

Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Public Testimony on Finance Budget

March 7, 2016

Good Afternoon Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to speak regarding the Budget/Cuts.

I am Sasha I. Soboleff, Grand President of the Alaska Native Brotherhood, an organization which has been in recorded existence for 104 years coupled with our Alaska Native Sisterhood 101 years old for which we have a singular word written as our MISSION, EDUCATION .

Anb/ans ORGANIZATIONS have addressed several key historical issues among those are the Right To Vote, Recognize Alaska Natives as Citizens and integrated Public Schools for our children, among other issues.

We are the VOICE of our 30 thousand members in SE Alaska & some western villages. We bring the Educational Issues which are threatened, again which impacts our children.

Since the late 1800 & early 1900s our cultures have been impacted by the western culture. The Teachers and western influences immediately impacted our family units which became fractured & remains today in that mode of sensitivity and fragility. Layer in the complexities of the passage of several Territorial Laws and Statehood plus the passage of ANCSA and ANICLA, this mix is toxic at best.

Since EDUCATION is our mission, cutting education further marginalizes our opportunities and pushes our children even further away from equal education opportunities.

How do we address that?

One must look for successful learning opportunities for students. That examination must include a learning which views the new challenges "through a cultural Lens."

How do we address the overall Alaska State Average Native DROP OUT RATE OF 63.2% a statistic which has remained unchanged for 40+ years.

Our emphasis to feed and support the AKLN program which has a proven record via University Alaska Southeast which recognizes the "Native Skill Set" in learning.

What is that "Skill SET?"

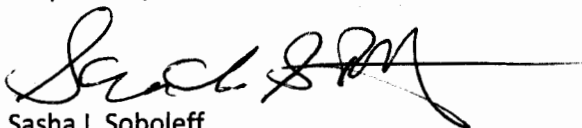
It is the processing of all information by what we SEE, by what we HEAR, by what we SMELL, by what we TOUCH and TASTE.

AKLN has served Native Students during the 2015 school year starting with 264 and increasing to 740 students currently.

Cut you must, but Don't push our Alaska Native Students further away from the educational opportunities.

Thank you for this sober and challenging exercise.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sasha I. Soboleff', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Sasha I. Soboleff

Alaska Native Brotherhood

Grand President

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