

Freddie Olin

From: Walkie <swcharles@alaska.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 1:49 PM
To: Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Cc:

Freddie Olin

Subject: Re: HB 216 Written Testimony

Waqaa, Mr. Olin,

My name is Walkie Charles, Yup'ik originally from Emmonak on the Yukon River delta. I grew up speaking Yugtun (Yup'ik) even when I was taken away to boarding school (Wrangell Institute) where our heritage languages were forbidden to be used. The long and the short of it is that today, I teach my heritage language as a baccalaureate degree at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. We've come a long way to find a way to incorporate our heritage languages and the re-learning of our cultures within the same walls where they were once condemned. I am in strong support of HB216 which provides a venue for us to recognize our heritage languages as national languages. True, it is symbolic but it also provides a sense of strength, belonging, and hope to all our languages in Alaska. I truly support this effort for us as stakeholders of our languages and also for our future generations.

Sincerely yours,

Walkie Charles, PhD
Professor of Yup'ik
Inaugural Chair of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council
University of Alaska Fairbanks