

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 11**

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**

**TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

**BY SENATORS ELTON, Olson, French**

**Introduced: 4/22/03**

**Referred: State Affairs, Health, Education and Social Services**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging continuation of the Governor's Children's Cabinet and applauding its past**  
2 **accomplishments.**

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

4 **WHEREAS** the Governor's Children's Cabinet was created in 1995 with the mission  
5 of ensuring that children's issues are always considered during top-level policy discussions;  
6 and

7 **WHEREAS** the children's cabinet was instrumental in bringing a cross-disciplinary  
8 approach to children's issues, integrating the Offices of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor,  
9 and the office of management and budget with the Departments of Public Safety, Education  
10 and Early Development, Corrections, Health and Social Services, and Law to address  
11 challenges facing Alaska children; and

12 **WHEREAS** this approach was extremely successful in administrative implementation  
13 of legislative enactments like welfare reform, school improvement, children's health care  
14 initiatives, improving child protection, and increasing adoption of foster kids; and

15 **WHEREAS** the children's cabinet helped develop pro-child policies like improving  
16 child care quality and availability, fighting youth smoking, preventing fetal alcohol syndrome,

1 hiring more state troopers, and expanding Head Start; and

2 **WHEREAS** the children's cabinet played a key role in adopting pro-child initiatives  
3 like Smart Start, that provided increased health care for the children of Alaska's working  
4 families, prevention programs to help break the cycle of abuse and neglect, and swift and  
5 forceful intervention when children are in peril; and

6 **WHEREAS** the Quality Schools Initiative, which continued the standards-based  
7 reforms of previous administrations, was a top priority of the children's cabinet; and

8 **WHEREAS** the Balloon Project, a children's cabinet initiative, has doubled the  
9 adoptions of children in state custody, helping 1400 children through adoption, guardianship,  
10 and family reunifications; and

11 **WHEREAS** the children's cabinet's relentless focus on safe, healthy, well-educated  
12 children will pay tremendous dividends to the state of Alaska today and into the future; and

13 **WHEREAS** Alaska's child injury and death rate has decreased 41 percent in recent  
14 years; and

15 **WHEREAS** youth smoking today is substantially lower than it was in 1994; and

16 **WHEREAS** the number of Alaskans receiving nutritious food and health screenings  
17 through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program is 60 percent higher today than it  
18 was in 1994; and

19 **WHEREAS** Alaska's teen birth rate has decreased from 70.9 births per 1000 teens in  
20 1991 to 48.8 births per 1000 teens in 2000, a 31 percent decline; and

21 **WHEREAS** Alaska's child protection efforts have improved dramatically from 1996  
22 when only 73 percent of reports of harm received by the Division of Family and Youth  
23 Services were responded to until 2002 when 92 percent were responded to, with a 100 percent  
24 response rate in many areas; and

25 **WHEREAS** the 500-family waiting list that existed for child care assistance in 1997  
26 is today at zero, making it much easier for families to get off and stay off welfare; and

27 **WHEREAS** the Alaska children's trust was activated thanks to collaboration between  
28 the legislature and the administration, led by the children's cabinet, and now in addition to  
29 raising private funds to increase its endowment, the Alaska children's trust provides  
30 substantial grants each year from that endowment to support innovative nongovernmental  
31 programs that reduce and eliminate child abuse and neglect; and

1       **WHEREAS** the children's cabinet draws from existing high-level staff, and thus, does  
2 not require additional legislative appropriations; and

3       **WHEREAS** the future of Alaska cannot be bright if we fail our children; and

4       **WHEREAS** there is nothing Alaska children cannot accomplish if they are protected  
5 from harm and given the tools they need;

6       **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature applauds the accomplishments  
7 to date of the Governor's Children's Cabinet; and be it

8       **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully calls on  
9 Governor Frank Murkowski and future governors to continue the Governor's Children's  
10 Cabinet and make use of the innovation, advocacy, and effective leadership it can provide.

11       **COPIES** of this resolution shall be delivered to the Honorable Frank Murkowski,  
12 Governor of Alaska; the Honorable Loren Leman, Lieutenant Governor of Alaska; and to Jim  
13 Clark, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor.