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Representative Carl Gatto Chair, Education Committee

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House Seeks Adaptations to Education Law **Rural Schools Need Consideration in “No Child Left Behind”**

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska House of Representatives approved a resolution in support of Alaska’s rural schools by a vote of 35 to four on Monday. Sponsored by the House Special Committee on Education, House Joint Resolution 13 requests the federal government to consider Alaska’s unique rural school districts and the difficulty of implementing the “No Child Left Behind” Act in some of those areas.

“Alaska fully intends to comply with No Child Left Behind,” Gatto said. “However, unlike any other state, we have a large number of students scattered over a large area, and we need Washington to make considerations for Alaska.”

HJR 13 requests the United States Department of Education to consider NCLB implementation strategies recommended by the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development. These strategies address NCLB requirements for qualified teachers, qualified paraprofessionals, supplemental services, and English language assessment. NCLB calls for schools to improve their performance each year to continue to receive federal funding. Those that do not meet that requirement face sanctions. Gatto said some requirements could call for teachers to get additional training, which he said is difficult for remote rural schools.

“Some rural schools have only one teacher for a K through 12 grade school. That teacher cannot leave for additional training in a particular subject,” Gatto said. “We want to ask the Department of Education to consider alternatives to the training requirement. For example, allow a highly trained teacher in Anchorage to go online or on the telephone and monitor a rural teacher in the classroom as he or she teaches the subject in question.”

[HJR 13](#) moves to the Senate.

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