6604

Tel 907 562-2211

February 16, 1998

The Honorable Robin Taylor
Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capital
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Support for Senate Joint Resolution 35

Dear Senator Taylor:

On behalf of the Providence Health System, I wish to express our strong support for Senate Joint Resolution 35 (SJR35), which would address an issue recently raised by the State Supreme Court regarding the forced provision of abortion in this state.

The Providence Health System has and will continue to support the right of individuals and organizations to opt out of service that they find objectionable. We respect the beliefs and conscience of others. While we clearly make known our values, we do not seek to impose our values on others nor do we want others' values imposed on us.

SJR35 will ensure that this kind of mutual respect will continue to exist with regard to the performance of abortion. The Alaska State Supreme Court decision identified a need for recognition of this mutual respect of choice to be added to the actual language of the state constitution. Without SJR35, the Court found that the state law, which currently allows hospitals a freedom of choice, is unconstitutional "as applied to quasi-public hospitals." Yet, the definition given of "quasi-public hospitals" is so broad that it could apply to every single hospital in the state of Alaska. The Court, in essence, found that without the language of SJR35 actually being in the constitution, there could be a giant leap in this state from recognition of a right to choose to be involved in abortion to a mandate to participate in abortion services.

We are very thankful that Senator Miller has introduced SJR35 and strongly encourage you to vote for its passage. If you have questions, please contact us at Providence Alaska Medical Center by calling (907) 261-5059. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gene L. O'Hara, Administrator
Providence Alaska Medical Center

S JUD

80290

~~Sister Kaye Belcher Prov. Health SJR35~~

~~Robert Flint Arch F. Hensley SJR35~~

~~Ken Jacobus SJR35~~

~~Jennifer Rudinger SJR35~~

Tai Sorensen
Johnson Nissan/Jeep SB254

Ken Jacobus SB254