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ALASKA NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH CORPS**ChalleNGe Program****Camp Carroll Training Site****P.O. Box 5727****Fort Richardson, Alaska 99505****(907) 384-6015/6017 or Toll Free 800-797-2267**

13 February 1996

Rep. Tom Brice
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Rep. Brice;

Please accept my thanks for your support of the Alaska National Guard Youth Corps ChalleNGe Program. As you are aware, the program is designed to provide "at-risk" 16-18 year-old Alaskans with the opportunity to earn a general educational development (GED) certificate, gain some basic skills training, and learn important life skills.

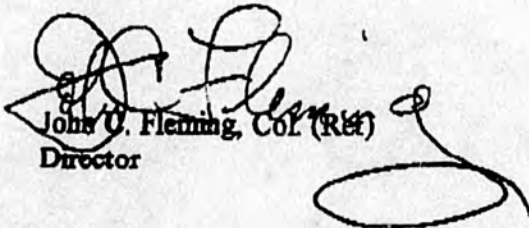
The Alaska ChalleNGe Program will graduate its fourth class, Class 95-2 this coming Friday morning. The young men and women who will cross the stage of the Fort Richardson post theater have completed a demanding 22-week residence program, which will be followed by 12 months of one-on-one assistance and tracking.

We are proud to say that ChalleNGe Program graduates are doing very well. Through our post-residential tracking program we know that 85 percent of our graduates are either employed full-time, or are currently in academic or skills training. These graduates came to us with little hope of future success. None had completed high school programs. Many had troubled lives prior to entering our program. Statistically, most of these teenagers were headed for futures on welfare or, worse, in prison.

We are encouraged by your support for the ChalleNGe Program and the well-being of these successful Alaskan young adults. Your introduction of a joint resolution in support of our efforts on behalf of our students is truly appreciated.

If my staff or I may be of any assistance to you or your fellow legislators, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely;


John C. Fleming, Col. (Ret)
Director



Representative Tom Brice

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SPONSOR STATEMENT

HJR 47: Supporting continued federal funding of the Alaska National Guard Youth Corps ChalleNGe Program

The Alaska National Guard Youth Corps ChalleNGe program seeks to prevent "at-risk" youths, those who have left school without having completed a high school program, from entering society's correctional systems. According to national statistics, 80 per cent of those in federal prisons do not have high school diplomas or GED certificates.

The ChalleNGe program offers the opportunity for students to complete a GED program, or return to high school with new, positive skills and strengths which allow them to obtain a diploma in a traditional setting. Currently, 85 per cent of the ChalleNGe program graduates are fully employed or attending school. 136 students have graduated from the ChalleNGe program, with another 64 slated to graduate February 16, 1996.

It can cost between \$20,000 and \$50,000 per year to house a prisoner in Alaska. For a fraction of that cost, the ANG Youth Corps ChalleNGe program offers Alaska's at-risk youths the skills necessary to not only stay out of our jails, but to succeed in today's ever more complicated society. The ChalleNGe program is cost effective, utilizing \$2.9 (1996 program year) million in federal funding to provide opportunities to succeed to at-risk young people in Alaska. At \$20,000 per year, 136 inmates would cost Alaska \$2.72 million. According to the Department of Corrections, Alaska's approximate cost for a medium security prisoner is \$107 per day, or \$39,055 per year.

Through tough, structured military-style training, ChalleNGe program graduates receive the discipline and self-esteem needed to succeed. ChalleNGe program graduates tend to have a drive to succeed, become productive Alaskans, and serve as role models for other youths and adults. ChalleNGe program graduates are likely to stay off public assistance rolls. They are also likely to support their local economies, pay taxes, and contribute to the well-being of their communities.

Supporting continued funding of this program pays off far beyond its cost.

