

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



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### SPONSOR STATEMENT SCR1

Alaska is avalanche country. Each year Alaskans lose their lives as a result of avalanches. One of the worst years was 1999, when 14 people were killed by avalanches in Alaska. While avalanches can be difficult to predict and prevent, education on the dangers of avalanches and the conditions in which they are likely to occur can save lives.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 would proclaim November 2001 as "Avalanche Awareness Month." This proclamation will raise public awareness of the hazards associated with avalanches, and the opportunities to participate in avalanche safety training at the beginning of the winter recreation season. It is hoped that public participation in avalanche safety programs will be increased and that this increased participation will result in saved lives during the winter.

The need for this resolution was brought to our attention by the Backcountry Avalanche Awareness Response Team (BAART), an organization formed by families of avalanche victims who are dedicated to preventing future avalanche deaths. BAART is comprised of trained volunteers who provide search and rescue services following slides and who educate the public on avalanche safety.