

April 22, 2008

The Honorable Sarah Palin  
Governor of Alaska  
P.O. Box 110001  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001



Re: Special session consideration of HB 301 and HB 364

Dear Governor Palin:

On behalf of all the members of the Alaska Family Council, we wish to congratulate you and your husband Todd on the birth of your son, Trig. We know this blessed event will be the cause of much joy in your family, in the months and years to come. For whatever challenges that may lie ahead, we offer our prayers and support.

We are writing to share our concerns about two issues that affect all Alaska families, specifically, the legislation to ban partial birth abortions (HB 301) and the legislation to require parental involvement in a minor's abortion decision (HB 364).

It is deeply disappointing to us that the Senate failed to act on these important bills after they passed the House. Naturally, there has been a lot of discussion about why this happened, and how this outcome could have been avoided. It is important to have that discussion about past mistakes, but far more important to consider what we can do today to move forward in a positive direction.

Our primary concern is to do whatever is in our power to protect vulnerable children and families by enacting into law the sound public policies embodied in HB 301 and HB 364.

Accordingly, we are urging you to exercise your constitutional authority and ask the Legislature to take up HB 301 (banning partial birth abortion) and HB 364 (parental consent) in special session.

We understand that you have received a letter from the Senate President requesting that these items be added to your earlier call for a special session to consider gas pipeline matters, set to begin on June 3. The issue of whether these issues should be added to the June 3 call for special session, or whether they should be made the subject of an entirely separate special session, is a matter of political discretion. We would be pleased with either course of action. We hope you will encourage the Legislature to bring these matters to a floor vote prior to the adjournment of any special session called for this purpose.

We recognize that some may argue these issues are best left to the regular session that begins in 2009. We respectfully disagree, because of the unique history of these two issues. The Alaskan people have waited long enough to see these measures enacted into law. Both the partial birth abortion ban and the parental consent bill were passed in 1997, only to be vetoed by then Governor Tony Knowles. After the Legislature overrode the Governor's vetoes, both bills were then held up by litigation.

In the case of the parental consent lawsuit, the court system acted disgracefully slow in taking nearly 10 years to resolve the matter. Despite the fact that the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the constitutionality of parental consent laws in nine different decisions, a narrow majority of three Alaska Supreme Court justices overruled the will of the people and their elected representatives in striking down this law. The make-up of the court has now changed, and the people deserve to have this statute passed again in the hope that it will now be upheld as constitutional.

It is time for the people's voice to finally be heard, and we urge you to help make this a reality by placing these items on the agenda for a special session. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Greg Schmidt  
Chairman of the Board

Jim Minnery  
President