

**SCR**

**17**

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

**Session**  
State Capitol Building, Room 125  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Phone (907) 465-2995  
Fax (907) 465-6592

**Interim**  
716 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 130  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501  
Phone (907) 269-0250  
Fax (907) 269-0249



**Chair**  
Senate State Affairs  
Administrative Regulation Review

**Member**  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
Senate Resources Committee

## SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE

### SPONSOR STATEMENT

#### SCR 170 – BRAIN INJURY AWARENESS MONTH: MARCH 2008

SCR 17 aims to raise awareness about Traumatic Brain Injuries and their impact to the state.

Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is damage to the brain that results when the head is hit, strikes a stationary object, or is violently shaken. Alaska is the number one state per capita for brain injuries and TBI is one of the leading causes of death of young people in the state. Over 800 TBIs are reported annually and an estimated 12,000 Alaskans have suffered a TBI.

These injuries are often life altering and consequently place a tremendous strain on victims and their families. Many victims often live with permanent disabilities, and the tragedy of TBI is exacerbated by the fact that most TBIs are preventable.

The Brain Injury Association of America recognizes March of each year as Brain Injury Awareness Month; this resolution would comport with national recognition by making March 2008 Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month in Alaska.

Underscoring the importance of raising TBI awareness is the fact that the number of Alaskans with TBIs is on the rise. TBIs are one of the most common injuries incurred in military combat today and as injured military personnel return home to Alaska, the rate of TBIs is increasing sharply with no signs of slowing.

According to a task force on traumatic brain injury created by the Army Surgeon General, as many as one in five U.S. combat troops who fought in Iraq or Afghanistan leave with signs they may have had a TBI. 60-67% of injured US soldiers sent from Iraq to Walter Reed Army Medical Center have a TBI from blasts, severe falls, and motor vehicle accidents. 83% of wounded Marines treated at the National Naval Medical Center have some form of temporary or permanent brain damage.

What this is all adds up to is increasing rates of TBI in Alaska and another reason in a long list of very good reasons to bring attention to this silent epidemic. So please join us in support of brain injury awareness, prevention, and treatment by passing SCR 17.