

STATE OF ALASKA

THE LEGISLATURE

1990

Source

Legislative
Resolve No.

HCS CSSCR 38(HESS)

101



Establishing a task force on adolescent pregnancy and parenthood issues.

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

WHEREAS the United States has the highest adolescent pregnancy, abortion, and birth rates of any industrialized nation in the world; and

WHEREAS Alaska has the second highest adolescent pregnancy rate, the sixth highest adolescent abortion rate, and the ninth highest adolescent birth rate in the United States; and

WHEREAS the adolescent birth rate among Alaska Natives is more than double the national rate for all races and is increasing while other state and national rates are slowly decreasing; and

WHEREAS young women who have babies during adolescence are frequently unable to continue with school instruction and are, therefore, not well equipped with the kind of education and skills that will enable them to live without public assistance; and

WHEREAS it costs more than \$12,000 a year to provide basic public services like food, medical care, and essential living expenses to one needy adolescent parent with a child; and

WHEREAS it costs more than \$51,000,000 annually to support needy families of Alaska mothers who had their first babies when they were under the age of 20; and

WHEREAS the public and personal costs of pregnancy and parenthood of young men and women in the state should be addressed by a panel of persons who have the experience and knowledge to make recommendations for effective legislative and agency

action to reduce those costs;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that an Adolescent Pregnancy and Parenthood Task Force is established to

(1) gather additional evidence and testimony on the extent and effects of adolescent pregnancy and parenthood in Alaska;

(2) review options and recommend a statewide plan with guidelines for implementation to reduce the rate of adolescent pregnancy in Alaska;

(3) examine existing state and local programs and services in Alaska and in other states and recommend ways to improve the delivery of information and services for the prevention and medical treatment of adolescent pregnancy in Alaska;

(4) examine the relationship between the issues of adolescent pregnancy, alcohol and drug use by adolescents before and during pregnancy, and the effects of alcohol and drug use on the health of the parents and the child;

(5) recommend ways to inform children and young adults about the consequences of early parenthood, including information about child support obligations for both parents and their other rights and responsibilities; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is immediately authorized to begin work and shall consist of 15 members, as follows:

(1) three members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House;

(2) three members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate;

(3) the commissioners, or their designees, of the Departments of Health and Social Services, Community and Regional Affairs, and Education; and

(4) six members of the public appointed by the governor, including a business person, teenaged mother or pregnant teenager, school classroom teacher, representative of a Native health organization, representative of a religious organization, and health care provider; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be co-chaired by one legislative member from each house selected by the task force members of their respective houses, and that the task force shall hold public hearings related to its purposes as needed with at least one meeting held in each judicial district of the state; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force serve without compensation but are entitled to expenses and per diem as authorized under law for boards and commissions; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit to the legislature by January 21, 1991, its findings and recommendations on the issues surrounding adolescent pregnancy and parenthood in

Alaska, and that the task force is terminated upon the convening of the First Regular Session of the Seventeenth Alaska State Legislature; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force may contract for one staff person to assist it for the equivalent of seven months of full-time work.