



March 22, 2019

Sent Via Electronic Mail

The Hon. Geran Tarr  
Alaska House of Representatives  
State Capitol, Rm. 128  
Juneau, AK 99801  
[Representative.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Geran.Tarr@akleg.gov)

Re: Support the continuation of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council;  
Addition of Tribal Health Representative

Dear Representative Tarr:

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) writes to express our strong support for House Bill 22, An Act extending the termination date of the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council; and providing for an effective date. We also support the Alaska Native Health Board's (ANHB) efforts to amend HB 22, and its companion bill SB 10, by adding a tribal health representative, which would be nominated by ANHB and its Tribal Behavioral Health Directors Committee.

AFN is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska. Our membership includes all 12 regional for-profit corporations, all 12 regional non-profit organizations, 171 for-profit village corporations, 191 federally recognized tribes, as well as a number of tribal consortia that contract and compact to run federal and state programs. Our mission is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community. AFN serves as the principle forum and voice of the Alaska Native community in dealing with critical issues of public policy and government, including state legislation.

Suicide prevention, education, and awareness have been priorities of AFN for many years. Our former board member William Martin serves as a Vice Chair for the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (SSPC). We fully support the continuation of the SSPC, and the work of ANHB.

Alaska Natives and American Indians are the only ethnic population specifically listed as at-risk for suicide by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Since suicide disproportionately affects Alaska Natives and American Indians, AFN fully supports SSPC's continuation, and we see the value of expanding the council to include a subject matter expert in prevention who has program experience in the tribal health system. The individual's knowledge and experience would add tremendous value to the work of the SSPC. Suicide is preventable, and an

additional tribal representative on the SSPC would be a critical resource in providing a unique perspective to promote resiliency and raise awareness.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions about the content of this letter at (907) 263-1310 or [nborrowmeo@nativefederation.org](mailto:nborrowmeo@nativefederation.org). Thank you for all you do on behalf of Alaska.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Borrowmeo', written over a horizontal line.

Nicole Borrowmeo  
Executive Vice President and General Counsel