



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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No Child Left Behind

Ellis resolution clears Senate State Affairs committee

JUNEAU – Calls for changes to the federal No Child Left Behind Act gained strength today as Senate Joint Resolution 30, sponsored by Senate Democratic Leader Johnny Ellis (D-Anchorage), passed the Senate State Affairs Committee. The resolution asks Congress to make the Act more workable for states and school districts and to provide full funding.

“We are simply saying to Congress, ‘If you are going to set lofty goals, make sure you don’t create roadblocks to success. And by all means, provide all the money you say it will take,’” said Senator Ellis.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, appropriations have fallen \$27 billion short of what the No Child Left Behind Act authorizes. For 2005, the Bush administration has proposed \$10 billion less than what the act calls for.

The resolution stops short of calling for Alaska to opt out of the law, a step that would mean losing federal education money. According to Ellis, Alaska should work to make the law more flexible.

“The expressed intent of the law – to provide high quality educational opportunities to all students, especially those in historically underserved communities – sounds very noble. But in practice, the law has proven to be awkward and in some cases counterproductive,” said Ellis.

Alaska is not alone in speaking out about problems with the No Child Left Behind Act. States as diverse as Hawaii, Virginia and Utah have seen legislative efforts protesting the burdens placed on them by the act.

SJR 30 next goes to the Health, Education and Social Services Committee.

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