



Soldotna High School

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Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

February 28th, 2018

To the Honorable Members of the 30th Alaska Legislature,

It has come to the attention of the Soldotna High School Student Government that HB 138 is set to be presented to the Alaska State House. The Soldotna High School Student Government offers its wholehearted support for this bill because it raises awareness of and encourages sobriety around the state.

As high school students, sobriety is essential to creating healthy learning environments. Unfortunately, many of us can tell stories of neighbors, friends, and family member who have had their lives destroyed by substance abuse. At Soldotna High School, we are lucky to have educational spaces free of addiction and harmful substances. We support this bill because it recognizes and encourages healthy lifestyles.

For the first time, many of us are at a time in our lives when our decisions have long-term consequences. Alcoholism and substance abuse can have devastating effects not just on our current situations but on our decisions for years to come. Sobriety offers students the opportunity to take control of their actions and determine their own futures. This bill will raise awareness about the enormous benefits of sobriety.

With students understanding the potential that their lives have when sobriety is a forefront, the lives of students not only at Soldotna High School, but all over our state, will improve drastically. We strongly urge you to support HB 138.

Thank you for your consideration,

The Soldotna High School Student Government



March 1, 2018

Sent Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz Alaska
House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB 138, A Bill to Establish March as Sobriety Awareness Month

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska. Its membership includes 186 federally recognized tribes, 177 village corporations, 12 regional corporations and 11 regional non-profit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs. AFN's mission is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community.

AFN strongly supports HB 138. Sobriety and healthy living has been a top priority of AFN for many years.

In 2016 Convention Resolution 16-15: that the Alaska legislature permanently reinstate the month of March as "Sobriety Awareness Month (SAM)" in support of its declaration of policy under Alaska statute 47.37.010, it is noted that between the years of 1995 and 2006, the Alaska Legislature designated the month of March as Sobriety Awareness Month (SAM) ten times in recognition and support of Alaska Statute 47.31.010. It is time to reestablish this official recognition of the benefits of health lifestyles on the quality of life of all Alaskans.

AFN calls on the Alaska State Legislature to permanently reinstate and annually designate, in perpetuity, the month of March as Sobriety Awareness Month.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

Julie Kitka
President

Cc: Board of Directors, AFN



March 6, 2018

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB 138, A Bill to Establish March as Sobriety Awareness Month

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

In 2016, CIRI sponsored the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention Resolution 16-15 resolving that the Alaska legislature permanently reinstate the month of March as "Sobriety Awareness Month." CIRI is writing today to voice its wholehearted support for your legislation, HB 138, which seeks to codify Sobriety Awareness Month into the Alaska statutes. Currently, an epidemic of opioid, methamphetamine and alcohol abuse results in an unacceptable social burden upon Alaskans. Your legislation reflects the deep concern that CIRI, and our family of non-profit organizations, share regarding the negative consequences of drug and alcohol abuse on all Alaskans. While this problem seems large and difficult to attack, a positive step forward from your legislation can be made by reaffirming sobriety and freedom from substance abuse as our societal norm.

CIRI believes your legislation helps point the way towards wellness as a goal for all Alaskans and is committed to helping you achieve the outcomes included in AFN Resolution 16-15, specifically:

1. An improved quality of life and health for individuals, families and communities;
2. An improved reduction in crime and social ills (e.g., domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, sexual assault, homicide, suicide, etc.) predominately associated with alcohol and drug abuse; and
3. An improved reduction in government spending for local, state and federal treasuries that end up paying for the pervasive social ills caused by and associated with alcohol and drug abuse.

CIRI joins your call to the Alaska State Legislature to permanently reinstate and annually designate the month of March as Sobriety Awareness Month. Thank you for your service and please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

Sophie Minich
President and Chief Executive Officer



Chairman & President

March 9, 2018

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz, Chair
House DHSS Committee
State Capitol Building
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Spohnholz:

On behalf of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), I write in support of House Bill 138, an Act establishing the month of March as Sobriety Awareness Month.

ANTHC is a statewide tribal health organization serving all 229 tribes and more than 166,000 Alaska Native and American Indian (AN/AI) individuals in Alaska. ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation co-manage the Alaska Native Medical Center, the tertiary care hospital for all AN/AIs in Alaska. ANTHC also provides a wide range of statewide public health, community health, environmental health, and other programs and services for Alaska Native people and their communities.

ANTHC concurs with the legislative findings and intent “to call attention to Alaskans who choose a positive and healthy lifestyle by not consuming mood- or mind-altering substances, and who, by virtue of their freely chosen lifestyle, serve as examples that life can be lived and enjoyed without the consumption of mood- or mind-altering substances.”

From 2014-2016, 58 percent of Alaska Native adults reported no alcohol use. In 2017, 80 percent of Alaska Native high school students reported no current use of alcohol. Based on a report from the McDowell Group, *Protective Factors for Youth Substance Abuse and Delinquency*, positive connection to adults, strong role models and healthy social norms are protective factors that enhance healthy development among our youth.

ANTHC supports these findings as well as the healthy and positive lifestyle chosen by those committed to sobriety. The passage of HB 138 would serve as a statement to all Alaskans on the importance of sobriety, helping to facilitate public and private sector activities dedicated to recognizing and celebrating the individual and shared health benefits of sobriety.

Sincerely,

Andy Teuber
Chairman and President

Our Vision

Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

4000 Ambassador Drive • Anchorage, Alaska 99508

907.242.1063

Tasha Elizarde

From: Michael Carson <carsons@mtaonline.net>
Sent: Monday, March 12, 2018 10:03 AM
To: Tasha Elizarde
Subject: HB138

Date: March, 2018

To: Rep. Ivy Spohnholz, Berta Senator Gardner & Senate HSS

From: Michael P. Carson

Cc: Tasha. elizarde@akleg.gov & Jacob. tatum@akleg.gov

Re: Sobriety Awareness Month in Alaska (HB 138 & SB 208)

But, by the Grace of God, this year I will celebrate 30 years clean & sober. Again, but, by the Grace of God. My imagination has been fired and this past 30 years have been the most satisfactory years of my life. And, I know the future will be bright and hopeful with many opportunities to engage more deeply with my family, friends, strangers and my community.

My name is Michael Carson. I am a co-founding board member of MyHouse in the Mat-Su. Also, I am the V.P. and the Recovery Specialist at MyHouse. In addition, I am currently the Chair of the Mat-Su Opioid Task Force. And, I have been leading a teen recovery group at the Mat-Su Youth Facility for the past 15 years.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support of HB 134, Sobriety Awareness Month (March) in Alaska. Recovery is every aspect of building relationships to overcome addiction and isolation. I believe recovery has to be lived out in the open to convince those still suffering there is hope. What a better way to bring more attention to sobriety and for those still suffering than having an awareness month and with celebrating it across our entire State.

With the opioid epidemic taking 99 lives this past year (Dr.Jay Butler) due to overdoses, we have to recognize recovery is possible for everyone. It does not matter how far down the scale a person has gone, there is always hope. Even with the total bewilderment and

despair of addiction, hope is eternal. And, that hope is shared by those in recovery. In fact, those that have suffered, owe to the suffering.

That is the reason why recovery is imperative to share through an awareness month. The message of those in recovery is, "If I can get sober, you can too. And, let me share with you how I did that. NOT ALONE!"

Addiction wants to live in the darkness and wants to stay there alone. Recovery is all about coming into the light and building relationships. And, recovery is to be shared with others to re-enforce one's own recovery. Can you imagine all those in the recovery community sharing their personal stories and shouting out their light and hope?!

And, the message of those in recovery would be, 'We are miracles and most importantly, the age of miracles is still with us. Our recovery community proves that!'

Thank you for considering a Sobriety Awareness Month.

LessDopeMoreHope

Michael

Special note- some of the above statements are modified or re-stated from the Big Book of A.A.

Dear members of the Alaska Legislature:

I am writing on my own behalf in representation of nothing other than my own personal experience. I have lived in Wasilla since 1986 and have spent much of my life in that community. I've seen the introduction and expansion of new businesses, as well as the reduction of many locally owned small businesses. I've watched our road system expand and have witnessed the increase in demand for further development in travel capability within the Valley. Peripheral to all these developments has run the growth of a problem that has reached epidemic proportion within recent years. Drugs have proliferated in my community and there seems no way of entirely comprehending their impact.

Sobriety awareness is only one way to combat the impression drugs are having; but in my experience, it is one of the most effective. When I was 29 years old, I found myself in a place of hopelessness. I had been recklessly drinking alcohol and using illicit and prescription drugs since I was 13. Faced with a doomed future, I asked a higher power for help and was immediately reminded of those who had graced my life and had shared with me their experience using, drinking, and (most significantly) living with sobriety. The miracle of that moment was the lasting imprint the memory of their sobriety had on me. It would follow me into today where I have been sober for over three years – and am remarkably happy to share that fact!

Sobriety awareness is an ideal upon which anyone can relate perception, experience, and most importantly ... hope. To designate an entire month in the name of sobriety awareness allows a platform for those seeking solution to their dilemma, whether in their own lives or their family members' lives, to come together and share visions of growth and courage that they may create an amalgam of hope greater than any individual. Please designate March as "Sobriety Awareness Month" in our beautiful state.

Sincerely,


Matt Leonard
fozzyleonard@yahoo.com