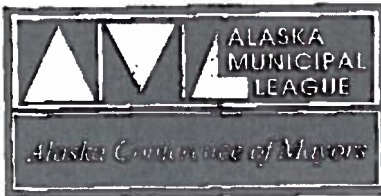


Additional Documents *for* **HB 216**

- SUPPORT LETTERS & EMAILS-2
 - Letter - Alaska Municipal League
 - Email: Story E
 - Email: Wright G
 - Email: Medicine Crow L
 - Email: Wallace
 - Email: Lovick Olga Dr
 - Email: Edwardson D
-



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March 31, 2014

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins
Room 426
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Representative Kreiss-Tompkins,

On behalf of the Alaska Municipal League, I would like to offer our support for HB 216. One of the many strong aspects of life here in Alaska is our cultural diversity. To attempt to make everyone the same would be a terrible thing to do to the cultures that have called Alaska home for thousands of years and to the non-Native populations that have recently made Alaska their home.

Many of the Native languages in this state are in dire straits, as there are very few speakers left. We have already lost speakers in Eyak; one of the most beautiful languages in the world. To think that the State of Alaska would not do everything in their power to keep these languages alive is a sad concept to think about.

The membership of AML is made up of all municipalities in the state, to include the small Native municipalities where English may not be the common language. As a united group, we support the ability of those people to have their language acknowledged as a part of their culture, their identity, their past and their future.

I heard a few people mention that their grandparents had also given up their language when they moved to Alaska. There is the crux of the discussion. Those languages of which we speak did not come to Alaska from elsewhere; they originated here.

We would request that all pass HB 216 and show support for the Native population of Alaska in helping them retain their primary languages.

Sincerely,

Kathie Wasserman
Executive Director

Joanna Lewis

From: Ellen Story <story.ellen@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 3:41 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)

Hello,

I am a teacher in the Juneau School District and I am writing to share my support for passing this bill. This is more than a symbolic act. It comes down to civil rights. The bill doesn't 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. This bill is a huge step towards equality and restorative efforts towards Alaska Native people. Please pass this bill as one small step to acknowledging the importance of the Alaska Native Language.

Thank you for your time,
Ellen Story

Joanna Lewis

From: Grady Wright <ygdratwighr@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 11:17 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

Mr. Lynn,

My name is Grady Wright and I am an Alaska citizen, writing in support of House Bill 216. I believe that the passing of this bill will help lift up Alaskans who have been historically mistreated and disrespected. The acknowledgement of indigenous languages as part of Alaska's heritage will be a boon not just for indigenous peoples, but Alaskans of every creed. We are not responsible for the crimes of our forebears, but we can become complacent in the consequences of those crimes if we are not vigilant. I hope you will consider this before tomorrow morning. Don't let anyone tell you this bill is controversial, English isn't going anywhere, but Tlingit might if we don't reverse current trends.

Best intentions,

Grady MK Wright

Joanna Lewis

From: Liz Medicine Crow <LizMedicineCrow@firstalaskans.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 9:22 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: RE: HB 216-SUPPORT

Good Morning, Representative Lynn - I watched the House State Affairs Committee this morning and was so happy HB 216 was moved out of Committee. Gunalcheesh, Haw.aa, Thank you for supporting this bill. Have a great day, Liz

From: Liz Medicine Crow
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 7:58 AM
To: 'Rep.Bob.Lynn@akleg.gov'
Subject: HB 216-SUPPORT

Dear Representative, As a member of the House State Affairs Committee, you have the opportunity to take historically significant action by making Alaska Native languages official languages of the state. It is not a complicated bill nor a complicated issues, it is the distance between right and wrong. We ask for your support of HB 216. Please pass it out of your committee so it can move on to a vote of the floor of the Alaska House of Representatives. Gunalcheesh, Haw.aa, Thank you! If you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to call or email. Take care, Liz

Elizabeth Laa.guen.gei, Kaa Tsáas Medicine Crow (Haida, Tlingit)

President/CEO

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Progress for the next 10,000 years...

True to identity, heritage, and values Alaska Natives are informed and engaged in leading the decisions that shape the future.

Joanna Lewis

From: Liana J Wallace <lwallace@uas.alaska.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 8:59 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: Alaska Native Languages walking a Thin Line of Survival in Alaska

Honorable Bob Lynn,

Please give as much attention as you can offer in support of HB216.

The Alaska Native Language Center which was formed in 1972 and then the recent Alaska Native Language Preservation Council which was just recently formed are said to represent our efforts to preserve our languages. They do not, represent all languages in Alaska equally. If you look at their council make up or even their home pages, all the languages represented are mostly the upper regions of Alaska. In the meantime, more and more fluent language speakers in the lower parts of Alaska are dyeing and in some cases taking the language with them as in the case of the Eyak. Please reconsider the thought that these two organizations will satisfy the need for us to have equal assess or resources to keeping our own language alive and please give us your support in HB 216 for it is only when all Alaska Native Languages are kept alive and supported by our government that we remain as Alaskans are enriched by knowledge and traditional ways of knowing about our environment and with our cultural tourism businesses.

Thank you for your attention in this matter,

Liana Wallace

Aak'w Indian from Juneau Alaska.

Joanna Lewis

From: olga@lithophile.com <olga.away@gmail.com> on behalf of Olga Lovick
<Olga@lithophile.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 7:13 AM
To: Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: Support for HB 216

I write in strong support of HB 216, "An Act adding the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unanga^, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages as official languages of the state."

Due to the great degree of endangerment of all of these languages, this bill is largely symbolic, but this does not detract from its importance.

Alaska's linguistic heritage is very rich, including 20 languages belonging to four different language families. Alaska's record in protecting its Native languages has been overwhelmingly poor: in particular the boarding school system has contributed greatly to the demise of these beautiful languages. Today, all of the languages that remain are endangered, many severely so, and Eyak went extinct six years ago. While the proposed bill will not be able to halt or even reverse this trend, it has great symbolic power. It will send a signal to the speakers of Alaska Native languages, and to those who are working on learning and teaching the languages. It will not endanger the status of English as the dominant language of the State, but it will give recognition to the languages that were spoken before the first white people ever came. Senate Bill 130 (the creation of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council) was a step in this direction. HB 216 will continue this positive trend.

I have worked with Alaska Native languages for over a decade now, and have seen the speaker numbers dwindle rapidly. I know how much it would mean to the elders who speak their language, and to their children who do not speak it anymore, if their languages finally gained the recognition they deserve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Olga Lovick
Associate Professor of Linguistics and Dene Language Studies Department of Indigenous Languages, Arts and Cultures
First Nations University of Canada
1 First Nations Way
Regina, Saskatchewan
Canada S4S 7K2

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Joanna Lewis

From: Debby Edwardson <debby.dahl.edwardson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 11:18 PM
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. Benjamin Nageak
Subject: House Bill 216

To the House State Affairs Committee: Representative.Bob.Lynn@akleg.gov

I support House Bill 216 and applaud those who have sponsored this important and historic piece of education. It is a travesty that Alaska is currently considered an English-Only state. The Native cultures of this state, and their languages, predate the state and are among our most prized resources. We cannot be proud of the fact that the state government played an unfortunate role in driving Alaska Native languages to the brink of extinction but we can be proud of this legislation.

This is more than a symbolic act. It is a fight for equality and civil rights. Please support it.

Debby Dahl Edwardson, President, North Slope Borough School District

My Name is Not Easy, Marshall Cavendish/Amazon 2011
A National Book Award Finalist, A Junior Library Guild Selection
Best Children's Books of 2011, Washington Post

Blessing's Bead, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009
ALA/YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults 2011. Booklist Top 10 First Novels for Youth: 2010