

ALASKA LEGISLATURE

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

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rep.jonathan.kreiss-tomkins@akleg.gov

Committees:
State Affairs, Co-Chair
Arctic Policy, Economic Development, and Tourism
Fisheries
Community and Regional Affairs



Juneau, Alaska 99801 (Jan. – April)
State Capitol, Room 411
907.465.3732

Sitka, Alaska 99835 (May – Dec.)
201 Katlian Street, Ste. 103
907.747.4665

Sponsor Statement | HJR 29 — Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945

Alaska Natives were denied basic civil rights during the State’s territorial days, when segregation was still a deep-seated force that was pervasive throughout the State. Alaska Natives faced discrimination from public establishments, the government, and fellow Alaskans, becoming strangers in the land that had been their home for millennia.

The Alaska Native Sisterhood’s Grand President, Elizabeth Peratrovich, fought to put an end to such racially prejudicial practices. The monumental efforts of Peratrovich, her husband, and countless other Alaska Native activists led to the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945 — the first Civil Rights act addressing racial discrimination in the United States. It was a major step towards the equal, just, and contemporary Alaska we live in today.

HJR 29 commemorates the 75th anniversary of this landmark legislation, which was originally passed on February 16th, 1945. It celebrates the heroic actions of Peratrovich, whose legacy has inspired generations of Alaskans to advocate for the changes that bring about a brighter, more inclusive future for our State.