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PRESS RELEASE

Attached is a telegram of July 26, 1976 detailing some of our concerns about the very important issue of bilingual-bicultural education presently of issue throughout the State. The telegram was transmitted to Senators Stevens and Gravel, and to the Directors of the Office of Civil Rights in Washington, D.C. and Seattle.

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The following was telegraphed July 26, 1977 by the Association of Village Council Presidents to Senators Gravel and Stevens, and to the Directors of The Office for Civil Rights in Washington, D.C. and Seattle:

I am contacting you on behalf of the Association of Village Council Presidents, the tribal unit representing the 56 villages of the Lower Kuskokwim and Yukon River. The Yukon Kuskokwim delta is an area in which there is a crying need for extensive and aggressive bilingual-bicultured educational programs. Presently, and in the past, there have been no serious efforts in this region, indeed statewide, to deliver viable bilingual education, yet the primary educational problems of our children all are directly related to the failure of the schools to adequately address their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. We therefore fully support the negotiated compliance plan known as "A Handbook for Alaska Native Language Programs" as the first step in a serious educational effort to address student's Linguistic needs. The present HEW Office of Civil Rights enforcement proceeding should therefore be encouraged to continue to enforce rights to equal educational opportunities for Native children. This enforcement process must not be embroiled in Washington politics. While some administrators are opposing the Handbook, people in our villages and those knowledgeable in the field of bilingual education are supporting the negotiated plan. A copy of an article appearing in the "The Tundra Drums" July 16, 1977, which does an excellent job of stating the importance of this issue will be forwarded for your information. As the Handbook was written and negotiated by Alaskan educators intimately familiar with the linguistic needs of our children, and was not imposed by "Outside" agencies, we trust that you will give it your full support.


Carl Jack
Association of Village Council
President

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