

SCS FOR CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 19(RLS) am S

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE RULES COMMITTEE

Amended: 4/25/18

Offered: 4/25/18

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 a linguistic emergency.**

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

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

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

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

16 **WHEREAS** the state is in critical danger of losing those languages and, according to

1 the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council, the state may lose the last
2 fluent speakers of all 20 Alaska Native languages by the end of the 21st century if current
3 rates of language loss continue as they have since the 1970s; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges Governor Bill
23 Walker to recognize a linguistic emergency.