



Written Testimony for House Labor and Commerce on HB 141

March 10, 2017

House Labor & Commerce Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chairman Kito and members of the Committee:

My name is Greta Schuerch and I am the External and Government Affairs Liaison at NANA.

NANA supports House Bill 141, the reauthorization of the Technical Vocational Education Program (TVEP) because of its benefits to Northwest Alaska as well as other regions of Alaska, both urban and rural. TVEP funding is essential to the continued success of the Alaska Technical Center and serves as a catalyst for individuals to forge and develop various career tracks.

The Alaska Technical Center is an adult vocational/technical school for all Alaskans and is an essential player in the advancement of collective workforce development efforts within the Northwest Arctic region, benefitting employers like Maniilaq, the Northwest Arctic Borough School District, NANA and the Red Dog Mine through core programs that include tracks in business technology, health occupations, construction trades technology, process technology and culinary arts. ATC also offers a variety of short-courses that meet the needs of other local employers and business partners. In 2016, ATC had 696 graduates, 81% of whom are currently employed. For years, TVEP has served as an important source of funding to ATC, helping create opportunities and forging career paths that may not otherwise exist.

In addition to the successes in our own region, the TVEP program has had tremendous positive impacts statewide. In the bill sponsor's home district, the Yuut Elitnaurviat Learning Center serves a key role in the Dental Health Aide Therapy (DHAT) program which benefits all areas of the state through its rigorous dental training program and whose graduates provide mid-level dental care in small rural communities throughout Alaska. Over the past 15 years, the DHAT program has significantly improved access to dental care in Alaska.

NANA Shareholders also benefit from the other various programs that are funded through TVEP at the University of Alaska, Galena Interior Learning Academy, Alaska Vocational Technical Center and Ilisagvik College.

NANA appreciates your continued support for secondary, post-secondary and adult education that prepares Alaskans for future jobs in our state.

Sincerely,

Greta Schuerch,
External & Government Affairs Liaison