

CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2(STA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered: 2/12/18

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES TARR, Spohnholz, Parish, Tuck, Gara, Drummond, Ortiz

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging Governor Bill Walker to join with the Alaska State Legislature to address the**
2 **presence of adverse childhood experiences and childhood trauma as factors for many**
3 **societal issues by establishing a statewide policy, supporting evidence-based programs,**
4 **and funding research for statewide solutions.**

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

6 **WHEREAS** nearly two-thirds of adults surveyed in the state report having
7 experienced adverse childhood experiences during childhood; and

8 **WHEREAS** adverse childhood experiences are traumatic experiences occurring
9 during childhood that may have a profound effect on a child's developing brain and body and
10 may result in poor health during the person's adulthood, including physical, emotional, and
11 sexual abuse, physical and emotional neglect, and household dysfunction, such as domestic
12 violence, separation or divorce involving household members, and substance abuse, untreated
13 mental illness, or incarceration of a household member; and

14 **WHEREAS** research over the last two decades in the evolving fields of neuroscience,
15 molecular biology, public health, genomics, and epigenetics suggests that experiences in the

1 first few years of life may influence the biology of the human body in ways that, in turn,
2 influence the person's physical and mental health over the person's lifetime; and

3 **WHEREAS** strong, frequent, or prolonged stress in childhood caused by adverse
4 childhood experiences can become toxic stress, which may affect the development of a child's
5 fundamental brain architecture and stress response systems; and

6 **WHEREAS** adverse childhood experience studies have also reported a strong
7 correlation between the number of adverse childhood experiences and a person's risk for
8 disease and negative health behaviors, including suicide attempts, cancer, ischemic heart
9 disease, diabetes, smoking, substance abuse, depression, obesity, unplanned pregnancies,
10 workplace absenteeism, lower educational achievement, and lower wages; and

11 **WHEREAS** approximately one in five adult Alaskans has experienced four or more
12 adverse childhood experiences; and

13 **WHEREAS**, according to data collected through the Behavioral Risk Factor
14 Surveillance System, when compared to an adult in the state with zero adverse childhood
15 experiences, an adult in the state with four or more adverse childhood experiences is 4.7 times
16 as likely to have ever been diagnosed with a depressive disorder, 4.2 times as likely to have
17 experienced hunger in the previous year, 2.9 times as likely to use a government food
18 program, 2.7 times as likely to be unable to work, 2.6 times as likely to use Medicaid, 2.6
19 times as likely to have not graduated from high school or received a general education
20 development diploma, 2.3 times as likely to be a current smoker, and 1.9 times as likely to be
21 a heavy drinker; and

22 **WHEREAS**, in research conducted outside the state, when compared to an adult with
23 zero adverse childhood experiences, an adult with four or more adverse childhood experiences
24 is 12.2 times as likely to attempt suicide, 10.3 times as likely to use injection drugs, 7.4 times
25 as likely to be an alcoholic, 2.4 times as likely to have a stroke, 2.2 times as likely to have
26 ischemic heart disease, twice as likely to have chronic pulmonary obstructive disease, 1.9
27 times as likely to have a type of cancer, and 1.6 times as likely to have diabetes; and

28 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Mental Health Board and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism
29 and Drug Abuse have estimated the direct and indirect cost to the state of adverse childhood
30 experiences in six categories (adult Medicaid, current smoking, diabetes, binge drinking,
31 arthritis, and obesity) to be approximately \$774,000,000 annually; and

1 **WHEREAS** the life expectancy of a person with six or more adverse childhood
 2 experiences is 20 years shorter than the life expectancy of a person with no adverse childhood
 3 experiences; and

4 **WHEREAS** early childhood offers a unique window of opportunity to prevent and
 5 mitigate the effects of adverse childhood experiences, toxic stress, and trauma on a child's
 6 brain and body; and

7 **WHEREAS** the emerging science and research on adverse childhood experiences,
 8 toxic stress, and childhood trauma have uncovered evidence of the burden of this growing
 9 public health crisis for the state with implications for the state's educational, juvenile justice,
 10 criminal justice, public health, public safety, labor, and commerce systems; and

11 **WHEREAS** Nobel-prize-winning economist James Heckman has found that high
 12 quality programs for disadvantaged children between birth and five years of age can deliver a
 13 13 percent annual return on investment realized through better outcomes in education, health,
 14 social behaviors, and employment; and

15 **WHEREAS** it is more effective and less costly to positively influence the architecture
 16 of a young child's developing brain than to attempt to correct poor learning, health, and
 17 behaviors later in life; and

18 **WHEREAS** early intervention and investment in early childhood years and effective,
 19 trauma-informed services and systems for people throughout the course of life are important
 20 strategies to achieve a lasting foundation for a more prosperous and sustainable state through
 21 investing in human capital;

22 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the policy decisions of the Alaska State Legislature
 23 acknowledge and take into account the principles of early childhood and youth brain
 24 development and, whenever possible, consider the concepts of early adversity, toxic stress,
 25 childhood trauma, and the promotion of resilience through protective relationships, supports,
 26 self-regulation, and services; and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that
 28 the Governor join with the Alaska State Legislature to address the presence of adverse
 29 childhood experiences and childhood trauma as factors for many societal issues by
 30 establishing a statewide policy, supporting evidence-based programs, and funding research for
 31 statewide solutions.