

Inspiring Personal Independence

SOUTHEAST ALASKA INDEPENDENT LIVING



3225 Hospital Dr, Suite 300, Juneau, Alaska 99801, 1-800-478-SAIL, ph/tty: 907-586-4920, fx: 907-586-4980

January 29, 2020

Dear Senator Kiehl,

I am writing on behalf of Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) with full support for Senate Bill 121. This bill will ensure that Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) are able to continue their administration the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for their tribal members and their families.

Last year SAIL served more than 1,400 seniors and people experiencing disabilities throughout Southeast Alaska, a coverage area similar to CCTHITA's geographic reach. With more than a third of SAIL consumers identifying as Alaska Native, we have partnered with CCTHITA in a multitude of ways to promote independence and self-sufficiency for those experiencing a range of disabilities. Most recently this has included CCTHITA's support with a three year federal demonstration project focused on increasing SAIL's services in Southeast's rural villages.

One of the CCTHITA programs key to promoting individual and family independence is TANF. As a Center for Independent Living, SAIL passionately believes that individuals with disabilities are their own best advocates and are best equipped to make decisions that impact their life. For the people we serve seeking stability, programs such as TANF are critical in providing a foundation of safety and security as individuals and their families chart a new path forward toward independence with dignity.

While this tweak to existing statute is minor, the impact is, without a question, tremendous for our tribal sisters and brothers, especially those who experience disabilities.

Thank you for your sponsorship of Senate Bill 121!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tristan Knutson-Lombardo', is written over a horizontal line.

Tristan Knutson-Lombardo
Assistant Director

An Aging and Disability Resource Center and Partner Agency of United Way of Southeast Alaska

Information and Referral · Advocacy · Peer Support · Independent Living Skills Training
De-Institutionalization · Outdoor Recreation and Community Access (ORCA)

www.sailinc.org



January 28, 2020

Senator Jesse Kiehl
State Capitol Room 419
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: Support for Substitute for Senate Bill 121, by Senator Kiehl; An Act relating to Alaska Native organizations' family assistance programs.

Dear Senator Kiehl:

As the Executive Director of SERRC, the Southeast Regional Resource Center which provides educational and workforce development services to youth and adults both in Juneau and throughout southeast Alaska, I am writing to you in support of the substitute for Senate Bill 121 an Act relating to Alaska Native organizations' family assistance programs.

SERRC and The Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, CCTHITA, have collaborated to provide education and workforce development services for tribal members for over three decades while SERRC has been providing adult education. Specifically, TANF clients have been receiving education and employment services that have had the potential to change the trajectory of the lives of the families involved. The two programs work collaboratively in the areas of making referrals, determination of eligibility, communicating about hours of attendance, as well as providing education, workforce development, and supportive services to help ensure more positive outcomes for families.

SERRC supports the work of The CCTHITA to administer the TANF program for Tribal citizens in Southeast Alaska and appreciates the amendment proposed to enable them to continue their efforts to strengthen families throughout our region.

Sincerely,


Sheryl Weinberg
Executive Director



KODIAK AREA NATIVE ASSOCIATION

3449 Rezanof Drive East | Kodiak, Alaska 99615 | 907.486.9800 | www.kodiakhealthcare.org

January 23, 2020

Sen. Jesse Kiehl
Alaska State Legislature
State Capital Room 419
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Letter in Support of S.B. 121 and H.B. 142

Dear Sen. Kiehl,

The Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA) is one of the thirteen Alaska Native organizations authorized by federal law and AS 47.27.070 to administer family assistance programs, alongside the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida).

KANA's own Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, KANA has often looked to Tlingit & Haida as a model of success. Since 2000, their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program has served the State and their beneficiary population very well, providing family assistance in a manner tied closely to education and employment services, reducing families' dependence on assistance. The benefit of their program to both the State and their local service population cannot be overstated.

Any language in AS 47.27.070(c) which interferes with Tlingit & Haida's ability to continue to administer their exemplary TANF program ought to be amended or removed. Such legislation has the full support of the Kodiak Area Native Association.

Sincerely,

Andy Teuber, President & CEO
Kodiak Area Native Association