

ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #2024-04

A resolution in support of requiring the Legislature to include fiscal notes that quantify costs to municipalities and school districts in legislation that impacts these entities.

WHEREAS, an “unfunded mandate” is any statute, administrative regulation, or order that demands action from a subordinate government without adequate provision for funding the cost to the subordinate government of implementing the demanded action; and

WHEREAS, unfunded mandates are a problem because the federal and state governments have tended to balance their budgets on the backs of subordinate governments, thereby shielding themselves from taking the fiscal responsibility for their own policy and program decisions; and

WHEREAS, from a purely political standpoint, an unfunded mandate can ensure that the blame for higher taxes or service cuts falls to local elected officials rather than the government that made the decision; and

WHEREAS, unfunded mandates are a threat to municipal and school district governance and operations in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, additional requirements of a municipality or school district, when not reimbursed, result in a loss of capacity to deliver public services to community members and students; and

WHEREAS, AS 24.08.035 requires that bills and resolutions carry fiscal notes that contain an estimate of the cost that would result from enactment for the current fiscal year and for five fiscal years in the future; and

WHEREAS, this statute limits those estimates to the cost to the State of Alaska alone, excluding costs that may fall to local governments and school districts to bear, obfuscating the true cost of enacting legislation.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AML supports legislation that requires the State of Alaska and Alaska State Legislature to include municipal and school district fiscal notes as part of its process in evaluating legislation that impacts local governments and public education.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.