Additional Documents *for*
HB 216

- SUPPORT EMAILS
  - Alexander
  - Argetsinger
  - Bayou
  - Bolivar
  - Brudie
  - Burge
  - Crass
  - Dahlberg
  - Dewees A 1st email
  - Dewees A 2nd email
  - Eggleston
  - Frizzell
  - Geiger M
  - Geiger W
  - Georgette
  - Hall
  - Hayton
  - Hill
  - Hilts
  - James Kolene DaxKilatch
  - Johnson Princess 'Daazhraii'
  - Johnson S.imla.xw
  - Lang Ka'illjuus
  - Leigh A
  - Parker
  - Steere
  - Story M
  - Story Mike & Andi
  - Tomalonis
  - Tumulak Gunalchéesh tlein
  - Willard
  - Williams M
  - Williams T Deixh Teexli

Nancy Manly

From: Edward Alexander <1edward.alexander@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 7:56 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: HB 216

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of our Alaskan Legislature,

As a lifelong Alaskan, a certified English teacher, and a former principal, I encourage you all to support this important bill. I am also a lifelong resident of the longest speaking English and French speaking community in the state of Alaska, Fort Yukon. We were speaking English in Fort Yukon back when the only other European language around was Russian.

I know that some may feel some consternation over the recognition of Native Languages as "Official" languages, and I hope that you will familiarize yourself with the history of this important issue before making your decision. Many Alaska Natives were severely beaten for speaking their languages (including many of my relatives), many more were disenfranchised from voting for important issues like statehood (which had resulted in Alaska being subject to the Voting Rights Act for many decades), and many were even subject to Indian Relocation in the 50's and 60's as the federal government adopted policies hostile to our peoples. I think we've learned in the meanwhile, that subjugation, violence, and the destruction of Alaska Native languages is a fruitless endeavor that doesn't befit our great state.

Some say our Native languages shouldn't be recognized as "Official", but I would counter that even the name of our state, Alaska, is derived from a Native Aleut word. How is that for "official" usage? Let's take a different path people, one where we celebrate our people's differences, one where we celebrate our history, and one where we look to a more tolerant and accepting future. I know many people who suffered through these previous eras, and for what end? Are we not capable of speaking more than one language? I write this letter from my vacation in Hawai'i, which is an 'officially' recognized language incidentally, and I find it interesting that many non-Native Hawai'ians say "Aloha" and "Mahalo" as we travel around, and it does give a feeling here of acceptance and a cultural richness that my family cherishes. No one is being forced to speak Hawaiian. I think we can do something similar in Alaska, don't many of our tourists come to visit our Native cultures? I see buses full of them touring my home village in the summer, and they all seem to enjoy Gwich'in culture.

Gwich'in culture, or Tlingit culture, or Yupik culture, and those languages (along with all of the rest), tell the story of our state, they enrich us all. For those members who are Republican let's, instead of forcing all people to be homogenous, let's embrace some principals of small government a government that doesn't dictate what its people should speak or look like, and for those of you who are Democratic let's recognize and celebrate all of the diversity in our State. I know many students across the State will be watching and learning from your actions, will they learn lessons of intolerance and the failed policies of the past, or will they be inspired to celebrate the origins of the word "Alaska" and the origins of our many Native Peoples and languages, one of the true sources of human wealth in our state? I hope the latter.

I know that a commission or agency of some sort has already stated that there will not be an increased administrative burden, so increased costs isn't an issue. It appears that respect, and simple recognition that there is a place for these languages, is the issue, and one that I hope you will all move forward with an affirmative vote on this important bill.

Please support HB 216, and please help others to understand the importance of an inclusive and respectful Alaska. An Alaska that isn't afraid to move forward together.

Thank you, Mahsi' choo, and Quyana,

Edward Alexander

Joanna Lewis

From: Timothy Argetsinger <timothy.h.argetsinger@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 7:58 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: Support for HB 216

Hello Bob,

I am a lifelong Alaskan emailing you to encourage your support of HB 216. This bill is vital to symbolically elevating the status of Alaska Native languages in ways that will help bring them in from the margins of our society. As you know, Alaska Native language stealing was a deliberate goal of federal education policy that has separated the past four generations of Alaska Natives from our languages. Alaska can become a nationwide leader in efforts to support the revitalization of indigenous languages by passing this bill into law and providing the symbolic albeit important social support needed to leverage and legitimate statewide language revitalization movements.

Thank you
Tim

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 12:25 PM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: HB 216

From: Theo Bayou [mailto:dziish@hotmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 12:23 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

My name is Theo Bayou, 66 year old Elder here in Anchorage, of the Tsimshean tribe in Southeast Alaska. I struggle to Learn my own language. The Anchorage Alaska Native Heritage Center held classes for the Southcentral area of Alaska and I am a student. I truely believe as a student myself, that the language of our people is so important. Please support HB 216.

We are holding a language class two nights a week from an instructor who was with the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and funds were no longer there, but yet she is hanging in there, and holding classes on her own with the use of the one building for us to continue.

Please support the HB 216. LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR NATIVE PEOPLE OF ALASKA AND OUR COUNTRY.

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 8:27 AM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: HB 216

From: Cynthia Bolivar [mailto:bolivar@gci.net]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 8:19 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

Honorable Representative Lynn,

I strongly support HB 216, designating Alaska Native Languages official state language alongside English. All Alaskans are strengthened by the rich and diverse cultural resources of the Alaska Native peoples. The recognition of their languages is timely (given that many face extinction) and of great benefit to our state in embracing a shared heritage for residents and visitors alike.

Cynthia Bolivar

1741 Hamilton Dr.

Anchorage, AK 99515

Nancy Manly

From: ODIN BRUDIE <odin@gci.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 11:15 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

Honorable Representative Lynn:

I urge you to support the bill to acknowledge Alaska Native languages as official languages of the State. Language has been the key trait that distinguishes our Native people from one another. People outside of Alaska have no idea of the diverse Native languages and cultures that exist here; with this bill they will take note. With this bill we recognize and thank the Native elders that bear their cultures. And, we credit those Alaskans who work very hard to preserve their language. Thank you and Sincerely,

Odin Brudie
512 6th St.
Juneau Alaska 99801
odin@gci.net

Nancy Manly

From: Heather Burge <hdburge06@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 10:34 PM
To: Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

My name is Heather Burge, and I am a senior at the University of Alaska Southeast. I support the passage of HB 216.

"This is more than a symbolic act. It is a fight for equality and civil rights. The bill does not require any additional resources or work on the part of the State of Alaska. These are not symbolic languages, but are living languages that were born right here in Alaska."

Gunalchéesh!

--
-Heather Dawn Burge
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 2:10 PM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: I support HB 16!!!

From: Trista Crass [mailto:mrs.world@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 1:55 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: I support HB 16!!!

Lifelong Alaskan, and I believe we should recognize the Native peoples' languages as the official language of the land. Let's join New Zealand in doing the right, and the BEST thing for Alaska! It'll make us stand out as a cultural destination, as a place that respects instead of trammels NAtive cultural heritage.

--
Cheers,

Trista

Nancy Manly

From: Sigrid Dahlberg <sdahlberg@carsondorn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 10:38 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: Official Alaska Languages Bill = HB216

Dear House State Affairs Committee Members,

Please support HB216 and help Alaska move toward showing equality and respect for the indigenous people of the land. All of our lives will be enriched by revitalizing the use of Alaska Native Languages.

Respectfully,
Sigrid Dahlberg
Juneau, AK

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Sigrid Dahlberg, P.E.
Environmental Engineer
Carson Dorn, Inc.

712 W. 12th St., Suite 1
Juneau, AK 99801
907.586.4447 phone
907.723.8896 mobile
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Dewee's 1st email

Joanna Lewis

From: Andrea Leigh <andrea.alaska@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 3:43 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: in support of The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

I am a lifelong Alaska resident and Alaskan voter. I remember when the English Only bill was passed (before it was struck down as unconstitutional) and I remember protesting it in front of the Loussac Library. I was still in high school then. I couldn't vote, but I remembered feeling ashamed of the history of xenophobia and narrow-mindedness that has robbed Alaskans of some of our linguistic diversity and attempted to silence our voices.

Alaska is a multilingual state. I was privileged, while studying to become a teacher at UAA, to have valuable internship experiences in Chevak and Toksook Bay and hear fluent Yupik and Cupik elders teach us about living on and caring for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta. I was especially moved to see the Yupik first immersion school in Toksook Bay. Students there become fluent in two languages, and are so much the richer. They can communicate with their grandparents at the same time as they prepare for college studies in English. Sadly, other Alaskan children are not currently able to learn the languages of their grandparents and great-grandparents because of our colonial history and the short-sightedness of educators and other officials. We have a responsibility to safeguard the languages of Alaska and this bill is a small step in recognizing different communities' grassroots efforts towards language revitalization.

I learned Spanish as a second-language in the Anchorage School District, and my son speaks Spanish with us at home. There are many other Alaskans who speak more than one language--languages from Alaska and languages which, like English, have migrated here. As a language instructor I know the benefits of language learning: the cognitive benefits, the community benefits and the benefits for enhancing intercultural communication--so important in our globalized world.

Alaska should be proud of its linguistic diversity and we should do everything in our power to protect that diversity and grow as a multilingual state. I don't know if you have had the opportunity to learn another language, or if you grew up bilingual like my son, but I assure you that it is an enriching and transformative experience. Let's honor our first Alaskans, our elders, and our multilingual Alaskans by standing together to say that "We are multilingual and proud." Please support Official Languages Bill HB216.

Sincerely,

Andrea Dewees, PhD

Dewees 2nd email

Nancy Manly

From: Andrea Leigh <andrea.alaska@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 9:25 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: why I support HB 216 and official indigenous languages

Why I support HB 216:

I am a lifelong Alaskan and Alaskan voter. My parents, who are white and of German/Dutch/English descent, came here during the oil boom of the 1970s. For most of my childhood growing up on the Kenai Peninsula and in Anchorage I knew and learned nothing about the peoples and languages that have inhabited Alaska for millennia, prior to the Russian occupation and prior to its purchase by the United States.

By speaking with fellow Alaskans, and by reading books at the Loussac library, I learned about Alaska's shameful history with regard to Native Alaskans. I learned about forced labor, institutional discrimination, boarding schools and the prohibition of cultural practices and languages. I saw how Alaska Natives experienced discrimination in the Anchorage. **I do not want this history of oppression and discrimination to continue to define Alaska in the future.**

I certified to teach at UAA and as part of my coursework I was able to spend two weeks in Toksook Bay. Toksook Bay has a Yupik-first program and children there, in stark contrast to other parts of the State, speak Yupik with their families and learn to read in Yupik in lower primary. I saw happy, self-confident and intellectually stimulated children and young people. I saw multiple generations of a family communicating fluently in the same language and dancing together. I saw young people successfully transitioning to English-language instruction in upper primary and earning high scores on achievement tests (higher scores, even, than students in schools whose only language of instruction is English). More than 10 years later many of these students are now in college, or have graduated from college, and continue to speak Yupik **as well as English. They are successful in both languages. Remember, this bill adds the indigenous languages as official languages, it does not detract from English's status in any way.**

I learned Spanish as a second language, and am a near-native speaker. I have spoken Spanish and English for over 20 years. As a language educator (with 15 years' experience) I hear many misconceptions and fears about language from folks who have not had this opportunity. I can assure you that: 1) humans are capable and excel at learning more than one language, even when they learn them at the same time 2) learning another language does not make a person less fluent in English (and, actually, research shows that the best way to create strong readers and writers is to teach them in their first language as those skills are directly transferable between languages). If Alaska's educators and administrators had recognized the benefits of multilingualism and bilingualism in the 20th century, and encouraged indigenous language education instead of prohibiting it, Alaska would today be a much more equitable state. **The state that I want to live in is a multilingual and multicultural one where all people are respected and the first languages and peoples of this land are honored alongside English.**

I hear opposition to this bill in a few forms. Sadly, some people believe that only English is useful. I imagine that people that say that have never had the opportunity to learn another language or, maybe, that they have lost language in their own family (I would remind those who have lost a family language about the difference between that language loss and indigenous language loss. Indigenous language loss has consequences for entire

cultures and generations, not to mention the very real risk for humanity of complete language loss via language extinction). I am sorry for those that can only speak one language. Learning another language is a rewarding experience, at any age, and I encourage everyone to do so (and I myself am looking forward to learning Tlingit, the language of my new home). Truly, being monolingual is a limitation and we have only to look to Europe, where language education is emphasized in elementary school, to see the alternatives. **Furthermore, as an Alaskan, and as an educator, I can say that indigenous languages in this state are essential. This is the only place where many languages are spoken, and these languages have been spoken here for millennia, much, much longer than English or Russian. Quite simply, they deserve recognition because they were here first, and for longer. Finally, officially recognizing the languages of this state is an important symbolic gesture necessary to healing the very real wounds of the past, including the suppression of language and culture. I do not think that any just person can be proud of Alaska's history with respect to Alaska Natives and I do not want that history to continue to define our state. The vision that I have for Alaska involves supporting communities' efforts towards language usage and revitalization. Hawaii has taken a promising path in this respect, and we would do well to build on their success and help lead the way for other states.**

The other opposition to this bill regards its potential financial consequences. I would defer to the State's own legal experts on that matter and both have testified that passing the bill would not create a financial burden. However, I think that there is a basic misunderstanding that prompts this fear. **This bill adds languages, it does not take them away.** The reality is that after 100+ years of language prohibition and discrimination we are an English-speaking state. We need and use English to communicate with one another. This bill does not detract from English. The concerns that legislators express regarding printing pamphlets or providing services in other language are concerns about Limited English Proficient (LEP) speakers. Those speakers are provided for under Title VI of the (federal) civil rights act. **It is essential not to confuse this bill, which is about adding the indigenous and first languages of this State as official languages alongside English, with provisions for LEP speakers. These are separate issues.**

I encourage you, as you discuss this bill, to keep in mind the vision you have for our state. I encourage you to think about equity, justice and democracy and to meditate on the errors that have been committed in the past and the discrimination and injustice that Alaska Natives have endured. I encourage you to think about how we can support communities' grassroots efforts at language revitalization and I encourage you, if you have been invited, to visit a bilingual community and witness for yourself how knowing the language of one's land, family and community adds to our quality of life. Finally, if you only speak English, I'd encourage you to learn a second language. So much of our fear is borne of ignorance. I want Alaska to be a State that is proud of its indigenous heritage, of the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages. I want Alaska to recognize those languages officially.

Thank you,

Andrea Dewees, PhD

Nancy Manly

From: Keri Eggleston <kerimichon@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 9:27 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

Dear Representative Lynn,

This note is in support of HB 216. I am a non-Native native Alaskan whose life has been greatly enriched through the study of Alaska Native languages. Our state is rich in so many ways, but our twenty-some Native languages is one of our unique resources that is largely uncelebrated. Many of these languages are highly endangered, with great efforts being made among their remaining speakers and learners to revitalize them. I see nothing but positive outcomes given the passing of this bill. Let's do what we can to right past wrongs and show support for a linguistically rich and diverse state. Please vote in favor of HB 216.

Sincerely, Keri Eggleston

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 2:10 PM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: HB 216

From: Amber Frizzell [mailto:frizzell.amber@gmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 12:41 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: HB 216

Dear Representatives,

I encourage you to pass HB 216. The facts to support and pass the bill have been presented. Passing this Bill will tell the people that were here time immemorial, that they are important, they have value. I don't need to repeat the known recent history of trauma that has been layed upon the Native Alaskans that carries over to future generations. This would be another small step in moving forward as a whole community of Alaskans.

Thank you for your consideration,

Amber Frizzell

Nancy Manly

From: Meribeth Geiger <beth_geiger@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 12:01 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

To the members of the House State Affairs Committee,

My name is Meribeth Geiger and I am a resident of Juneau. This is a message voicing my support of the passage of House Bill 216, the Official Languages Bill. This bill is an important step in the preservation and revitalization of our State's original languages. There is fiscal note of $0, and this can act as an acknowledgment of the great value of the diverse cultures and people found within our State. I urge you to do everything within your power to see the passage of this bill.

Thank you very much,
Meribeth Geiger

Joanna Lewis

From: Will Geiger <will_geiger907@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 4:04 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Cc: Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: House Bill 216 (Official Alaska Languages Bill)

Members of the House State Affairs Committee,

My name is William Geiger and I am a resident of Juneau, Alaska. I understand the public testimony regarding House Bill 216 will be very limited; as such, I would like to voice my strong support for the passage of this Bill regarding Alaska Native languages here. I am currently involved in the community of Tlingit language learners and activists working to revitalize the language. It is a dynamic and growing group of individuals from extremely diverse backgrounds, ages, identities, and histories. By passing this Bill you will show a great support to those of us who are working to learn these languages, which have endured a long legacy of trials imposed on them by various American agencies. Please show your support for the revitalization of Alaska Native languages by passing this Bill. It is hard work and a lifetime commitment to truly learn these languages, and with the support of the Alaska State Legislature, I believe those efforts can be lessened and the vitality of these languages raised to a safer level. The revitalization of these languages is a movement that will promote an extreme amount of much needed healing, inter-cultural dialogue, and diversity.

Gunalchéesh á (Thank you very much),
William Geiger

Nancy Manly

From: Susan Georgette <susangeorgette@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 9:49 PM
To: Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Anna Fairclough; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Hollis French; Rep. Tammie Wilson; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Eric Feige; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Subject: Ambler Road Project

Dear House and Senate Transportation Committee Members:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed Ambler Road in northwest Alaska. I have lived in the Northwest Arctic Borough for almost 30 years, and I have had the good fortune to spend extended periods of time in the upper Kobuk communities and fish camps. My family and I have traveled and camped extensively in that area in all seasons of the year.

Northwest Alaska is blessed with abundant wildlife and fisheries, vast healthy ecosystems, clean water, and a way of life in which the Iñupiat retain considerable control over their entire traditional homelands (unlike their counterparts in Alaska's road-connected areas). These qualities—all rare in the world today—are among our region's greatest assets, and ones I believe will be seriously eroded by a road linking our region to the state highway system.

For the past 20 years, one of the most contentious issues in the Northwest Arctic Borough has been the conflict between non-local sport hunters and local subsistence hunters. Year after year local communities express concerns about sport hunters deflecting the caribou migration, engaging in inappropriate hunting behaviors, or in some other way disrupting subsistence activities. A road to the upper Kobuk would only make these problems worse.

I am not necessarily opposed to mining development in the Ambler area. Red Dog Mine has certainly been a beneficial economic engine for our region, and the Ambler Mining District has the potential to similarly be so. But Red Dog has a road that is strictly industrial and not connected to the state highway system. I believe that the Ambler Road, if built, would eventually be opened to public use, with primarily negative results to the local communities, subsistence resources, and way of life we cherish. A road—even an industrial one—connected to the state highway system is simply too high of a price to pay for mineral development in the Ambler Mining District.

Sincerely,

Susan Georgette

PO Box 278

Kotzebue, AK 99752

susangeorgette@gmail.com

907.442.3336

Nancy Manly

From: Millie E Hall <mehall3@uas.alaska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 11:20 PM
To: Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller
Cc: Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes
Subject: Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

Dear Honorable Members of the House State Affairs Committee:

I am writing to you to voice my support of the Official Languages Bill (HB 216) which will be heard by you tomorrow morning.

I am from the Yukon Territory in neighbouring Canada, and I have moved to Juneau to study the Tlingit language at the University of Alaska Southeast. I have left my home, my family and my job for two years, because the language of my ancestors is in danger of being lost forever, and it is important to me to do something to stop this from happening.

Alaskan Native languages are in grave danger: fluent speakers are elderly and languages are not being transmitted to children.

It is important to keep our precious languages from dying, because our identity is tied so intimately to them, and our languages keep us connected to our ancestors, our homelands, and to each other.

Indigenous languages have had much violence done to them in the past; it is now time for all of us to make reparations and to give them a safe space where they can once again grow and flourish. Indigenous peoples have a right to speak their language on their homelands, and it is now time to have those languages recognised, protected and honored.

I urge you to show your support of native languages by elevating them to official language status in Alaska.

Thank you, Gunalchéesh,

Millie Hall

Nancy Manly

From: Allan Hayton <notyah.nalla@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 10:12 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

Rep. Lynn,

I am writing to express me support for HB 216. Alaska Native languages are presently in a dire state, and it would be a shame to lose these valuable repositories of knowledge, history, and culture. I grew up in Arctic Village at a time when everyone young to old spoke Gwich'in as their first language. Today there is no one learning Gwich'in as their first language. That is quite a shift in just a few generations. While Gwich'in is one of the stronger Alaska Native languages with about 250 speakers remaining, as compared to Deg Xinag or Hän that are on the verge of extinction, it is still endangered due to the fact that no young people are learning Gwich'in as their first language (or even bilingually). I am hopeful we will soon see a resurgence in Alaska Native languages across the state, and young people will be passing these languages on to future generations. Alaska Native languages are unique in all the world, and are spoken nowhere else but this wonderful state. Thank you, mahsi' choo, hai' for your support. ~Allan Hayton

--

Program Manager
Gwich'in Steering Committee
122 First Ave. ♦ Fairbanks, AK 99701 ♦ 907.458.8264 ♦ Fax 907.457.8265
"In no case may a people be deprived of their own means of subsistence." International Covenants on Human Rights

Joanna Lewis

From: Erica Hill <ericahill88@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 6:26 PM
Subject: Support Official Languages Bill

I write to express strong support for passage of the Official Languages Bill. This bill recognizes the incredible contributions that Alaska Native cultures have made to our state. As a valuable first step toward language revitalization, the bill expresses a commitment to equality that is long overdue.

I strongly support passage of the Official Languages Bill.

best regards,
Erica Hill
Auke Bay, Alaska

Nancy Manly

From: ehhilts@gmail.com on behalf of Sunni Hilts <sundog@ptialaska.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 7:25 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: Native Languages

Dear Representatives,

I am so glad to hear that you are considering elevating our indigenous languages to an official status.

We are such a unique state, and the desire to keep those languages alive and the importance to the identity of our Alaska Native citizens is one of the things that marks us.

Through adoptions we have 5 Alaska Native grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. We would appreciate this part of their heritage being given your support.

Sincerely,

Rod and Sunni Hilts
Seldovia, Alaska

Nancy Manly

From: Kolene James <daxkilatch@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 11:45 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

Greetings House State Affairs Committee,
Gunalcheesh for your time and careful consideration of the official languages bill (HB216). I am writing on behalf of my family. My English name is Kolene James, my Tlingit names are DaxKilatch and Sheeyixh. I am Gaanax.adi and adopted Taalkweidi. I am also Tsimshian, the Gitlaan Ghanhada Clan and Irish. I am married to Lyle James, Xeetli.eesh, a Tlingit Kaagwaantaan from Glacier Bay, Filipino, and Hawiian. My father's people are the Tsimshian, Irish, and adopted into the Tlingit Kaagwaantaan Clan. My Grandfather's and Great Grandfather's people are the Tlingit Neix.adi Clan, Tsimshian, and Irish. My Great Great Grandfather's people are the Tlingit Teikweidi Clan, the Tsimshian, and the Haida, that's four generations I just acknowledged. Thank you for reading about my relations.

My family, they spoke several World languages (this includes Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Chinook, and Eyak) until 4 generations ago. My family, like many of the Alaska Native families, valued not only the language of their tribe but the language of their loved one's Tribe or Nation. This ability to communicate in several languages was how we showed respect and honor for one another. This speaking several languages allowed for successful family businesses to thrive, we had access to a traditional holistic education inclusive of many subjects such as math, science, communication, lending to many life skills such as hunting, gathering, crafting homes and transportation that stood the test of weather and time, all of this contributing to healthy families in Southeast Alaska and beyond. All of my family knew their purpose, their history, ability to be self-reliant, self-confident, they were contributors to the welfare of the larger community. This was pre-colonial time.

Post colonial time my family speaks English with very limited knowledge of Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida. Some of my family members have discovered their purpose, some are doing research on their history, some are self-reliant, some maintain self-confidence, some are contributors to the welfare of the larger community. Some family members are not as successful as they could be. This bill could impact the 'some' to 'all' of my family members being successful, self-reliant, contributing to the welfare of the larger community with the acknowledgement of our Alaska Native languages. With the passing of this bill, languages would be valued and implemented in all of our classrooms, validating our identity, our history, and our way of living. The percentage of social ills could literally be turned around to reflect healthy communities, higher graduation rates, higher rates of successful young individuals creating jobs, generating more revenue and giving back to their communities. Our Alaska Native communities could start the healing process from trans-generational grief. Gunalcheesh, Haw'aa, T'oyk'shm, Thank you for your time and consideration of making (HB216) all of the Alaska Native languages the official language our great State.
Respectfully,
DaxKilatch, Kolene James

Nancy Manly

From: Princess Lucaj <princesslucaj@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 9:08 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: HB 216

Dear Representatives,

I write this in honor of my late grandmother (shitsuu), Katherine Peter, who received her honorary doctorate for her many, many years working with the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and writing a great many books, including the first dictionary in our Gwich'in language.

Let's join Hawaii in recognizing our Indigenous languages with HB 216!

What a wonderful, solid way to show our great respect and admiration for the original inhabitants of this great land.

Mahsi'choo shalak naii! Thank you very much my relatives!

Princess 'Daazhraii' Johnson
Fairbanks, Alaska

Nancy Manly

From: Michele K. Johnson <michelekjohnson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 5:25 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: Support for The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

Dear Members of the House State Affairs Committee,

I would like to applaud you in your consideration to recognize Alaska's Native languages as official state languages. As a Tlingit language learner, in the Yukon Territory, I know how precious our Indigenous languages are, and also how fragile. There is a beauty and poetry in our languages, and they deserve every possible support.

Gunalchéesh, thank you,

Michele Johnson (S.imla.xw)

Joanna Lewis

From: Lisa Lang <lisaverosh@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 4:08 PM
To: Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn; Moriah Sallaffie; Gail Dabaluz; Benjamin Young; lil_hagoo@hotmail.com; Wendy Smythe; Doreen Witwer; haidagram1@hotmail.com; sidedenshaw
Subject: SUPPORT FOR THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE BILL (HB 216)

The Official Languages Bill (HB 216) will be heard by the House State Affairs Committee tomorrow morning. They meet at 8am. The time available for oral public testimony will be extremely limited, but written testimony from members of the public would be a valuable show of support. It would be great if the committee members had emails start flowing in over the next 16 hours, supporting the bill. The messages can be short and sweet – it's honestly better if they are.

—

Please show your support for this bill. Here are some facts:

Alaska's current laws which elevate English as the official language of the state have been ruled unconstitutional and qualify us as an "English-Only State"

There are over 700,000 people in Alaska, and an estimated 15,000 (2%) can currently speak an Alaska Native Language

Fewer than 20% of Alaska Natives can currently speak their own language

The State of Alaska has an obligation to take legitimate steps to protect and revitalize Alaska Native Languages because Alaska Natives are citizens of the State, and both State and Federal Governments have a historical role in endangering and attempting to destroy Alaska Native Languages

Out of the 50 states, only Hawaii has an official languages bill that recognizes an indigenous language. That is 2% of the states, and Alaska can be an innovator and double that statistic.

We have already seen the last fluent birth speakers of two Alaska Native Languages (Eyak and Holikachuk) pass away in the last ten years, and there was no one there to give them security that their languages would live on.

This is more than a symbolic act. It is a fight for equality and civil rights. The bill does not require any additional resources or work on the part of the State of Alaska. These are not symbolic languages, but are living languages that were born right here in Alaska.

The bill is a huge step towards equality and restorative efforts towards Alaska Native people. As languages die, so will people as they lose their sense of identity and the connections that tie them to ancestors, places, and each other.

—

Again, there is not much time for public testimony tomorrow, because we want the bill to move out of the committee and onto the floor. If we have too many people tomorrow who want to testify, we could run out of time and the bill could be stalled in a committee. We want to see it move forward so our state can take a monumental step forward in recognizing intellectual equality among all its citizens.

Here are the members of the committee. Please send a short and supportive message before tomorrow morning.

Members of the House State Affairs Committee, minus Rep. Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov
Rep.Bob.Lynn@akleg.gov (Chair)
Rep.Wes.Keller@akleg.gov (Vice Chair)
Rep.Lynn.Gattis@akleg.gov
Rep.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov
Rep.Doug.Isaacson@akleg.gov
Rep.Charisse.Millett@akleg.gov

I am sending this note to both the legislators and to individuals who may take the time to send an email to the committee. It is a labor of love and a deep emotional issue for those who have devoted their lives to revitalization at all levels. Please take the time to support this bill and let the committee members know IT MATTERS TO US ALL!!! Thank you Lance for keeping us updated.

Ha'waa

Ka'illjuus

Nancy Manly

From: Louise Parker <louiseparker@northwestel.net>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 4:53 PM
To: Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: Support for the Language Bill

Representatives for Alaska,

I am a Tlingit member from Canada and I support the language bill for Alaska and I commend all of you on the important work you are doing. Alaska is the only place I can take the Tlingit Language at the University of Alaska Southeast and I had to leave my family in Whitehorse to pursue my Tlingit language, which was taken from me in residential school. I have had to make this sacrifice to take this training and I do not regret one minute of it. Please, Please, continue to implement critical plans for financial aid and strong Tlingit Language Revitalization plans to keep our language alive.

Átlein Gunalchéesh!!!

Kheyawk Louise Parker

29 Tamarack Drive, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 4W3

In Juneau: 907-500-3232

louiseparker@northwestel.net

Joanna Lewis

From: Victoria Hykes Steere <hykessteere@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:55 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Cc: Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: HB 216

Chair, Vice-Chair, Committee members:

As a voter and Alaskan, I strongly support the passage of HB 216. Alaska Native Languages are important to the history, culture, and fabric of Alaska. Alaska, as the only state in the United States singled out in the Roadmap to a Safer Native America report, would provide positive leadership with the passage of HB 216 and become a national leader in the move to preserve Native American/Alaska Native languages, which would attract funding for language preservation efforts statewide.

Thank you.

V. Hykes Steere. Assistant Professor
Alaska Pacific University
4101 University Drive
Anchorage, AK 99501

Nancy Manly

From: Mallory A Story <mastory@uas.alaska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 11:20 PM
To: Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

Dear House State Affairs Committee,

I am a resident of Juneau and I am learning the Tlingit language at the University of Alaska Southeast. I am proud that our state is showing the value of Alaska Native languages by offering degrees in Alaska Native Studies and Languages. It is so inspiring to learn with people dedicated to their right to speak their own language despite previous State policies and a political atmosphere that once aimed to destroy Alaska Native languages.

I am in full support of The Official Languages Bill (HB 216) because it sends a message of encouragement to people who are working hard to learn their heritage language. If passed, this bill sends a message to fluent speakers of Alaska Native languages that they are a valued population in our state. Most importantly the passage of this bill sends a message of respect. I have learned that respect is a fundamental value in Tlingit culture and I hope it continues to be a value of the state of Alaska. Thank you for your time.

Gunalchéesh,
Mallory Story

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 10:41 AM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: Support for HB 216 The Official Languages of the State

From: Mike and Andi Story [mailto:andimike@ak.net]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 9:00 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Cc: Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Sen. Dennis Egan; 'School Board'
Subject: Support for HB 216 The Official Languages of the State

Marcy 27, 2014

Dear Honorable Representatives,

I am writing in support of HB 216, The Official Languages of the State and urge you to pass this bill out of your committee today.

I am so proud of the State of Alaska and I have a great love of this place and its diverse people. I urge you to recognize the first languages of our state. Your leadership on this will elevate and revitalize our Alaska Native Languages. It builds awareness of the knowledge, history, sciences and culture that make up our state. Making sure this is passed on to our children's children is critical for the knowledge of the history of our state and for progress in the present, and a powerful statement of how we value all our languages spoken here and that we do not want to lose any of our languages.

This bill does not require any additional resources or work on the part of the State of Alaska. It clearly states how we value and want to keep the knowledge and languages that are part of this land.

I serve on the local school board here in Juneau. Our Board, with the support of our Native organizations, elders and partners, are offering the option of Tlingit language K – 12th grade to students. We also are working to infuse place based and cultural knowledge and language throughout our school's curriculum. Passage of this bill so compliments and validates this work.

Thank you for your service to the people of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Andi Story

12069 Cross Street

Juneau, Alaska

Joanna Lewis

From: Vincent Tomalonis <vjtomalonis@alaska.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 7:39 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: Please support Alaska Native Languages

Please help to preserve our languages.

Vincent Tomalonis
White Mountain/Anchorage, Alaska (**Iñupiat**)

Nancy Manly

From: Nae Tumulak <l.yanwudaghaat@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 12:38 AM
Subject: HB 216

Alaska Leaders:

I was in the 7th grade when I learned the truth about my grandfather and his time in boarding school. He went in a fluent speaker of Lingít; a full understanding of our way of life. He came home to shame his family As only English came from his mouth. I heard the pain in his voice, and I heard him push it back down with a deep sigh. It wasn't until much later in life that I began to fully understand how my grandfather's story was that of many and how that very fact has contributed to the state of our beautiful languages today.

I have been studying Lingít formally for five years. I have been reconnecting with my history, my heritage, and most importantly, my ancestors in a way that I have never imagined before. Even with this remarkable connection, there is something else I long for: recognition.

I recently stood in a crowded mall in Anchorage, asking my 17-month-old daughter in Lingít if she was hungry. She signed back, "eat," followed by "please". I continue in Lingít, telling her we shall eat when a heaviness overcomes me: the likelihood that we are the only family speaking Lingít in the mall is high, let alone another Alaska Native language and no one even recognizes it.

The ability to even hear someone say "quyana," "chin'an," "gunalchéesh," is recognition enough to know that we have not been forgotten. We have not been pushed aside or under a rug. I am in love with the idea of a walking into a store and being thanked by the clerks in our native languages!

With my whole heart, and with my daughter in mind so that she may never know that heaviness, I support HB 216, and hope you will, too.

Gunalchéesh tlein.

Joanna Lewis

From: Rose Natkong <Rosen@jys.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 3:26 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Cc: Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Wes Keller
Subject: HB 216 - The Official Languages Bill

Hello Members of the House,
I would like to ask for your support in passing Bill HB 216. As a student studying the Lingit language, I believe it is very important for all Alaska Native Languages to be recognized and supported here in the state of Alaska. Passing this bill will encourage many Alaska Natives to hold on to the language and culture that makes Alaska so unique and beautiful. This bill will come at no financial cost to the state, but if passed it will in turn bring a richness to the state that money cannot buy. Please, support HB 216 and help encourage the Alaska Native Community by enhancing self-identity, connections with each other and the land.

Thank you,
Rose Anna Willard

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Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 10:24 AM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

From: Maria D Williams [mailto:mdwilliams6@uaa.alaska.edu]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 10:11 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

Dear esteemed Representatives Lynn, Keller, Gattis, Hughes, Isaacson and Millett:

I am so pleased to hear that Alaska Native Languages will be recognized as Official Languages. I believe this is an amazing and affirming piece of legislation that supports our beautiful state and it's history.

I teach at the University of Alaska Anchorage and the language programs there include Yup'ik, Tlingit and I have taken the Tlingit language course and just loved it! I learned so much about culture and values and it just added such richness to my education.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislative action,
Maria Williams
250-2049

Joanna Lewis

From: Terry Williams <insidepassagearts@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:55 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: Fw: HB-216

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 9:44 PM, Terry Williams <insidepassagearts@yahoo.com> wrote:

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:51 PM, Terry Williams <insidepassagearts@yahoo.com> wrote:

On , Terry Williams <insidepassagearts@yahoo.com> wrote:

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:46 PM, Terry Williams <insidepassagearts@yahoo.com> wrote:

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:42 PM, Terry Williams <insidepassagearts@yahoo.com> wrote:

Dear Representative Lynn, Please allow the house to vote on HB-216. As a member of the Tlingit Sockeye/Raven Clan I want to encourage you to make Alaska the 2nd. state in the Union to grant Native Language speakers official equality status with English speakers before our native languages are forever lost to our descendents. There are 15,000 Alascan residents that speak their native language and we would like to see that number increased. Sincerely, Deixh Teexli, Terry Williams, 30 year resident of Skagway Alaska