

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

EDUCATION

ETHICS

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

RULES



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SENATOR Tom Begich

Senate Democratic Leader

Senate Bill 184 – Settlement Trusts & Benefits Sponsor Statement

Version: 32-LS1473\A

Historic in its application, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) sought to resolve indigenous land claims by transferring land titles to regional corporations for the benefit of Alaska Natives and their descendants. Part of the settlement included distributions or benefits to 1971 enrolled tribal members, compensating them for their portion of historic land ownership and in recognition that financial resources may be needed to preserve indigenous cultures and ensure Alaska Natives and their descendants are able to contribute to live in indigenous communities.

Distributions or benefits from ANCSA settlements are meant to compensate Alaska Natives and their descendants for indigenous land claims and are separate from other benefits an individual may receive due to disability or age. Unfortunately, the law as it currently is written does not guarantee an Alaska Native can and will receive their rightful distribution as well as other benefits available to all Alaskans due to qualifying circumstances.

Senate Bill 184 seeks by statute to exclude certain payments to aged or disabled Alaska Natives or their descendants from being used to determine eligibility for adult public assistance, senior benefits, and the Alaska Pioneers' Home. A similar bill is currently being considered in the United States Congress, introduced by Senator Murkowski and co-sponsored by Senator Sullivan.