



NAACP

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Anchorage, Alaska Branch – Wanda V. Laws, President

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February 18, 2013

The Honorable Representative Wes Keller
State Capitol
120 4th Street, Mail Stop 3100
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Keller,

One of the goals of the NAACP is to ensure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of all citizens. Therefore it is essential that all students have access to an equal and high-quality public education by eliminating education-related racial and ethnic disparities in our public schools.

I am writing to inform you that the NAACP Anchorage strongly opposes HJR 1 because it would create a dual and unequal education system in Alaska. Public schools accept every child whereas private schools can legally discriminate. Ultimately “choice” would not be in the hands of the parents.

The NAACP Anchorage is also in strong opposition to SJR 9. History has taught us that a Constitution is amended with the goal to enhance society. However, this attempt to change the Alaska Constitution is false and misleading because it would allow subsidies for those who are more fortunate to pay for their kids to attend private school. These same subsidies are pulled from a system for which most of us depend on. This action will divert attention, energy, and resources for efforts to reduce class size, enhance teacher quality, provide every student with books and computers, and provide a safe and orderly environment at all of Alaska’s public schools.

We cannot seriously talk about advancement in Alaska without talking about our young people and education. The simple truth is that preparing young people for success and ‘finding our way back to first’ is about much more than what happens inside the classroom. It takes the interest and investment from all of us. When we meet the needs of the whole child we are one step closer to preserving the promise of Alaska. Taking resources away from public schools ensures that Alaska cannot meet these goals.

The NAACP Anchorage asks that you include this letter in the bill packet.

Respectfully,

Wanda V. Laws

Wanda V. Laws
President, NAACP Anchorage