



**Testimony of Nicole Borromeo, ANCSA Regional Association President**

**Before the Alaska State Legislature House Resources Standing Committee**

**March 23, 2026**

Co-Chairs Dibert and Frier, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Joint Resolution 44 (HJR44) and for bringing attention to this important issue that affects not just Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs), but all Alaskans.

My name is Nicole Borromeo, and I am the President of the ANCSA Regional Association. Our organization represents the 12 Alaska Native regional corporations established by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA), and our board is comprised of the presidents or CEOs of those 12 corporations.

HJR44 reflects a fundamental truth. ANCs are among the state's most significant private-sector economic engines, directly employing thousands, and supporting billions in economic activity that helps keep our state vibrant. They are also integral to the social and cultural well-being of roughly 150,000 Alaska Native shareholders.

ANCs are private companies with a congressional mandate to advance the social, cultural, and economic well-being of their shareholders, descendants, and communities. They are shareholder-owned institutions in which no individual owner profits disproportionately, and they return earnings broadly through dividends, revenue sharing, elder benefits, scholarships, and community investments.

These 12 ANCs, as well as the more than 200 village corporations, were created when Congress resolved aboriginal land claims while creating a private, for-profit model to promote long-term economic self-determination through ANCSA. However, ANCSA was not without its limitations. Much of the lands conveyed to Alaska Natives are landlocked, difficult to access, or onerous to develop.

In 1992, Congress united to resolve this issue by authorizing ANCs and their subsidiaries to participate in the U.S. Small Business Administration's 8(a) program. This shift recognized federal procurement as a lawful and necessary economic development tool and offset the unique challenges of lands conveyed to ANCs under ANCSA.

While ANCs have a fiduciary duty to maximize economic benefits for their shareholders, they also play a significant role in driving Alaska's economy and are frequently recognized among the top 10 companies in Alaska Business Magazine's Top 49ers. In 2022, these corporations generated \$13.5 billion in total revenue and accounted for 7% of all wages paid in Alaska. ANCs are reversing our state's historic economic model by importing wealth rather than just exporting resources.

Nationwide, ANC-owned contractors employ 51,576 residents across all 50 states, which plays an important part in driving the 8(a) program's over \$200 billion in total economic impact to communities across America.

While ANCs' reach is national, our primary impact remains rooted here at home. 8(a) contracts act as a vital pipeline, importing billions of dollars from federal agencies back into the hands of Alaskans. Since 1971, ANCs have delivered more than \$6.5 billion in distributions through ANCSA's 7(i) and 7(j) revenue-sharing provisions.

Regional corporations spent \$2.8 billion in Alaska on wages, goods and services, shareholder distributions, revenue sharing, charitable giving, education, and taxes in 2022 alone. This includes providing \$17.3 million in benefits to more than 10,800 elders that year.

The evidence proves that Alaska's ANCs are strong, and that we are essential partners to the federal government. Yet a key element of this partnership, the 8(a) program, is now under misguided scrutiny from policymakers in Washington, D.C.

The 8(a) program is used extensively by defense, homeland security, infrastructure, and other mission-critical agencies. It helps reduce acquisition timelines, preserve government ownership of intellectual property, and deliver high-performing, scalable solutions that improve taxpayer value.

The streamlined procurement process exists because it fulfills a genuine government need to rapidly access specialized, mission-critical expertise. The program reduces federal procurement cycle times by 75-85%, enabling agencies to field vital solutions in weeks rather than months.

The 8(a) program also ensures taxpayer savings. Directed awards through the program must meet fair pricing requirements under 15 U.S.C. § 637(a)(1)(A), meaning the government pays market rates, not premium rates.

Importantly, 8(a) is a merit-based program; it is not "preference without performance." The program includes significant built-in oversight, under which ANC contractors regularly achieve high grades for contractual efficiency and performance. Contracts are not guaranteed, and they are not renewed simply because of a company's designation.

Notably, the Trump administration itself has [recognized](#) the value of 8(a) in modernizing and improving federal operations — consistent with its efforts to enhance federal efficiency — and has said that 8(a) is not a DEI program.

Given the program's value to Alaska and the nation, it is important that our state's elected leadership send a clear message to Washington.

HJR44 accomplishes this vital task.

ANCs are foundational contributors to our economy. They are revenue importers, lawful and mission-critical federal partners, and their earnings circulate directly back into Alaska communities. Their corporate model promotes shared prosperity, both for Alaska and across states in the Lower 48.

Supporting HJR44 affirms Congress' will, economic realities, and the measurable contributions of ANCs to the State of Alaska and the national interest. I respectfully urge your support for HJR44.

Thank you for your consideration.