

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 19**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY REPRESENTATIVES ORTIZ, Kreiss-Tomkins, Parish, Edgmon, Foster, Kopp, Lincoln, Chenault, Tarr, Millett, Grenn, Zulkosky, Gara, Kawasaki, Spohnholz, Josephson, Drummond, Tuck, Sullivan-Leonard**

**Introduced: 2/16/18**

**Referred: Community and Regional Affairs**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging Governor Bill Walker to issue an administrative order recognizing a linguistic**  
2 **emergency.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **WHEREAS** the state is home to 20 officially recognized Alaska Native languages,  
5 Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangaâ Dena'ina, Deg Xinag,  
6 Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän,  
7 Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian, alongside English; and

8 **WHEREAS** House Bill No. 216, enacted as ch. 116, SLA 2014, signed into law by  
9 Governor Sean Parnell, adding the 20 Alaska Native languages to the official languages of the  
10 state, was the culmination of hundreds of hours of effort by legislators, Alaska Natives, and  
11 others; and

12 **WHEREAS** Senate Bill No. 130, enacted as ch. 48, SLA 2012, signed into law by  
13 Governor Sean Parnell, established the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory  
14 Council to advise both the governor and legislature on programs, policies, and projects to  
15 provide for the cost-effective preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native  
16 languages in the state; and

1           **WHEREAS** the state is in critical danger of losing those languages and, according to  
2 the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council, the state may lose the last  
3 fluent speakers of all 20 Alaska Native languages by the end of the 21st century if current  
4 rates of language loss continue as they have since the 1970s; and

5           **WHEREAS** one Alaska Native language, Eyak, lost its last fluent speaker in 2008;  
6 and

7           **WHEREAS** 50 years of research shows that early, total language immersion  
8 education for English speakers increases academic proficiency in both English and the  
9 immersion language, as well as in other academic subjects; and

10          **WHEREAS** indigenous peoples should be able to provide education in the peoples'  
11 own languages in a manner that is appropriate to the peoples' cultural methods of teaching and  
12 learning;

13          **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Governor, the Alaska  
14 Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council, and other state agencies to work  
15 actively with the legislature and Alaska Native organizations to ensure the survival and  
16 continued use of all 20 of the state's Alaska Native languages; and be it

17          **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the Governor,  
18 in cooperation with the legislature, to work with Alaska Native organizations to initiate and  
19 strengthen, as appropriate, legislative and policy measures that prioritize the survival and  
20 continued use of Alaska Native languages; and be it

21          **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges Governor Bill  
22 Walker to issue an administrative order recognizing a linguistic emergency.