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To Our Honorable Legislators:

I strongly support House Concurrent Resolution 19, urging Governor Bill Walker to issue an Administrative Order recognizing a **linguistic emergency in Alaska**. Alaska’s Native languages are imperiled, as the last generations of fluent speakers are an aging population and younger generations face ever increasing assimilation pressures. UNESCO’s Endangered Languages listings include Seward Peninsula Inupiaq (King Island, Diomedes, and Norton Sound dialects) as *Critically Endangered*, Kotzebue and North Slope Inupiaq dialects are *Severely Endangered*; Siberian Yup’ik is listed as *Definitely Endangered*, and Central Yupik and Nunivak Island Yupik are listed as *Vulnerable*. The loss of Native languages reflects centuries of unjust policies and practices that resulted in innumerable social and health consequences for Alaska’s first peoples. As a mental health professional, I have witnessed these consequences first hand. I also have experienced the resiliency and recovery that are hastened by access to ancestral lifeways, pride in one’s indigenous identity, and sacred connections to the land, animals, family, society, and spirituality which are best conveyed and understood in one’s own language. As a non-Native person, my own mental, physical, relational, and spiritual well-being have been improved enormously through contact with Alaska Native languages and lifeways. I know of many other non-Native persons who have received similar benefits.

I urge you to support Concurrent Resolution 19.

Thank you,
Cynthia Bolivar
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