

Raymond Watson, Chairperson
Myron P. Naneng Sr., President
Phone: (907) 543-7300
Fax: (907) 543-3369

AVCP
Association of Village Council Presidents
Administration
Pouch 219, Bethel, AK 99559



January 26, 2016

Akiachak
Akutuk
Alakanuk
Andreusky
Aniak
Atmautluak
Bethel
Bill Moore's Sl.
Cheformak
Chevak
Chuathbaluk
Chulomnawick
Crooked Creek
Fek
Emmonak
Georgetown
Goodnews Bay
Hamilton
Hooper Bay
Lower Kalskag
Upper Kalskag
Kasigluk
Kipnuk
Kongiganak
Kotlik
Kwethluk
Kwigillingok
Lime Village
Marshall
Mekoryuk
Mtn. Village
Napaimut
Napakiak
Napaskiak
Newtok
Nightmute
Nunakauyak
Nunam Iqua
Nunapitchuk
Ohogamiut
Oscarville
Paimiut
Pilot Station
Pitka's Point
Platinum
Quinhagak
Red Devil
Russian Mission
Scammon Bay
Sleetmute
St. Mary's
Stony River
Tuluksuk
Tuntutluak
Tununak
Umkumiut

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monique Vondall-Rieke".

Monique Vondall-Rieke, JD
Tribal Justice Center Director

David Scott

From: Randy Ruaro
Sent: Monday, February 01, 2016 2:36 PM
To: David Scott
Subject: FW: Governor's Adoption Bill HB 200/SB 112

Importance: High

FYI

From: Charity Carmody [mailto:charity.carmody.p8jk@statefarm.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 10:30 AM
To: Sen. Bert Stedman <Sen.Bert.Stedman@akleg.gov>; Sen. Cathy Giessel <Sen.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov>; Sen. Pete Kelly <Sen.Pete.Kelly@akleg.gov>; Sen. Bill Stoltze <Sen.Bill.Stoltze@akleg.gov>; Sen. Johnny Ellis <Sen.Johnny.Ellis@akleg.gov>
Subject: Governor's Adoption Bill HB 200/SB 112
Importance: High

Dear Senators –

I am writing you in support of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. I believe this to be a very important piece of legislation at this time. As you know, our child welfare system is in crisis. There are more children in the custody of the state than ever. Roughly 60% of these children are Alaska native. The reality of the situation is that we do not have enough foster and adoptive homes to adequately place these children.

I am the President and Founder of Beacon Hill. We are a foster care and adoption community resource center based in Anchorage. We provide many services to families involved in foster care and work hard to promote adoption for legally free children in our state. Without a doubt, one of the most grievous situations we come across is when an Alaska native child has a family or tribal member that wants to adopt them and yet they are subjected to bureaucracy and further trauma.

As a state and community, we are continuing to suffer from the consequences of our actions prior to ICWA. We must work diligently to remove barriers for Alaska Native families to be able to adopt. I believe that this bill is a good start in promoting permanency, preserving culture, and honoring the traditions of our land and Native people.

I urge you to pass this bill. If you would like to talk with me, I would be honored. Thank you for your taking the time to read this, for your service to our state and for caring about our children.

Charity Carmody, President
Beacon Hill
Serving Alaska's foster children and those at risk of going into foster care through the love of Christ.
PO Box 241764 Anchorage, AK 99524
907-222-0925 Resource Center Office
907-632-4862 Personal Cell



January 26, 2016

Sent Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Bert Stedman
Chairman of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: SB 112, Adoption of Child in State Custody

Dear Chairman Stedman:

As the president of the largest Native organization in the state, and on behalf of our members – including 185 federally recognized tribes, 153 village corporations, 12 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit associations and tribal consortiums that contract and run federal and state programs – I write to convey the Alaska Federation of Natives' (AFN) strong support of SB 112, Adoption of a Child in State Custody.

As you may know, AFN worked closely with Governor Bill Walker, Commissioner of Health and Social Services Valerie Davidson, and many others during the previous legislative session to remove the barriers that effectively prevent Alaska Native families and individuals from exercising their right to be considered a 'preferred' adoptive placement for Native children in state custody under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). SB 112 effectively and efficiently accomplishes this task by making two minor administrative changes to state law.

First, the bill proposes to link adoption proceedings to existing child-in-need of aid (CINA) proceedings by ensuring any petition to adopt a child in state custody – who is adjudicated a child in need of aid – is filed and heard within corresponding CINA proceeding. This simple change will better protect Native children, as well as Alaska Native families and individuals who wish to adopt them, and will save the state considerable resources by making certain related adoption and CINA proceedings evolve as one court matter. Under current law, the proceedings are filed and heard separately, which makes it difficult if not impossible for many Alaska Native families and individuals to assert their desire to adopt a Native child in state custody. This is particularly true when the state changes the permanency goal for a Native child from reunification to adoption during the course of an open CINA case, but fails to adequately communicate notice of the change. Once an

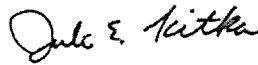
interested relative finds out about the change, it is not enough for them to become involved in the CINA case; they must then also know to initiate a case of their own. SB 112 would streamline the process.

The bill also proposes to allow the use of a 'proxy' in lieu of a formal petition to adopt a child in state custody, and clarifies that the document may be filed by a Native child's relative, tribe (or tribe that the child is eligible to be enrolled in), or another Native family. The filer of the proxy may also communicate his or her request to adopt the child by telephone, mail, facsimile, electronic mail or in person under the bill. The proxy clarification is especially important to the Alaska Native community as many Native peoples may not speak English fluently or may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel.

Congress enacted ICWA in 1978 to combat to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities. Today, upwards of 40% of the Alaska Native children in state custody are adopted annually by non-Native families and individuals. It is the hope of AFN that SB 112 will increase the number of Alaska Native children who achieve permanency in line with the goals of ICWA.

Thank you for your commitment to returning Alaska Native children in state custody to their families, communities, and home regions.

Sincerely,
ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES



Julie Kitka
President

Cc: Governor Walker
Commissioner Davidson
Senator Cathy Giessel, Committee Vice-Chair
Senator Pete Kelly, Committee Member
Senator Bill Stoltze, Committee Member
Senator Johnny Ellis, Committee Member



2050 VENIA MINOR ROAD
P.O. BOX 86
ST. PAUL ISLAND, ALASKA 99660

February 3, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

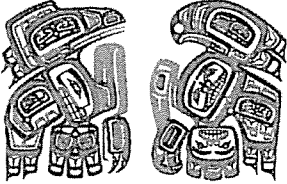
Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Amos T. Philemonoff, Sr.
President, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

JAN 28 2016



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Edward K. Thomas Building
9097 Glacier Highway • Juneau, Alaska 99801

January 26, 2016

Senate Health and Social Services Committee Members
Capitol Building Room 205

RE: House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112

Dear Senate Health and Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200 and Senate Bill 112. Central Council believes this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska Native children and families.

The proposed legislation removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt children connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. This is a concern because our children are our greatest resource, and the long lasting effects of loss of tradition and culture can be measured well into adulthood. It is our hope this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

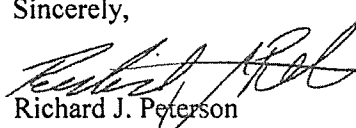
Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska families who live in rural areas do not have fair access to the courts as do urban residents. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Please take into consideration, that while this bill will help Alaska Native foster children, it will also help the 40% of the non-Native children in the system who also deserve to be placed with a family.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Peterson
President



January 26, 2016

The Honorable Bert Stedman, Chair
Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

ph.
907 793.3600

fx.
907 793.3602

web.
CITCI.org

Dear Chairman Stedman:

Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) writes in strong support of Senate Bill 112 because of the significant positive impact it will have on reducing the long term negative effects of placing Native children outside of their own communities and families. As the Senate Health and Social Services Committee is well aware, Native children make up over 60% of the children in out of home care, and Native adoptive families are often difficult to identify and place. CITC offers a wide spectrum of services that assist families both before and after their involvement with the Office of Children's Services. From supervised visitation to intensive in-home services, CITC has a tremendous impact on the families with whom we work. Last year CITC realized the following results in our Child and Family services division:

- 86 percent of program participants referred in the family preservation program maintained their children in their own care
- an average of 90 percent of families maintained care for their own children through the Intensive Family Preservation program
- 638 individuals participated in family support/preservation programs, of whom 100 percent avoided Office of Children's Services (OCS) involvement or placement

In addition, CITC's holistic, wrap-around services, including TANF, Recovery Services and education programs, support families to overcome their barriers and remain intact. Because of the nature of our work, CITC has an inside view of the opportunities to improve outcomes for Native families, and how important it is to make it as efficient as possible for family adoption to occur through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) process.

SB 112 removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable and by removing obstacles that have resulted in children unnecessarily being disconnected from their families.

The Honorable Bert Stedman

January 26, 2016

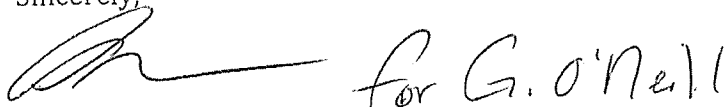
Page Two

Unfortunately, currently well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. This bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions, and will reduce litigation based on lack of compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which Congress enacted in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities. Sadly, after almost forty years, Alaska Native families still experience disproportionate rates of children placed out of their homes and culture.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the CINA proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceeding held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption. As a result, children in out-of-home placement would reach permanency more quickly, lessening the burden on Alaska's Office of Children's Services.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaska's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gloria O'Neill", followed by the text "for G. O'Neill" in a similar handwritten style.

Gloria O'Neill
President/CEO

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Mey
RJM

January 26, 2015

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

We are parents, school volunteers, and professionals who work with Alaska Native children and families. We are writing as constituents to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. This bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

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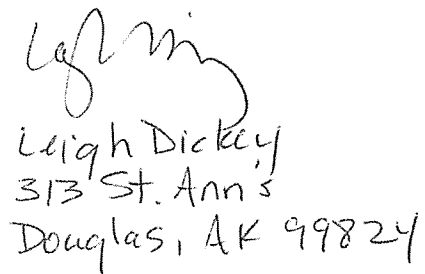
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Holly Handlor
9831 Nine Mile Creek Rd
Juneau AK 99801



Leigh Dickey
313 St. Ann's
Douglas, AK 99824

1-26-16

Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members:

This is a letter in support of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112.

I believe this bill will have important and positive impacts on the outcomes of Alaska Native children and the Alaska Native families who want to adopt them because this bill removes bureaucratic barriers making the process more accessible, understandable, and natural for families.

Alaska Native culture has kept children and families in Alaska safe, happy, and healthy in their communities for thousands of years and all Alaska Native children have the right to be connected to and grow up in their Alaska Native culture and heritage and with their Alaska Native family. I have heard and seen in my nine years of work as an Indian Child Welfare Act department director that over 40% of Alaska Native children adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members, non-ICWA. ICWA came into being to help prevent this 40% loss of Alaska Native children outside of their families and culture. This bill has the potential to decrease that 40% and increase the number of healthy and happy Alaska Native children who can grow up within their family, culture and traditions.

Passing this bill will help eliminate complicated procedural barriers inherent in probate court proceedings in the adoption process for children in custody-time, access to legal counsel, language, etc. Alaska Native families instead would be considered for adoption through regular Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings, and would have natural opportunities to state their wish to adopt. They would also have the option to make their request through several avenues natural to them, by phone, mail, fax, email, or in person to the Office of Children's Services, and/or through a request made for them by the child's tribe. Providing these options would increase the number of Alaska native families willing and wanting to adopt to be able to be considered for adoption.

Thank you for your work to keep Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities and culture.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Offt


Yup'ik, mother, sister and auntie, lifelong Alaskan, and voter



P.O. BOX 286 ILIAMNA AK 99606
| 907-571-1246 TEL | 907-571-3539 FAX
Email: ivc@iliamnavc.org

January 25, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,
ILIAMNA VILLAGE COUNCIL



Thomas Hedlund, President



KTC

Kasigluk Traditional Council

Post Office Box 19

Kasigluk, Alaska 99609

Ph: (907) 477-6405 / 6406 Fx: (907) 477-6212

kasigluk.admin@gmail.com

kasigluk.bookkeeper@gmail.com

January 26, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native Families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Mauts

KTC President



KTC

Kasigluk Traditional Council

Post Office Box 19

Kasigluk, Alaska 99609

Ph: (907) 477-6405 / 6406 Fx: (907) 477-6212

kasigluk.admin@gmail.com

kasigluk.bookkeeper@gmail.com

January 26, 2016

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Mautz

KTC President



KAWERAK, INC. • P.O. Box 948 • Nome, AK 99762



TEL: (907) 443-5231 • FAX: (907) 443-4452



SERVING THE
VILLAGES OF:
BREVIG MISSION
COUNCIL
DIOMEDE
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GOLOVIN
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NOME
SAVOONGA
SHAKTOOLIK
SHISHMAREF
SOLOMON
STEBBINS
ST. MICHAEL
TELLER
UNALAKLEET
WALES
WHITE MOUNTAIN

1/26/16

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska Native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable. Family and tribal members who live in villages have little direct access to the documents required to make a formal request to adopt. Allowing family and tribal members to make their request known to an ICWA worker, OCS worker, or in court instead of with formal documentation, would increase the amount of children returning home.

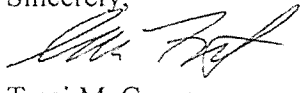
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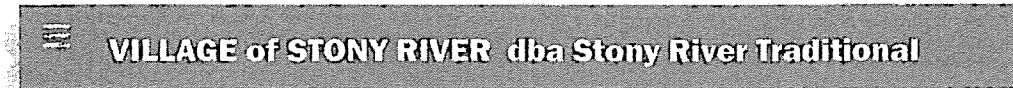
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

 For Traci McGarry

Traci McGarry
Kawerak, Inc. Program Director
Children & Family Services/ Child Advocacy Center



Village of Stony
River Box SRV
Stony River AK,

Phone: 907-537-3258
Fax: 907-537-3254
E-mail: stony.river@yahoo.com

President-Mary Willis

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

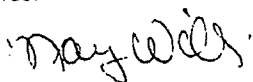
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely, 
Mary Willis
Village of Stony River

Tanana Chiefs Conference

Chief Peter John Tribal Building

122 First Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-4897
(907) 452-8251 Fax: (907) 459-3850

SUBREGIONS

UPPER KUSKOKWIM

McGrath
Medfra
Nikolai
Takatna
Telida

January 26, 2016

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members
Re: House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112

LOWER YUKON

Anvik
Grayling
Holy Cross
Shageluk

Dear Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska.

UPPER TANANA

Dof Lake
Eagle
Healy Lake
Northway
Tanacross
Tetlin
Tok

Numerous state and national policy already dictate familial placements. This is based on research that proves time and again a child's family is the best placement option. State and federal statute mandate family placements of foster children when possible. For Native children, federal law takes this preference mandate further by ensuring preference to a child's tribe and other Native families when an immediate family placement is not available.

YUKON FLATS

Arctic Village
Beaver
Birch Creek
Canyon Village
Chalkyitsik
Circle
Fort Yukon
Venetie

House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112 removes barriers for families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

YUKON KOYUKUK

Galena
Huslia
Kaitag
Koyukuk
Nulato
Ruby

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. This is a concern because our children are our greatest resource, and too often Native children suffer in adulthood when they lose connection to their Native culture. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

YUKON TANANA

Alatna
Allakaket
Evansville
Fairbanks
Hughes
Lake
Minchumina
Manley Hot
Springs
Minto
Nenana
Rampart
Stevens Village
Tanana

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska families who live in rural Alaska do not have fair access to the courts as do urban Alaskans. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Please take into consideration, that while this bill will help Alaska Native foster children, it will also help the 40% of the non-Native children in the system who also deserve to be placed with family.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victor Joseph". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "J".

Victor Joseph
TCC President and CEO

January 26th, 2016

The Honorable Members of the Senate HSS Committee,

Please join us in making Alaska's children a priority. We are writing in support of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112 "An Act establishing procedures related to a petition for adoption of a child in state custody; adding a definition of 'proxy for a formal petition'; amending Rule 6(a), Alaska Adoption Rules; and providing for an effective date." We believe this bill will have positive impacts for Alaskan children and families involved in child welfare.

Of the more than 2,800 children in state foster care, Alaska Native children are overrepresented, making up more than 60%. This Bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic, understandable, and conducive to Alaskan communities.

This Bill would allow for the child-in-need and adoption proceeding to be kept as one court matter, ultimately protecting children and families wishing to adopt, and saving state time and resources.

Alaskan children are twice as likely to experience abuse and neglect as children in any other state. Once children enter our foster care system, their hardships are not over. They are shuffled between "placements," waiting to see if they will be reunited with their families or begin the journey to finding some sense of permanency. This Bill could help children move more quickly toward permanency, ideally with relatives or tribal members.

As advocates, constituents, and caring Alaskan's we hope you will join us in making Alaska's children a priority.

Regards,

Amanda Metivier
Executive Director
Facing Foster Care in Alaska, Joined by;

Alaska Child & Family
Alaska Youth and Family Network
Covenant House Alaska
My House Inc.
Alaska Children's Trust
Beacon Hill
Volunteers of America, Alaska

Native Village of Bill Moore's Slough

P.O Box 20288

Kotlik, Alaska 99620

Phone (907)899-4232 Fax (907)899-4232

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. WE believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through and entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Stella Fancyboy

Native Village of Bill Moore's Slough President

**Native Village of Kwinhagak
PO Box 149
Quinhagak, AK 99655
Phone 907-556-8165, FAX 907-556-8166**

January 26, 2015

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

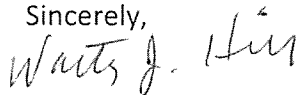
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Walter J. Hill
President



ICWA Office

January 27, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. I believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. I hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Mary Andrew

ICWA Caseworker II



KENAITZE
INDIAN
TRIBE

WWW.KENAITZE.ORG

PHONE: (907) 335-7200 • FAX: (907) 335-7239

P.O. Box 988 • KENAI, AK 99611

January 26, 2016

The Honorable Bert Stedman
Chairperson, Senate Health and Social Services Committee
State Capitol Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chairperson Stedman:

I am writing on behalf of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe to express support for House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The tribe believes this bill will positively affect Alaska Native children and families now and into the future.

The bill simplifies the process for Alaska Native families who wish to adopt children connected to them by family or tribal membership. It also eliminates barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA). Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

We have seen these challenges firsthand at the tribe and believe that if this bill passes, it will benefit many Alaska Native children and families across the state.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Jaylene Peterson-Nyren
Executive Director
Kenaitze Indian Tribe



OHOGAMIUT TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

P.O. Box 49

Marshall, Alaska 99585

Phone: (907) 679-6517/6598 Fax (907) 679-6516

**"Let us put our Minds Together and see what kind of Life we can build
For our Children" – Sitting Bull**

January 26, 2016

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members:

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

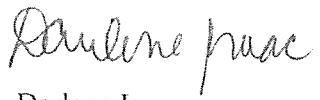
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child in Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,
OHOGAMIUT TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Darlene Isaac".

Darlene Isaac,
President

Cc: file

January 26, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members:

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) believes this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska Native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities. By tribal resolution, ASNA is the ICWA representative for the Arctic Slope communities of Atkasook, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut and Wainwright. The services we provide include representing Tribal children in court cases, handling customary adoptions and working with families, courts, and the state to place children with relatives. This bill will strengthen the services we provide and allow maximum benefit for the people of the North Slope.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceedings and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Angela Cox
Vice President of Administration
Arctic Slope Native Association

Native Village of Noatak
ICWA Coordinator
P.O. Box 89

Noatak, AK 99761

PHONE: (907) 485-2173/2172 Ext. 22

FAX: (907) 485-2117

nva@nanvutag.org

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.


Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions. Our native traditions are highly important to us in our native village of Noatak, our love for children and responsibility to tribe are part of our Inupiaq Iliqisuat Values. Iliqisuat meaning, "Our way of life."

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child in Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

I have attached a copy of our Inupiaq Iliqisuat Values. Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Nanna Patterson
ICWA Coordinator

Inupiat Iḷitqusiat Values

Knowledge of Language

Knowledge of Family Tree

Sharing

Humility

Respect for Others

Love for Children

Cooperation

Hard Work

Respect for Elders

Respect for Nature

Avoid Conflict

Domestic Skills

Hunter Success

Responsibility to Tribe

Every Inupiaq is responsible to all other Inupiaq for the survival of
our culture spirit, and the values and traditions through which it

survives. Through our extended family,

we retain, teach and live our Iṅupiaq way.

David Scott

From: Trevor Storrs <tstorrs@alaskachildrenstrust.org>
Sent: Sunday, January 24, 2016 4:02 PM
To: Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Bill Stoltze; Sen. Johnny Ellis
Cc: Christy Lawton (christy.lawton@alaska.gov)
Subject: HB200 - Support

Dear Senate HSS Committee,

Alaska Children's Trust (ACT) is the statewide lead organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. We applaud the Office of Children Services, DHSS and the Walker Administration for addressing the high number of Alaska Native children in state custody and the need for a strong preference that those children be adopted into Native homes. The success of these children overcoming the trauma they experienced and build the resilience they will need to manage the effects of the trauma are influenced by the environment around them. A key component to managing trauma is cultural/social resilience. Native Children who are adopted by native families have a strong linkage to their cultural heritage which builds resilience. Because of this, ACT supports the goal and purpose of HB 200.

Trevor Storrs

Executive Director

Alaska Children's Trust