

# Group says secession unwise for state

The Associated Press

In a 180-page report to the Alaska Statehood Commission, two University of Alaska political scientists conclude that while the controversial secession issue might merit study, it is not a wise option for the state.

The \$14,200 report, authored by professors Andrea Helms and Geral McBeath of the universi-

ty's Fairbanks campus, was commissioned in March by the 11-member Statehood Commission.

The Helms and McBeath report, the third such study submitted to the commission since its formation last year, is based on a review of comparative literature in federalism.

"Actual secession of the state, at the present time, is so foolhardy a notion that it does

not warrant further serious study," their report states. "However, the threat of secession is a political method which might conceivably bring about a beneficial change in Alaska's relationship with the Lower 48 states."

"We would point out that such a threat would be largely symbolic, because Alaska is one of 50 states and has limited capability to strike an independent

course," the report concludes.

The statehood commission was established by voters last August to ponder the state's often stormy relationship with the federal government.

The commission's executive director, John de Yonge, said the state law creating the commission "requires us to do these studies."

On the question of whether the state should alter its status with Washington by constitutional amendment, Helms and McBeath conclude such a process would be "cumbersome."

Further, the professors say judicial interpretation is a "viable method of attacking the centralized policies" of the federal government.