

From: [Charity Carmody](#)
To: [Stedman, Bert K \(LAA\)](#); [Giessel, Cathy \(LAA\)](#); [Kelly, Pete \(LAA\)](#); [Stoltze, Bill \(LAA\)](#); [Ellis, Johnny \(LAA\)](#)
Subject: Governor's Adoption Bill HB 200/SB 112
Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 10:30:01 AM
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



February 5, 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:

This letter is a written statement of support for HB 200/SB 112 on behalf of Doyon, Limited. Doyon's mission is to enhance our position as a financially strong Native Corporation in order to promote the social and economic well-being of our shareholders, strengthen our native way of life, and enhance our land and resources.

Doyon, Limited is the state-chartered Alaska Native Corporation established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for Interior Alaska. Currently we have over 19,300 shareholders, most of whom live here in Alaska.

Doyon believes that HB 200/SB112 will have positive impacts for Alaska. State and federal statutes mandate family placements of foster children when placements are possible. Federal law, known as the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), takes the preference mandate for Alaska Native children further by ensuring preference to a child's tribe and other Native families when an immediate family placement is not available.

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, cultures, or communities.

Today, upwards of 40% of the Alaska Native children in state custody are adopted annually by non-Native families and individuals. Doyon supports HB 200/SB112, in

the hopes that it 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Schutt', with a stylized, cursive-like script.

Aaron M. Schutt
President and CEO
Doyon, Limited

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

From: [Elizabeth Steven](#)
To: [Lawton, Christy \(HSS\)](#)
Cc: [Jenkins, Sarah L. \(HSS Sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Letter of Support
Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 10:34:52 AM

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 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) proceeding 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.

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

Sincerely,

Elizabeth J. Steven, ICWA Worker, Napaskiak Tribal Council

Lawton, Christy (HSS)

From: nunap.admin@gmail.com on behalf of NUP Tribal Administrator [tribaladmin@yupik.org]
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 11:12 AM
To: Lawton, Christy (HSS)
Subject: Support

The Nunapitchuk Tribe respectfully support SB 200 making it possible to perform adoptions for our tribe. We have pending adoptions that we work on following due process. Thank -you for this opportunity.

--

Eli Wassillie
Tribal Administrator
Native Village of Nunapitchuk
Nunapitchuk IRA Council
Box 130
Nunapitchuk, AK 99641
(907)527-5705; fax 527-5711

My new eMail address is tribaladmin@yupik.org



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.

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

Sincerely,

Mary Andrew
ICWA Caseworker II

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



Akiachak
Akiak
Alakanuk
Andreafsky
Aniak
Atmautluak
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Cheformak
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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
Tuluksak
Tuntutuliak
Tununak
Umkumiut

January 26, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

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

Sincerely,

Monique Vondall-Rieke, JD
Tribal Justice Center Director

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

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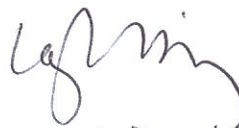
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Holly Handlor
9831 Nine Mile Creek Rd
Juneau AK 99801



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

Letter of Support

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.

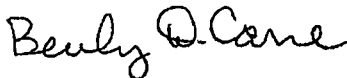
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

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. The children that were adopted to non-native families were displaced and were alienated by both cultures of natives and non-natives.

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 cursive script that reads "Beverly D. Cano".

Beverly D. Cano

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

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



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.

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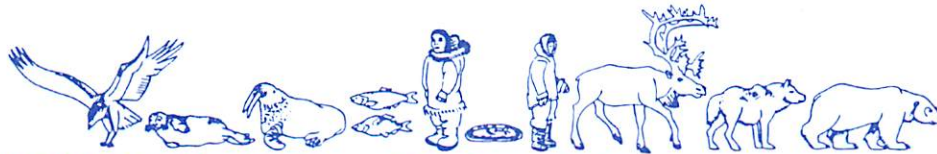
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Martin

KTC President



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



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



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SOLOMON
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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.

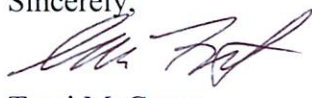
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

 For Traci McGarry

Traci McGarry

Kawerak, Inc. Program Director

Children & Family Services/ Child Advocacy Center



MANIILAQ
ASSOCIATION

January 27, 2016

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

Dear Members,

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.

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.

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 into 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.

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

Sincerely,

Timothy Schuerch
President/CEO

MANIILAQ ASSOCIATION | P.O. BOX 256 | KOTZEBUE, AK 99752 | 1.800.478.3312

Kotzebue **Dikiqtagruk**, Ambler **Ivisaappaat**, Buckland **Nunatchiaq**, Deering **Ipnachiaq**, Kiana **Katyaak**, Kivalina **Kivaliniq**,
Kobuk **Laugviik**, Noatak **Nautaaq**, Noorvik **Nuurvik**, Point Hope **Tikigaq**, Selawik **Akuligaq**, Shungnak **Isinnaq**

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

January 26, 2015

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

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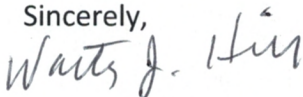
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Walter J. Hill
President

Nondalton Tribal Council
P.O. Box 49
Nondalton, A.K. 99640
Ph. (907) 294-2257
Fax (907) 294-2271
nondaltontribe@yahoo.com
ntcfsilas@yahoo.com

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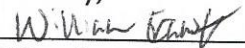
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,


William Evanoff, President



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

Darlene Isaac

Darlene Isaac,
President

Cc: file

Pitkas Point Traditional Council
PO Box 127, #22 Pitkas Point
St. Marys, Alaska 99658
907-438-2833 – 907-438-2569 (fax)
pitkaspoint@yahoo.com

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,

Ruth Riley, President
Native Village of Pitkas Point

Cc: files

**Scammon Bay Traditional Council****103 Askinuk Street/P.O. Box 110 Scammon Bay, AK 99662-0110****Phone (907) 558-5425 Fax (907) 558-5134 E-mail scammonbay@starband.net**

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.

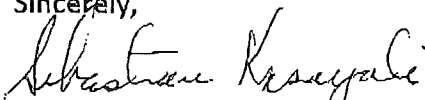
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,


Sebastian Kasayuli, President

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

Dot 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
Kaltag
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", written in a cursive style.

Victor Joseph
TCC President and CEO



26 January 2017

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

It is with great pleasure to provide you with this letter of support for House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. As the lead statewide organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect, Alaska Children's Trust (ACT) recognizes that this bill will have positive and lasting impact for Alaska native children and families.

Children are one of the greatest resources in Alaska. 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. Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. 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.

HB200/SB 112 is one step closer to us ensuring Alaska's children grow-up in a safe, stable, and nurturing environment. 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. 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,

Trevor Storrs
Executive Director

First Lady Donna Walker
Honorary Chair

Ginger Baim, *Chair*

Ivy Spohnholz, *Vice Chair*

Lisa Wimmer, *Treasurer*

Melanie Bahnke, *Secretary*

Ramona Reeves, *Past Chair*

Susan Anderson

Elsie Boudreau

Com. Valerie Davidson

Com. Michael Hanley

Carley Lawrence

Sherry Modrow

Tlisa Northcutt

Marcus Wilson

Julie Woodworth



Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc.

1131 E. International Airport Rd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99518-1408
Phone (907) 276-2700
Fax (907) 279-4351

January 26, 2016

Subject: House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112—Keeping Alaska's Native Children with Family

Dear Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

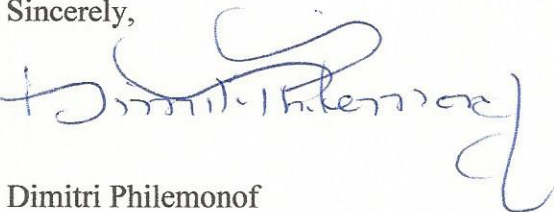
This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc., and its thirteen (13) board members strongly believe this bill will have a positive and lasting impact for Alaska Native children and their families. The Bill efficiently removes barriers for Alaska Native families who strongly desire to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and culturally relevant.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is the APIA's hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions. As you know, The U.S. Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the disturbing 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. This had a devastating effect on Native families and ICWA has been key to reverse the traumatic effects of removal.

In addition, Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. Bill 112 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 and convoluted proceeding held in Probate Court. With bill 112 in place, Alaska Native 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. The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) strongly supports this action.

Committee members, on behalf of the 13 board members and 13 Tribes APIA represents, I urge you to support Senate Bill 112 by keeping Alaska Native children with their families and in their own home communities connected to their culture. Our future depends on it.

Sincerely,



Dimitri Philemonof
President & CEO



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 Atqasuk, 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



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.

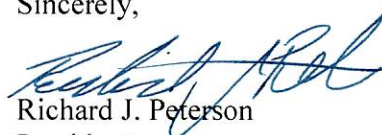
Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

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



Chevak Traditional Council

P.O. Box 140

Chevak, Alaska 99563

(907) 858-7428 fax (907) 858-7812
chevaktc@gmail.com

January 26, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. Chevak Native Village 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 and true identity.

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.

On behalf of Chevak Native Village Council,

Samson Matchian
Interim Administrator



COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

P.O. Box 33

Fort Yukon, AK 99740

Ph: 907-662-2587 Fax: 907-662-3333

www.catg.org

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members

Subject: Supporting House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112

Dear Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. This bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska's children and families.

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 closely aligned to the realities rural families face.

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 own family, culture and traditions. It will also help the 40% of non-Native children in the system who also deserve to be placed with family.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 because of 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.

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.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

Rhonda Pitka
CATG Chairwoman

Patricia J. Stanley
CATG Executive Director

KARLUK IRA TRIBAL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 22
KARLUK, ALASKA 99608
(907)241-2218 FAX(907)241-2208
EMAIL: karlukiracouncil@aol.com

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.

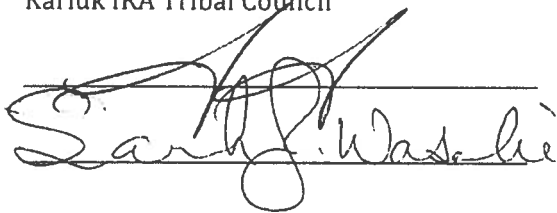
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

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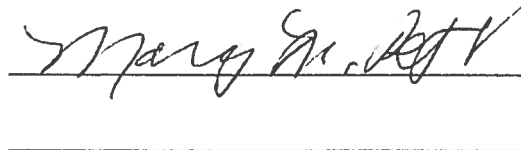
Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption 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,
Karluk IRA Tribal Council



Sarah J. Wasieleski



Mary M. Ryt V



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.

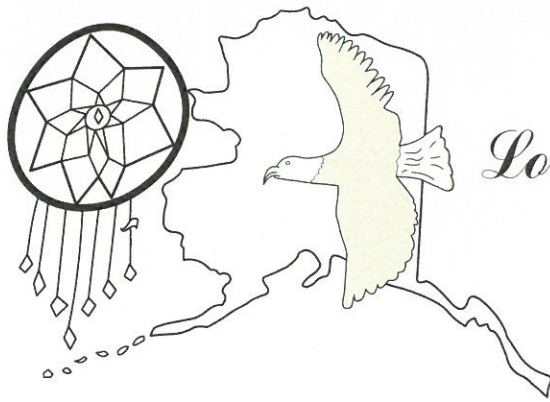
The bill simplifies the process for Alaska Native families who wish to adopt children connected to them by family or tribal membership. It also eliminates barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of 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



Louden Tribal Council

P.O. Box 244
Galena, Alaska 99741
Phone (907) 656-1711
Fax (907) 656-2491

Letter of Support

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 that reads "Jenny Pelkola". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jenny Pelkola, First Chief
Louden Tribal Council



Native Village of Afognak

To embrace, protect, develop, and enhance Alutiiq culture, protect our traditional use areas and encourage unity among the Alutiiq of the Kodiak Archipelago

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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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,

Denise Malutin, Cultural Programs Coordinator
denise@afognak.org



Hoonah Indian Association

P.O. Box 602

Hoonah, AK 99829-0602

Phone (907) 945-3545 Fax (907) 945-3703



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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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 Alaska's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Robert Starbard
Tribal Administrator

Native Village of Napakiak
P.O. BOX 34069
Napakiak, AK 99634
PH (907) 589-2135 FAX (907) 589-2136
nativevillageof_napakiak@yahoo.com

January 26, 2016

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The Native Village of Napakiak 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.

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,



David L. Andrew, Tribal Administrator



Newtok Village Council
P.O. Box 5596
Newtok, AK 99559

Mertarvik Community

Phone (907)237-2202
Fax (907)237-2210

To: Senate Health and Social Services Committee Members,

From: Newtok Village Council
100 Armory Road
PO Box 5596
Newtok, AK. 99559

RE: Support Letter

Dear 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.

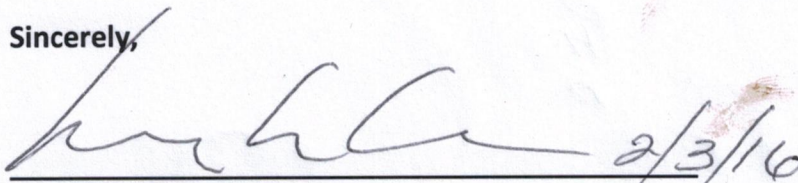
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

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. The 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,



President: Paul Charles

Organized Village of Kwethluk
Kwethluk Indian Reorganization Act Council
P. O. Box 130
Kwethluk, Alaska 99621

January 27, 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.

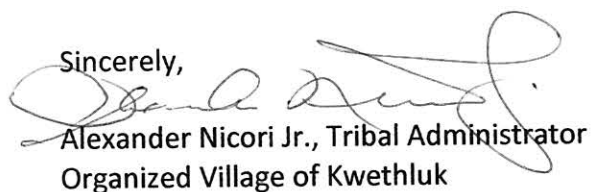
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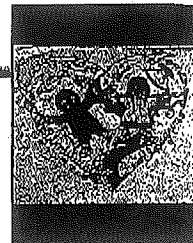
Sincerely,



Alexander Nicori Jr., Tribal Administrator
Organized Village of Kwethluk

Cc: OVK ICWA Program File
Kwethluk IRA Council

Oscarville Traditional Council



P. O. Box 6129
Napaskiak, Alaska
99559

Phone: (907) 737-7100
Tribal Fax: (907) 737-7428
ICWA Fax: (907) 737-7101
E-mail: alarson@avcp.com

MEMO LETTER

CFSS/ICWA Program

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members

From: Andrew Jimmy Larson, Jr.-OTC ICWA/CFSS Worker

Date: 1/27/16

Re: Support Letter of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112.

I want to present my support on the House Bill 200 and the Senate Bill 112. I believe this bill will have a lasting impact for Alaska Native Children and will secure placement of adoption to what is rightfully given to immediate family members that is less harmful to a child or children.

The bill will avert impending barriers for Alaska Native families to adopt that are closely related by family or are tribal members by making this process most effective for successful transition.

As you know 40% of Alaska Native children are adopted out to non-Native or non-family members. The House Bill 200 and the Senate Bill 112 will increase the number of Alaska Native children go to their communities, be cultural relevant, and maintain ties to their traditions.

In 1978 the US Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) because of the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies. It placed them to non-Indian foster and/or adoptive homes both in and out of State. A child remained in the home was not close to family in the village, had no sense of cultural identify only to feel left out, and were not with other close relative's kin to the child or children and their families.

This bill will eliminate complicated procedures striped in legal counsel while adoptive process take place in State custody. The Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceeds need to be uphold in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their needs with the help of ICWA workers/advocates and a desired outcome can be done through (CINA) and would be required for consideration for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adopt.

On behalf of the OTC-Council and ICWA advocate is in support of keeping Alaskan's children with immediate family or family that meet the requirement and in their own home communities.

Andrew Jimmy Larson, Jr.-OTC ICWA/CFSS Worker

OSCARVILLE TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

CC: OTC ICWA FILE

Date: 26 January 2016
To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members
From: Verna Kolyaha, Pedro Bay Village Council Program Services
Re: HB 200/SB 112

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,


VERNA KOLYAHA
PROGRAM SERVICES

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.

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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

VILLAGE of STONY RIVER dba Stony River Traditional



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.

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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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,
Mary Willis

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Willis", is written over the typed name.

Village of Stony River

January 26, 2016

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

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.

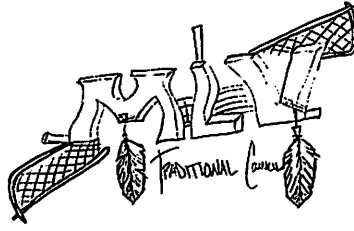
Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption 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,

 for G. O'Neill

Gloria O'Neill
President/CEO



Mentasta Traditional Council

P.O. Box 6019

Mentasta Lake, AK 99780

Phone # (907) 291-2319

Fax # (907) 291-2305

mentastatraditionalcouncil@yahoo.com

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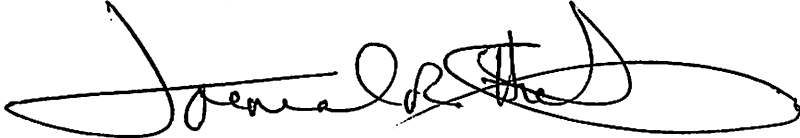
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joeneal Hicks", with a large, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joeneal Hicks
Tribal Administrator
Mentasta Traditional Council

From: [Teresa Simeon-Hunter](#)
To: [Lawton, Christy \(HSS\)](#)
Cc: [Cheryl Offt](#)
Subject: support letter
Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 1:08:45 PM

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 remove 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.

Quyana,



Teresa Simeon-Hunter

Family Community Services Specialist –ICWA

Chuathbaluk, Alaska

Taneeka Hansen

From: Liz Medicine Crow <LizMedicineCrow@firstalaskans.org>
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2016 10:30 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Liz Vazquez; Rep. David Talerico; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. Adam Wool
Cc: Davidson, Valerie J (HSS); karen.forrest@alaska.gov; Lawton, Christy (HSS); Andrea Sanders; Liz Medicine Crow
Subject: Support for House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112
Categories: committee, Taneeka

First Alaska

February 20, 2016

To: House Health & Social Services Committee

Re: House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112

Dear Committee Members,

As a statewide Alaska Native nonprofit organization, we would like to express our support for House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. These bills will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska's children and families in

two important ways: strengthening Alaska by growing healthier children; and eliminating complicated and costly procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody. Of critical importance to our communities, these bills pave the way for more Alaska Native children within the OCS system to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

When state intervention occurs and children are removed from their parents, numerous tribal, state, and national policies already dictate familial placements, in recognition that a child's family is the best placement option. While this reflects every family's wish to keep their children with them, in the case of Alaska Native and American Indian children specifically, Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 in urgent response to the alarming and extreme occurrences 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, cultures, or communities.

This federal law mandates placement preferences to a child's Tribe and other Native families when an immediate family placement is not available because of the cultural and familial devastation that occurs when children are removed from the strength of their cultural birthrights and communities. Like all children are to their families and cultures, our children are our lifeblood - and their connection to family and culture is theirs. Growing up connected to and knowing who they are is every child's right, and family preference laws allow that value and the spirit of the law to be equitably implemented.

At nearly 60%, Alaska Native children are disproportionately represented in the overall foster care system today, while well over 40% of Alaska Native children adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. Clearly, this is a crisis that was intended to be addressed with the passage of the Act, and can be addressed today through these bills by integrating the spirit of ICWA more equitably for Alaska families, so that no matter where they live they can more readily assert their desire to adopt their family's and communities' children. As you can imagine, this issue is of paramount concern to Alaska Native people across the state.

At First Alaskans Institute, over the past 12 years, we have had the great honor and responsibility of helping develop our communities' leadership with over 8,000 children, youth, and young leaders from across Alaska. Throughout this time, we have seen time and time again that our young people who seek to strengthen or already have strong connection to cultural knowledge, values and relationships have the inherent ability and capacity to lead our peoples, inspire change, promote healing, and support the growth of healthy, thriving communities throughout Alaska and the nation. Culturally connected, confident and healthy young Native leaders are Alaska's greatest treasure and in the promise of their well being lies the key to Alaska's future.

The practical efficiencies of the placement framework offered within the House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112 will reduce government inefficiencies around child placement. These bills also make the process more realistic, accessible, and understandable for those who want to adopt family children or those connected via Tribal membership, thereby increasing the ability of all children in the system - Native or not - to be placed with their families and communities. This is a great example of *what's good for Alaska Native children is good for all children* - a win-win situation for all of Alaska's children, families and state government.

Thank you for all of your hard work to keep Alaska's children with their families and communities. This bill is a sound investment in the future of our state.

Sincerely,

Liz Medicine Crow (*Haida/Tlingit*)

President/CEO

Andrea Sanders (*Yup'ik*)

ANPC Director

Cc:

Senate Health & Social Service Committee:

[Senator Bert Stedman](#), Chair

[Senator Cathy Giessel](#), Vice Chair

[Senator Pete Kelly](#), Member

[Senator Bill Stoltze](#), Member

[Senator Johnny Ellis](#), Member

Department of Health & Social Services

Valerie Davidson, Commissioner

Karen Forrest, Deputy Commissioner

Christy Lawton, Office of Children's Services Director



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.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amos T. Philemonoff, Sr." The signature is written in a cursive style.

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