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Wallace/Martin  
2/19/15

**CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3( )**  
**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**  
**TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

**BY**

**Offered:**  
**Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES EDGMON, Kreiss-Tomkins, Kito, Tuck**

**A RESOLUTION**

**Urging members of the Alaska delegation to the United States Congress to introduce substantially similar legislation to the Alaska Safe Families and Villages Act of 2013.**

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

**WHEREAS** the 229 federally recognized tribes in the state represent a vast continuum of cultural legacies enriched by thousands of years of traditions and place-based ways of life; and

**WHEREAS** many Alaska tribal communities face severe problems relating to poverty, lack of economic opportunity, alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault; and

**WHEREAS** the percentage of Alaska Natives living below the federal poverty guideline is nearly twice the national average; and

**WHEREAS** the unemployment rate for Alaska Natives is dramatically higher than the national average; and

**WHEREAS** the alcohol-related death rate for Alaska Natives has, in recent years, been more than 16 times higher than the alcohol-related death rate for Caucasians; and

**WHEREAS** rural communities in the state have, in recent years, reported alarming

opioid, heroin, and methamphetamine abuse; and

**WHEREAS** Alaska Native women in rural communities have reported rates of domestic violence multiple times higher than the national average; and

**WHEREAS** Alaska Native women suffer the highest rate of sexual assault of any population in the United States, and the rate of sexual assault for Alaska Native children is six times the national average; and

**WHEREAS**, while Alaska Natives represent 19 percent of the population of the state, they make up 36 percent of Alaskans in prisons or jails; and

**WHEREAS**, in the past 25 years, state, federal, and joint commissions, task forces, and committees established to address those issues have included the Alaska Natives Commission, created in 1990; the Alaska Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Fairness and Access, created in 1995; the Alaska Commission on Rural Governance and Empowerment, created in 1998; the Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission, created in 2004; the Indian Law and Order Commission, created in 2010; and the United States Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence, created in 2013; and

**WHEREAS** each of those bodies concluded that the strongly centralized law enforcement and justice systems of the state have been inadequate to alleviate crime, social ills, and community distress in rural Alaska; and

**WHEREAS** each of those bodies identified the need to strengthen the authority, responsibility, and capacity of local tribal governments to administer public safety and justice in their communities; and

**WHEREAS** many experts agree that greater control, better defined jurisdiction, and increased accountability at the local level will lead to swifter response to violence and criminal activity in communities, increased crime prevention, and increased rehabilitative, rather than punitive, sentencing models; and

**WHEREAS**, in matters of jurisdiction and the delivery of justice at the local level, the state has too often and for too long been the adversary of Alaska Native tribes; and

**WHEREAS** ambiguities in federal laws deprive Alaska tribes of jurisdictional tools to make their communities safer and healthier; and

**WHEREAS** the original version of the Alaska Safe Families and Villages Act of

1 2013, which failed to pass the 113th United States Congress, included provisions to establish  
2 a demonstration project under which a number of Alaska Native tribes would possess  
3 enhanced authority over domestic violence and child abuse and neglect, greater local law  
4 enforcement responsibilities to combat alcohol and drug abuse, increased federal funding for  
5 development of their tribal courts and local law enforcement needs, and improved  
6 coordination and communication among federal, state, tribal, and local law enforcement  
7 agencies;

8 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the members of the  
9 Alaska delegation in the United States Congress to introduce legislation substantially similar  
10 to the original Alaska Safe Families and Villages Act of 2013, reported to the Senate in the  
11 First Regular Session of the 113th United States Congress.

12 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of  
13 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and  
14 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the U.S. House of  
15 Representatives; the Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Majority Leader of the U.S. House of  
16 Representatives; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of  
17 Representatives; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the  
18 Honorable Harry Reid, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; and the Honorable Lisa  
19 Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young,  
20 U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.