

HB 216 Written Testimony

From: Bernadette Alvanna Stimpfle <ehp.dir@kawerak.org>

Tue, Feb 18, 2014 at 1:55 PM

To: Freddie R Olin IV

Hello Mr. Olin,

This morning I listened in on the testimonies for HB 216 and was inspired to give a written testimony as well. Thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Bernadette Y. Alvanna-Stimpfle. My parents are originally from King Island, Alaska. I was born and raised in Nome and that is where I reside now. I have taught Inupiaq language and culture, ESL and the regular classroom with Nome Public Schools for 25 years. I now work at Kawerak Inc. as the Eskimo Heritage Program Director. I am also a member of the Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council. I am representing myself and I am in full support of HB 216. I grew up speaking only Inupiaq until I entered Kindergarten. I learned to speak English pretty much from osmosis in school since no special programs existed for English as Second Language. For the first few years of formal education, I was wondered why my teachers didn't speak in my grandmother's language. In my child's mind, she was the smartest person I knew!

I would like to share my experiences to foreign countries and other states where their indigenous language is an official language. The indigenous people gain such personal PRIDE in their language and culture. I can see it in their faces and posture and in all the good works they do. The message of pride is passed on to the younger generations. They in turn are eager to learn in their Native language. Once the younger generations learn their language as one of their first languages, then learning in that Native language is not only natural but their knowledge is broaden.

HB 216 will bring that pride to our own Alaska Native peoples. This is a way to have today's children and grandchildren to grow up, having PRIDE in their language and culture. To be eager to learn and excel both in the Native language and English as well. The bill will bring even more than just to preserve our Native languages but to work towards developing our own teaching materials from our own perspectives. Thanks to Senators that brought this bill forward.

Iliganamiik! (Heart-felt thanks)

"Yaayuk"

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