



March 30, 2021

Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Rep. Zulkosky,

On behalf of Native Peoples Action, a statewide Indigenous non-profit, I am writing to express our strong support and appreciation for House Bill 123 – An Act Providing for State Recognition of Federally Recognized Tribes.

Alaska Native people have lived on these lands since time immemorial. Tribal governments have held a special recognition and place in Alaska dating pre-contact as sovereign governments and continue to provide important services and support including public safety, economic development, and protectors of our lands, waters and people. These are all efforts that continue to serve Tribal citizens and Alaskans today.

Alaska is home to 229 federally recognized Tribes. This formal government-to-government relationship was established with the federal government, however, no formal recognition by the State of Alaska has taken place. We appreciate and recognize the important step that HB 123 takes to correct this long overdue wrong and formally recognize Alaska's federally recognized Tribes.

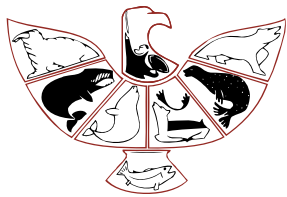
For many years, and even today, trauma has been inflicted on Native people ten-fold with the lack of respect and lack of recognition of our sovereign status. The fact that the state of Alaska does not recognize Tribes continues to be a point of contention and trauma. Tribes and Native people bring extensive contributions to our state, including millions of dollars for healthcare through Indian Health Services and education dollars through Head Start. Our Native cultures are filled with a rich history and there is no Alaska without the Indigenous people who have stewarded these lands for thousands of years.

NPA strongly encourages all legislators to join you in taking this important step to help begin the process to bring healing and recognition that will open more opportunities to better working relationships between Tribal and state governments. We appreciate your leadership and stand ready to help in any way possible.

Gunalchéesh/Háw'aa/Quyana/Mahsi'/Baasee'/Maasee'/Dogedinh/Thank you,

Kendra Kloster

Kendra Kloster
Executive Director
Native Peoples Action



Alaska Native Health Board

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HEALTH CONSORTIUM

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

YAKUTAT TLINGIT TRIBE

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM
HEALTH CORPORATION

VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE

March 29, 2021

The Honorable Tiffany Zulkosky
Alaska House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol Room 416
Juneau, AK 99801
Via Email: Representative.Tiffany.Zulkosky@akleg.gov

RE: House Bill 123, State Recognition of Tribes

Dear Representative Zulkosky,

The Alaska Native Health Board¹ strongly supports House Bill 123—an act providing for State recognition of Federally Recognized Tribes. House Bill 123 establishes formal state policy that the state's indigenous peoples have their own governments and that the government of the State of Alaska will no longer deny their existence. This is an important step in strengthening the partnership between the State of Alaska and Alaska Native tribes. House Bill 123 recognizes and enhances the capacity of Alaska Native tribes to continue their longstanding tradition of providing vital resources to the state of Alaska.

In 1970, President Nixon, in his special message on Indian affairs to the United States Congress, recognized the contribution of the Indian in America as:

“A record also of endurance, of survival, of adaptation and creativity in the face of overwhelming obstacles. It is a record of enormous contributions to this country—to its art and culture, to its strength and spirit, to its sense of history and its sense of purpose. It is long past the time that the Indian policies of the Federal government began to recognize and build upon the capacities and insights of the Indian people.”

The Alaska Legislature can choose to recognize those capacities and honor the enormous contributions of Alaska Natives. House Bill 123 marks the trail toward bringing future resources and prosperity to all Alaskans through a strengthened partnership with Alaska Tribes. We are encouraged by the introduction of this legislation, and we look forward to supporting its passage through the Legislature.

Sincerely,

Andrew Jimmie
Chairman
Alaska Native Health Board

¹ ANHB is the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues and is the advocacy organization for the Alaska Tribal Health System, which is comprised of tribal health programs that serve all of the 229 tribes and over 177,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people throughout the state. As the statewide tribal health advocacy organization, ANHB helps Alaska's tribes and tribal programs achieve effective consultation and communication with state and federal agencies on matters of concern.



House Tribal Affairs Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99081

Re: HB 123 – State Recognition of Tribes

April 1st, 2021

Dear Chair Zulkosky and Members of the House Tribal Affairs Committee:

Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawai'i ("PPVNH") writes today in support of HB 123, a bill to formally grant state recognition of federally recognized tribes. This policy is a critical first step to developing formal partnerships between the state of Alaska and Alaska Native tribes and bring healing and recognition to the state's 229 federally recognized tribes.

Planned Parenthood's goal of achieving health equity – including access to quality, affordable, culturally competent health care – requires actively dismantling systems that marginalize, oppress, and disenfranchise Indigenous and Native peoples. It is critical to address the violence Indigenous and Native communities continue to endure as a result of colonialism and racism and to acknowledge the enormous contributions these communities continue to make to this country. Indigenous and Native people have historically faced structural barriers to reproductive freedom due to a history of forced sterilization, family separation at the hands of the government. Formally recognizing federally recognized tribes is a critical step forward to undoing systemic racism that allows these systems to persist and place barriers to health equity.

For many years, and even today, states have inflicted trauma on Indigenous and Native people many times over by failing to recognize or respect the sovereign status of tribal nations. While the federal government legally recognizes the sovereignty of 229 Tribes, Alaska does not formally recognize tribes as independent, sovereign nations or interact with them as such. This not only leads to a patchwork of legal and governing structures, but also contributes to an ongoing source of source of trauma for Indigenous and Native people. This patchwork and systemic discrimination compounds many of the health struggles facing Indigenous and Native people today, such as high rates of depression and suicide, an epidemic of sexual assault and domestic violence, and high rates of maternal mortality.

Alaska's formal recognition is a step in the process of centering Indigenous and Native people in decision-making that will open more opportunities for better working relationships between Tribal and state governments. HB 123's progress toward true tribal self-determination is critical to achieving equity, improving health outcomes, and healing.

Sincerely,

Morgan Lim
Alaska Government Relations Manager
Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest & Hawai'i

31 March 2021

Rep. Tiffany Zulkosky
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Rep. Zulkosky,

I am writing today to express my strong support for HB 123- An Act Providing for State Recognition of Federally Recognized Tribes.

As Indigenous peoples, when we say we are from a certain place, we are referring to origin stories where our peoples were created from the lands which they are from. These deep connections come from time immemorial and have taught us we are stewards of the lands and waters for the next generations.

Alaska Native peoples have taken this responsibility as sovereign governments since before outside contact, before statehood, and continue to enact these rights today. Yet, the 229 federally recognized Tribes here in Alaska are not recognized by the state. This is an issue which we should not even need a bill for. Government-to-government relationships should already be in place.

Alaska Native peoples contribute to and lead many important sectors in the state, including an extraordinary tribal health care system that is unlike any in the nation. Our peoples and cultures provide a rich history to all Alaskans through the sharing of our values and lifeways. We can do much more to serve our people when we are able to self-determine and create the solutions and future for the next generations. When we do this it contributes positively for all Alaskans.

I strongly encourage all legislators to join you in solidifying strong and respectful relations between Tribal and state governments. This recognition is an important step for all Alaskans, we look forward to seeing this support come through from all legislators.

Quyana / Thank you!

Dr. Charlene Apok
Anchorage, AK