

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY SENATOR REVAK

Introduced: 2/17/20

Referred: State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Commemorating the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage.**

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

3 **WHEREAS**, at the time of ratification, the Constitution of the United States did not
4 define the limits of suffrage, deferring the establishment of voter qualifications to the states;
5 and

6 **WHEREAS**, in 1878, United States Senator Aaron Sargent introduced an amendment
7 to the Constitution of the United States, known colloquially as the "Anthony Amendment"
8 after women's suffrage activist Susan B. Anthony, that would have prohibited states and the
9 federal government from denying suffrage to citizens of the United States based on sex, but
10 that was ultimately defeated in the United States Senate; and

11 **WHEREAS**, after the United States Congress established the Territory of Alaska
12 through the Second Organic Act of 1912, the first legislative action by the First Alaska
13 Territorial Legislature was to recognize the right of women to vote. House Bill No. 2, An Act
14 to Extend the Elective Franchise to Women in the Territory of Alaska, was signed into law
15 March 21, 1913--seven years before a similar law would be enacted at the federal level; and

16 **WHEREAS**, 41 years after United States Senator Aaron Sargent introduced the

1 "Anthony Amendment," following significant political gains made by women's suffrage
2 advocates such as Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, and Lucy Stone, among others,
3 a constitutional amendment granting women the right to vote was again introduced by
4 President Woodrow Wilson in a special session of the United States Congress and ratified a
5 year later in 1920 after narrowly achieving the necessary support of three-fourths of the states,
6 with Tennessee being the last state to vote in the affirmative; and

7 **WHEREAS**, with the adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution of
8 the United States, women's suffrage was achieved in the United States, allowing countless
9 women across the nation and in the state to contribute to the body of legislation in the interest
10 of improving their respective states, the nation, and the world; and

11 **WHEREAS**, in 1936, Representative Nell Scott was the first female legislator elected
12 to the Alaska Territorial House of Representatives, becoming the first female legislator in
13 Alaska's history; and

14 **WHEREAS**, in 1949, Senator Anita Garnick was the first woman elected to the
15 Alaska Territorial Senate; and

16 **WHEREAS**, in 1959, Representative Blanche McSmith was appointed to the House
17 of Representatives by Governor Bill Egan, serving in that body as the first female African
18 American legislator; and

19 **WHEREAS**, in 1959, Representative Helen Fisher, Representative Blanche McSmith,
20 Representative Doris Sweeny, and Senator Irene Ryan became the first women elected to
21 serve in the First Alaska State Legislature following the proclamation of Alaska as a state in
22 1959; and

23 **WHEREAS**, in 1987, Senator Jan Faiks became the first woman to serve as President
24 of the Senate; and

25 **WHEREAS**, in 1993, Senator Georgianna Lincoln became the first Alaska Native
26 woman elected to the Senate and Representative Ramona Barnes was elected as the first
27 female Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

28 **WHEREAS**, in 1994, Fran Ulmer was elected as the first female lieutenant governor
29 of the state; and

30 **WHEREAS**, in 2000, Senator Bettye Davis became the first African American
31 woman elected to the Senate; and

1 **WHEREAS**, in 2002, United States Senator Lisa Murkowski became the first woman
2 from the state to be appointed and later elected to the United States Senate; and

3 **WHEREAS**, in 2006, Sarah Palin was elected as the state's first female governor and
4 in 2008 was chosen to be republican presidential nominee John McCain's running mate,
5 making history again as the first person from the state to run on a presidential ticket; and

6 **WHEREAS**, in 2019, 23 female legislators serve in the Thirty-First Alaska State
7 Legislature, the largest proportion of women lawmakers in the state's history; and

8 **WHEREAS**, in 2019, the Dunleavy administration has appointed an unprecedented
9 number of women to historically male-held roles in the executive branch;

10 **BE IT RESOLVED** that on this 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in the United
11 States, the Thirty-First Alaska State Legislature requests that the Lieutenant Governor
12 coordinate recognition and commemorative events during the 100th anniversary year of 2020
13 to celebrate the great strides made by women since the establishment of women's suffrage,
14 and specifically celebrate the state's rich history in empowering women as equal members of
15 society.