

SENATE CS FOR CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 19(RLS)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

Offered: 4/25/18

Referred: Today's Calendar

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES ORTIZ, Kreiss-Tomkins, Parish, Edgmon, Foster, Kopp, Lincoln, Chenault, Tarr, Millett, Grenn, Zulkosky, Gara, Kawasaki, Spohnholz, Josephson, Drummond, Tuck, Sullivan-Leonard

SENATORS Hoffman, Micciche, Stevens, MacKinnon, Stedman, Bishop, Costello, von Imhof, Gardner, Egan, Olson, Wielechowski, Begich, Meyer

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging Governor Bill Walker to recognize the urgent need for language revitalization**
2 **efforts.**

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, Unanga̋, 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; and

13 **WHEREAS** language is an important element of culture, and the use of Alaska Native
14 languages can strengthen Alaska Native culture in a mutually reinforcing cycle;

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

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

23 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges Governor Bill
24 Walker to recognize the urgent need for language revitalization efforts.