

March 3, 2025

Senator Elvi Gray – Jackson
State Capitol Building Room 30
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Jackson:


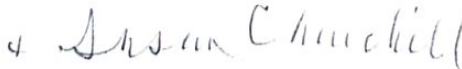
As Alaska has a very diverse population of individuals of different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including many different Asian American, Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders, Susan and I are very excited and supportive about SB131. Susan was the Executive Director of Bridge Builders in Anchorage for 7 years and I served on the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission for approximately 9 years as well as having been a director of human resources in Alaska for about 10 years. Both of us have been fortunate to have the opportunities to be involved with some of these communities and value both the relationships and the knowledge/wisdom we received from these rich experiences.

The Anchorage School District is one of the most diverse as established by national surveys. For example, the most diverse high schools are Bartlett High School and Bettye Davis East High School. By providing education regarding these cultures and their contribution to Alaska it will have numerous positive impacts. The two most important is educating all students as to cultural diversity not only in our state but the United States. It will reinforce the importance of the students from the Asian Americans, Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders communities they are part of our history and the future of our country.

We hope individuals from these communities will be included by the educational organizations in creating the course design and content.

Thank you for introducing SB131 this Legislative Session.

Sincerely,

 & 
Robert Churchill



Japanese American Citizens League Alaska Chapter

Dear Senators Gray-Jackson and Kawasaki,

On behalf of the Alaska Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), I send our full support for SB 131. I suggest a friendly amendment to the bill: At the end of line 9, please add "and in Alaska" after "United States." Enlightening students on Asian American and Pacific Islander contributions to our nation's history, economics, politics and culture should include an Alaskan focus as well.

For example, the forced evacuation and incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II was an event nationwide in scope that did not exclude Alaska. Alaskans of Japanese descent were torn from their communities and sent to the internment camps, affecting villages and towns throughout our land. Our students' awareness of this matters.

The list of prominent Japanese Americans and their achievements includes Alaskan Dr. Syun-Ichi Akasofu, a globally recognized pioneer in the study of the aurora borealis and founder of the International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska. The list of Alaska pioneers includes Japanese immigrant, Frank Yasuda, who discovered Chandalar gold and founded the community of Beaver, Alaska.

If education means developing broader and deeper understandings, then the more we do to include all of us who are part of our state, our nation and our world, the more we do right by our students. SB 131 is a step in the right direction.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis N. Arashiro".

3/1/2024

Dennis N. Arashiro
JACL Alaska Chapter
Executive Board President