



# NATIVE MOVEMENT

Building Healthy & Sustainable Communities

[www.nativemovement.org](http://www.nativemovement.org)

To members of the House Labor & Commerce Committee:

Native Movement is a statewide 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that is dedicated to building people-power, rooted in an Indigenized worldview, toward healthy, sustainable, and just communities for all. In recognizing that guaranteed civil rights for marginalized people is an integral part of the vision our organization is working to achieve, we write today with resounding support for House Bill 99.

It can go without saying that discrimination has very real impacts on LGBTQ2 youth, adults, and elders within the state of Alaska. According to the 2020 Alaskan LGBTQ+ Health Needs Assessment Survey, 85% of Alaskan LGBTQ2 adults have reported experiencing a mental health disorder, while half of respondents remain unserved by the health care system. According to the Trevor Project, more than half of all Alaskan LGBTQ2 youth reported experiencing depression, and almost three-fourths experiencing significant anxiety. Alaska Native LGBTQ2 youth, in particular, report more instances of harassment and discrimination due to being LGBTQ2, furthering already-abhorrent mental health statistics and making them 2.5 times more likely to attempt suicide than non-Native LGBTQ2 peers.

In creating healthy, sustainable, and just communities for all, we recognize that LGBTQ2 people must lead and be centered through empowerment in all spaces. And we must not negate the fact that living in a state where there is no guaranteed law against discrimination based on LGBTQ2 status significantly contributes to the adversities as described above. We must recognize that LGBTQ2 Alaskans are also Alaskans, who contribute to our state in many ways, and deserve the equal protections afforded to everyone else in order to flourish and build a joyous life. We must also recognize that equal rights and protections under the law is a cornerstone of the democracy we aim to uphold, and your leadership on this committee has the opportunity to ensure that these values are put into practice.

Native Movement encourages members of the House Labor & Commerce Committee to join us in creating a better tomorrow, and urges you to vote to pass House Bill 99 out of committee. Please feel free to contact myself at [agpik@nativemovement.org](mailto:agpik@nativemovement.org) or David Clark, Gender Justice Policy Communications Specialist, at [david@nativemovement.org](mailto:david@nativemovement.org), for more information.

Quyana,

*Charlene Apok, PhD*

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