WHEREAS, the child care sector in Alaska has never faced a crisis like the one we are dealing with now – COVID-19 relief funding is gone, child care centers are closing, the sector is unable to maintain a stable workforce, and families are unable to afford the care they need; and

WHEREAS, currently, the average family in Alaska pays 15-35% of their income for child care, and 51% of families say they can’t participate in the workforce to the extent they would prefer due to child care issues. According to KIDS Count 2023, Alaska ranks 44th in the nation for economic well-being and 34% of Alaska children have parents that lack secure employment; and

WHEREAS, the problem is largely a financial matter – child care was already expensive, but increases in prices in the last three years have outpaced inflation, and without major changes to the current system and additional financial support, low- and middle-income families cannot obtain adequate child care; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage recognizes the problem and has made major financial investments in recent years to support child care and early education by investing millions in federal COVID relief funding, making long-term investments through alcohol tax funding, and beginning in 2024, dedicating local marijuana tax revenue to early education and child care, to be invested in the Anchorage Child Care and Early Education (ACCEE) Fund; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality is also closely following the Governor’s Task Force on Child Care, conducting outreach to providers and parents, and identifying specific local policy changes and remove barriers in our child care licensing regulations, so that Anchorage can be part of solutions to improve access to child care; and

WHEREAS, local policy changes and financial investments are not enough to end the child care crisis, in Anchorage and in the state as a whole – broader solutions at the state level are also necessary; and

WHEREAS, Alaska House Bill 89, sponsored by Representative Julie Coulombe, is based on child care best practices developed in other states with bipartisan and business support, and is intended to help families get back to work, help employers fill jobs essential for economic growth, and help ensure our children have safe care and are prepared to learn when they enter the K-12 education system; and
WHEREAS, HB89 includes several provisions to both improve parents’ access to care and providers’ quality of care, including making assistance available to more families; incentivizing employers to provide child care services or assistance to employees through tax credits; and performance-based grants for high-quality child care centers; and

WHEREAS, HB89 is an important step towards revitalizing our child care sector and would provide more parents the opportunity to participate in the workforce, reducing parental stress and increasing economic stability, and allow more children to grow and develop to their full potential, increasing their readiness for school and eventually the workforce;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY RESOLVES:

Section 1. The Anchorage Assembly supports increasing access to quality, affordable child care for Alaska’s families, and urges the 33rd Alaska Legislature to pass HB 89.

Section 2. This resolution shall be effective immediately upon passage and approval by the Assembly.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this _______ day of _____________, 2024.

_______________________________
Chair of the Assembly

ATTEST:

_______________________________
Municipal Clerk