

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRIBAL AFFAIRS

April 16, 2019

8:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Tiffany Zulkosky, Chair
Representative Bryce Edgmon, Vice Chair
Representative John Lincoln
Representative Dan Ortiz
Representative Chuck Kopp
Representative Dave Talerico
Representative Sarah Vance

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6

Expressing support and appreciation for the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

- MOVED HR 6 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 126

"An Act establishing November as Alaska Native Heritage Month."

- MOVED HB 126 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 7

Urging the governor to continue to fully implement the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact and build ongoing partnerships between the state and tribal governments.

- MOVED HR 7 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HR 6

SHORT TITLE: NAT'L. NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) LINCOLN

03/18/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/18/19	(H)	TRB, MLV

04/09/19 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/09/19 (H) Heard & Held
04/09/19 (H) MINUTE (TRB)
04/16/19 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 126

SHORT TITLE: ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE MONTH
SPONSOR(S): TRIBAL AFFAIRS

04/08/19 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/08/19 (H) TRB
04/09/19 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/09/19 (H) Heard & Held
04/09/19 (H) MINUTE (TRB)
04/16/19 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HR 7

SHORT TITLE: SUPPORT AK TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE COMPACT
SPONSOR(S): TRIBAL AFFAIRS

04/10/19 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/10/19 (H) TRB
04/11/19 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/11/19 (H) Heard & Held
04/11/19 (H) MINUTE (TRB)
04/16/19 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

JOHN BIOFF, General Counsel
Kawerak, Inc.
Nome, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HR 7.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:03:21 AM](#)

CHAIR TIFFANY ZULKOSKY called the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Representatives Talerico, Lincoln, Ortiz, Vance, Edgmon, and Zulkosky were present at the call to order. Representative Kopp arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HR 6-NAT'L. NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL

[8:04:25 AM](#)

CHAIR ZULKOSKY announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6, Expressing support and appreciation for the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

CHAIR ZULKOSKY noted that the committee previously heard a presentation on HR 6, as well as invited and public testimony. She asked if Representative Lincoln, the prime sponsor, wished to make any final comments. He indicated that he did not.

CHAIR ZULKOSKY relayed to committee members that fiscal notes are available for all three pieces of legislation on today's calendar, and that they are all zero fiscal notes. After ascertaining that no committee member wished to offer final comments on HR 6, she expressed that she would entertain a motion to move it out of committee.

[8:05:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON moved to report HR 6 out of committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HR 6 was reported out of the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs.

[8:05:21 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:05 a.m. to 8:08 a.m.

HB 126-ALASKA NATIVE HERITAGE MONTH

[8:08:02 AM](#)

CHAIR ZULKOSKY announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 126, "An Act establishing November as Alaska Native Heritage Month."

CHAIR ZULKOSKY stated that the committee previously heard a presentation on HB 126, as well as invited and public testimony. After ascertaining that no committee member wished to offer final comments, she expressed that she would entertain a motion to move HB 126 out of committee.

[8:08:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON moved to report HB 126 out of committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal

note. There being no objection, HB 126 was reported out of the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs.

[8:08:45 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:09 a.m. to 8:11 a.m.

HR 7-SUPPORT AK TRIBAL CHILD WELFARE COMPACT

[8:11:02 AM](#)

CHAIR ZULKOWSKY announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 7, Urging the governor to continue to fully implement the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact and build ongoing partnerships between the state and tribal governments.

CHAIR ZULKOSKY noted that the committee already heard a presentation on HR 7, as well as invited and public testimony. After ascertaining that no committee members had questions about HR 7, she re-opened public testimony

[8:11:51 AM](#)

JOHN BIOFF, General Counsel, Kawerak, Inc., relayed his professional background and involvement with Kawerak, Inc., which he explained is the regional nonprofit tribal consortium located in Nome. He explained that he is testifying on behalf of Melanie Bahnke, President and CEO of Kawerak, Inc. He said Kawerak, Inc. provides social services to the 20 tribes in the Bering Strait region of Alaska. He added that it operates a child advocacy center that serves the region, and that it works in partnership with the State of Alaska (SOA) to facilitate child abuse investigations. He said Kawerak, Inc. represents the 20 tribes in Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) proceedings. He discussed his experience representing tribes in ICWA proceedings and opined on the importance of Kawerak, Inc.'s partnership with SOA and the Office of Children's Services (OCS). He said Kawerak, Inc. has been involved in the development of the [Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact] from the beginning and is a signatory. He spoke to the time and resources invested by Kawerak, Inc. in building relationships and supporting the compact. He discussed the important of the compact and HR 7. He stressed that tribal and SOA resources are limited, so it is imperative that partnerships form to maximize resources to benefit Alaska families. He said the compact and partnerships between SOA and tribal governments make sense for

Alaska, given the vastness of the state and the complexity of challenges facing rural areas. He affirmed Kawerak, Inc.'s support of HR 7 and the intent and spirit in which it was drafted. He added that Kawerak, Inc. urges Governor Michael J. Dunleavy to fully implement the compact and continue the partnership laid out between SOA and the tribes, as well as to pursue additional partnership opportunities. He thanked the committee for the opportunity to testify.

[8:14:07 AM](#)

CHAIR ZULKOWSKY thanked Mr. Bioff for his comments. After ascertaining that no one else wished to testify, she closed public testimony. She expressed that she would entertain a motion to move HR 7 out of committee.

[8:14:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON moved to report HR 7 out of committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HR 7 was reported out of the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs.

[8:14:48 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:15 a.m. to 8:17 a.m.

[8:17:14 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m.