HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 29

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE HERRON

Introduced:  2/26/14
Referred:   Health and Social Services

A RESOLUTION

1Supporting the Disability Law Center of Alaska's inquiry into the United States Social
2Security Administration's disproportionate denial of social security disability insurance
3and supplemental security income claims in the state.

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

WHEREAS the United States Social Security Administration provides social security
disability insurance and supplemental security income benefits to qualifying individuals; and

WHEREAS many hard-working Alaskans and their families rely on social security
disability insurance and supplemental security income benefits to meet their basic financial
and health care needs; and

WHEREAS the United States Social Security Administration has established a
process through which individuals in every state may apply for benefits and appeal denial of
those benefits; and

WHEREAS the initial approval rate for social security disability insurance and
supplemental security income benefits in this state is similar to that of other states, but appeals
in this state are routinely denied at a significantly higher statistical rate than are appeals in
other states; and

WHEREAS, in recent year, the gap between the percentage of appeals denied in this state and those denied in comparable states has grown at an alarming rate; and

WHEREAS individual appeal denials negatively affect children with disabilities, adults with disabilities, veterans, the elderly, and their families; and

WHEREAS the high rate of denials also affects the overall financial and social well-being of communities and the state as a whole; and

WHEREAS the Disability Law Center of Alaska is examining what appears to be an inexplicably low rate of hearing approvals for social security disability insurance and supplemental security income appeals over the past several years;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports the commitment of the Disability Law Center of Alaska to investigate and assess the integrity of the social security disability insurance and supplemental security income appeal process in the state and to ensure that Alaskans with disabilities receive the benefits to which they are legally entitled.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Honorable Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner of the United States Social Security Administration; the Disability Law Center of Alaska; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.