

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

April 3, 2018

3:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Chair
Senator Anna MacKinnon
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Berta Gardner

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 215

"An Act relating to multi-line telephone systems."

- MOVED SB 215 OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 19(CRA) AM
Urging Governor Bill Walker to issue an administrative order
recognizing a linguistic emergency.

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 215

SHORT TITLE: ENHANCED 911: MULTI-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEMS

SPONSOR(S): JUDICIARY

03/07/18	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/07/18	(S)	CRA
03/20/18	(S)	CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/20/18	(S)	Heard & Held
03/20/18	(S)	MINUTE(CRA)
04/03/18	(S)	CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HCR 19

SHORT TITLE: GOVERNOR: AK NATIVE LANGUAGES EMERGENCY

SPONSOR (s) : ORTIZ

02/16/18 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/16/18 (H) CRA
03/06/18 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/06/18 (H) Heard & Held
03/06/18 (H) MINUTE (CRA)
03/08/18 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/08/18 (H) Moved CSHCR 19 (CRA) Out of Committee
03/08/18 (H) MINUTE (CRA)
03/09/18 (H) CRA RPT CS (CRA) 5DP
03/09/18 (H) DP: SADDLER, DRUMMOND, LINCOLN,
RAUSCHER, PARISH
03/19/18 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
03/19/18 (H) VERSION: CSHCR 19 (CRA) AM
03/21/18 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/21/18 (S) CRA, STA
04/03/18 (S) CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR COGHILL
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 215.

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HCR 19.

JODIE GATTI, staff to Representative Ortiz
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Available for comments on HCR 19.

ALBERT MINGEULOK, representing himself, elders, and those who
have passed on
Shishmaref, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke Inupiaq in support of HCR 19.

DON BREMNER, representing himself
Yakutat, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HCR 19.

ALICE TAFF, representing herself
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported HCR 19.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:31:45 PM](#)

CHAIR CLICK BISHOP called the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Coghill, Stedman, Gardner, and Chair Bishop.

SB 215-ENHANCED 911:MULTI-LINE TELEPHONE SYSTEMS

[3:32:47 PM](#)

CHAIR BISHOP announced consideration of SB 215 [version 30-LS1455\D was before the committee]. This is its second hearing and public comment has opened and closed.

[3:33:14 PM](#)

SENATOR COGHILL, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 215 thanked the committee for hearing this bill. When one dials 911, you want help to get to where you are located as quickly as possible. This bill says when you have changed your phone to a multi-line system it designates the building and the floor to help responders to know exactly where you are located. The technology is available.

CHAIR BISHOP asked if the language is "may" participate rather than "shall."

SENATOR COGHILL answered yes.

CHAIR BISHOP found no further testimony.

SENATOR STEDMAN moved to report SB 215, version \D, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There were no objections and it was so ordered.

[3:35:00 PM](#)

At ease

HCR 19-GOVERNOR: AK NATIVE LANGUAGES EMERGENCY

[3:40:24 PM](#)

CHAIR BISHOP called the meeting back to order and announced consideration of HCR 19 [CSHCR 19(CRA)am, version 30-LS1402\R.A, was before the committee].

[3:40:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, thanked the committee for hearing HCR 19.

JODIE GATTI, staff to Representative Ortiz, Alaska State Legislature Juneau, Alaska, introduced herself.

REPRESENTATIVE ORTIZ said human occupation of Alaska started over 10,000 years ago. When the migration occurred, the people brought their culture and their language with them, which help to determine a lot about what Alaska culture is today. This resolution deals with a serious problem, the loss of Native American languages, that threatens the Alaskan culture today.

He said the state has moved in the right direction by acknowledging and recognizing the 20 Alaska Native languages as official languages of the state. However, recognition is just the first step. The intent of this resolution is to heed the suggestions put forth by the Alaska Native Language Preservation Advisory Council (ANLPAC). It strongly urges that the governor issue an administrative order recognizing that a linguistic emergency exists in the state and that it is the policy of the State of Alaska to actively promote the survival and continued use of all Alaska's 20 Native languages.

In their 2018 biennial report to the Governor and Legislature, ANLPAC warned that all 20 Alaska Native languages are in crisis; most are predicted to become extinct or dormant by the end of the 21st century. The State of Alaska can no longer sustain these rates of language loss unless policy changes are enacted that support people who are learning and speaking Alaska Native languages throughout the state.

He said the loss of language represents the loss of a critical piece of Alaska's history, culture, and traditional way of life. The Eyak language lost its last fluent speaker in the year 2008 and the Tanana language has only one fluent speaker left, and that person is 96 years old.

[3:44:01 PM](#)

CHAIR BISHOP, finding no questions from the committee, opened public testimony.

[3:44:36 PM](#)

ALBERT MINGEULOK, representing himself, elders, and those who have passed on, Shishmaref, Alaska, spoke Inupiaq in support of HCR 19.

[3:45:44 PM](#)

SENATOR HOFFMAN joined the committee.

[3:47:31 PM](#)

SENATOR MACKINNON joined the committee.

[3:48:25 PM](#)

DON BREMNER, representing himself, Yakutat, Alaska, supported HCR 19. To help keep endangered languages from vanishing, bold statements are needed. He made some comments in the Tlingit language. He said the Aramaic language was once common throughout the Middle East and was used for trade, government, and divine worship. This is their time to join together with the state in this room, the Beltz Room, on April 3, 2018, to preserve Alaska Native languages before the last speakers vanish.

[3:52:49 PM](#)

ALICE TAFF, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, supported HCR 19. She is a linguist, which is a person who is engaged in the scientific study of language. She is an affiliate professor for Alaska Native languages at the University of Alaska Southeast and at the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. There is no question that this is an emergency.

Knowing that languages are fading from use causes pain and suffering, she said. National Public Radio (NPR) had a story about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in people who had been to war and for a variety of other reasons. They talked about the Civil War veterans moving West and how violent they were. She thought it was going to mention Native Americans and former slaves, but it didn't.

MS. TAFF talked about the transgenerational transmission of PTSD. They now know that trauma causes stress, and stress causes chemicals to adhere to the genes that can turn them on or off. It makes people more prone to diabetes, for instance. These epi-genetic effects (outside the gene) are inheritable. So, the trauma of language loss, boarding school, loss of land and the ability to get your food is transmitted from generation to generation. The Alaska Native Community is in an unbalanced conditioned and susceptibility to these.

Studies from Canada have shown that in communities where the aboriginal and First Nations languages are in use by half the

people, the suicide rate is zero. A study in Alberta found a similar result for diabetes.

CHAIR BISHOP thanked her for her testimony and finding no further comments, closed public testimony, and said HCR 19 would be held in committee.

[3:58:23 PM](#)

CHAIR BISHOP adjourned the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee meeting until 3:58 p.m.