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ANIAK

JOINT SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LOCAL OPTION LAWS

November 18, 1985

Present: Rep. John Binkley, chairman
Sen. Vic Fischer
Rep. Mark Earnest for Sen. Sachett
Rep. John Sund
Legal Counsel: Laurie Otto

Rep.
Binkley:

I call this local option committee to order on November 18, at 11:45 a.m. (Introduction of committee members). We will begin this meeting by talking generally about what we are trying to accomplish and why we are really here. This committee was created by a resolution in the senate and in the house that was passed, creating this committee to study some of the problems that we've had with the current local option laws. To see what some of the perceived and real problems are, to go out and gather data, information and facts so we can take these back to Juneau and act upon what we've found to be the case out in local communities.

I'm sure everyone is familiar with the local option laws. Apparently in Aniak the sale of alcohol is restricted, but you can import alcohol for your own use. This is similar to what we have in Bethel. We're not trying to come into Aniak or any other community and tell the community what they should do as far as local options. We are considering another option, adding that to the list that a community can select from. Right now there are four different options a community can select from. We want to consider in the course of these hearings a fifth option that a community might be able to choose. This would be to allow communities to ban possession of alcohol within their communities. Again this isn't anything that would be mandated from Juneau by the state legislature. It simply would be another choice that a local community could make. Of course the local options are ones that are voted on by the entire community in a referendum type vote. Then they could choose the

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form of option they wanted and the kind of limitations they want on alcohol within their own communities. We encourage this and we want to see those decisions made at a local level. We also want to make sure that those options available to communities are adequate. If there is need for any other options we want to be able to respond to that and have that available to communities. So with that, maybe we could start out. What we're looking for is: How the local option in your community is working? What are some of the problems with it? What are some of the facts associated with alcohol? What are some of the problems that occur? What are some of the crimes that are related to alcohol in the communities? What type of alcohol seems to be a problem? Is there a problem with home brew, or is it store bought booze, or some of those type of alcohol related problems in the community? Maybe before we start if any of the other committee members would like to say anything you could.

Laurie
Otto:

The one think I'd like to mention John, is to let you know that Lyn Kvamme is going to be the first witness testifying before the committee. She is a counselor at Aniak's Counseling Center. She will be providing the committee with a little of the background about the entire regions approach to alcohol and her experience working in the field. Just to provide you with a little background information and a little bit of perspective.

Rep.
Binkley:

I want to apologize for being late this morning. The committee will be visiting another community, Akiachak, down on the Lower Kuskokwim. Laurie what is our schedule for being in Akiachak?

Laurie
Otto:

I think we need to be there about 1:30p.m.

Rep.
Binkley:

We will need to end the meeting around 12:30 p.m. then. So this will be fairly short and if you could we'd like for you to be as specific as you can. Please make your testimony as condensed as possible. In this way everyone will have an opportunity to talk with us this morning. With that Lyn we'll turn it over to you. Good morning and it's good to see you here.

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Lyn

Kvamme:

Good morning. My name is Lyn Kvamme and I've been working as a counselor for about five years now. I started working in Bethel for four years. I then moved to Aniak the first of February and I've been working here since.

The experiences I've had counseling in communities and the Delta have been with alcohol. In the counseling center here we provide both mental health and alcoholism counseling. On the majority what we see is for alcohol counseling. As long as I can remember people have been drinking a lot here and abusing alcohol. Not just social drinking but abusing alcohol. The majority of people we see are single males between the ages of 23 on up to 35-45 this is the majority of the clients we see is male. Most of them are offenders either D.W.I. or something to do with assaults. We hardly see any teenagers. I don't see any teenage abuse with alcohol in this region. Most of the people that are abused are in their thirties, late twenties and early thirties, a lot of them are parents too. I see a lot of kids. I work as the youth coordinator here in Aniak. I work with the kids and a lot of them share problems of alcohol, alcoholism or alcohol abuse in their family, which interrupt with schooling. They don't get enough sleep at night or they don't have enough time to do their homework because of their parents partying. Especially on weekends they take over the chores of their parents of taking care of the rest of the kids, this is what they share with me. So, the parents drinking and neglecting their children does affect the whole community in this way.

Rep.

Binkley:

Lyn, you mentioned that most of the people are offenders. Is quite a bit of crime then associated with alcohol?

Lyn

Kvamme:

Yes. Most crimes we have here I'd say about 90% of them are alcohol related and have a criminal record.

Rep.

Binkley:

How about as far as abuse of children when parents get in a situation where they're drinking?

Lyn

Kvamme:

Yes, almost all the reports that we get of a

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child being neglected or abused by a parent. When we go into the history of their parents were mostly alcohol related.

Rep.

Binkley:

Do you have any sense of how the current local options that you have here, as I mentioned before Aniak allows for the importation of alcohol but not for the sale? What's your feeling of how that local option works here?

Lyn

Kvamme:

There's two different ways I feel about it. One is I feel it's okay. You know I feel that the people that don't abuse alcohol can get their liquor with out having to go some place else for it. They can order it. But in another way, it is easy for bootleggers to have business here. They can make a lot of money because it's easy for them to get it. They order it instead of going some place else like McGrath to get it. It's easy for them to sell it here because people in surrounding villages can't import it to their village, so they come here and buy it. Sometimes they take it back to their village or stay here in the community and drink it. I see it's not helping the alcohol abuse here in that way.

Laurie

Otto:

Where do people drink here?

Lyn

Kvamme:

Here? At peoples homes or parties. Since it's getting colder mostly at their homes.

Rep.

Binkley:

Is there a lot of cases where some of the crime or abuse takes place outside the home where the drinking actually occurred? When there is a particular party going on in one particular home do abusive situations usually occur in that home or does that sometimes extend out of that situation into other areas of the community?

Lyn

Kvamme:

Well, I've been here just a little while and what I've see is just a little bit, yes outside the community. Not in the home but outside yes.

Rep.

Binkley:

So other people are affected by the drinking that may take place initially in some ones own personal home?

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Lyn

Kvamme: Yes. We've had some complaints like neighbors calling and there's nothing we can do. But some times they don't call the cops and it affects the neighborhood that their partying in.

Mark

Earnest: For local knowledge what kind of police force is in Aniak?

Lyn

Kvamme: There is the state troopers which are here in Aniak. There's one V.P.S.O. which is based here in Aniak and there is a city policeman. So there is about three people.

Mark

Earnest: Have there been any convictions on any sale of alcohol here in Aniak?

Lyn

Kvamme: No, none that I know of.

Mark

Earnest: Maybe somebody else might know.

Rep.

Binkley: Any other questions? Senator.

Sen.

Fischer: Lyn based on your previous experience else where and your experience in Aniak you're probably familiar with the laws and regulations on alcohol. Is there any sort of law or additional assistance that the state needs to provide, so a local community in the region not necessarily Aniak could better deal with the alcohol problem?

Lyn

Kvamme: Yes like Sleepmute for example, they banned alcohol and you can't import it to the village. They don't have any kind of support. For a while they didn't have a V.P.S.O. in the village and people were importing the booze and they weren't convicted. Other people see this so they feel they can go out and bring it in themselves. When they do convict them-if the person was convicted and their time was suspended and put on probation there was no way for the probation officer to know if this person ever violated their probation or not. There's no follow up on probation or anything else like this. If the village has a strong counsel, city counselor, or traditional

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city counsel this is the only way that the probation officer will ever find out is through the counsel reporting them. I feel it would help if there was more policeman in the village.

Sen.
Fischer: More enforcement.

Lyn
Kvamme: Yes, more enforcement.

Sen.
Fischer: Thank you.

Rep.
Sund: Question Lyn, interms of the offenders that you deal with single males come to counseling do they come voluntarily or are they court ordered?

Lyn
Kvamme: Most of them are court ordered. I'd say about 95% of them are court order.

Rep.
Binkley: Lyn, how about the problem of home brew do you see much instances of people that are producing home brew and that some how that is causing problems in the community?

Lyn
Kvamme: Not, here in Aniak but I've seen it in other villages. Like in Sleepmute and in Crooked Creek and Kalskag.

Rep.
Binkley: So in Sleepmute even though they are able to ban or they have voted to ban importation people still have a problem with alcohol because of home brew?

Lyn
Kvamme: Yes, because of home brews.

Rep.
Binkley: Do you have any idea of how they go about making home brew around here?

Lyn
Kvamme: No, however, I do know they can buy the makings at the store and then make it at home.

Rep.
Binkley: The yeast and what not?

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Lyn

Kvamme: Yes, everything they can by from the stores. The stores provide them all everything.

Rep.

Sund: I don't have anything else right now but if you'd stay through the rest of our hearing here I'd appreciate it we might have a couple of questions here from somebody else.

Lyn

Kvamme: Sure.

Mark

Earnest: Lyn, are you a counselor or for K ~~N~~ A?

Lyn

Kvamme: For K ~~N~~ A yes.

Mark

Earnest: OK.

Laurie

Otto: Did you also work at P.A.T.C. for three years, which is the Phillips Alcohol Treatment Center?

Lyn

Kvamme: Yes for three years, and I also worked at the group home in Bethel.

Laurie

Otto: Is that counseling included?

Lyn

Kvamme: Yes, all counseling related.

Rep.

Binkley: Lyn thank you very much I appreciate it.

Lyn

Kvamme: Thank you.

Rep.

Binkley: Ok, I guess we can just go by the list here, Rob Clift.

Robert E.

Clift: I wasn't really aware that you people were coming so I haven't prepared a statement. As I see the problem with alcohol here in Aniak it falls into several categories. One is that almost all the deaths we've had in the last few years have been related to alcohol-accidents, drownings, and so

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forth. There is a lot of death, unnecessary death associated through this. With affects it has on children so far as neglect and so forth I guess I would not really like to see the laws changed from what we have right now. I think anything further would be meddling in areas that government shouldn't meddle. The things I see that have had the most affect on our alcohol abuse here in Aniak have had an unnecessarily been any programs but more availability of jobs-employment. It seems that when people have jobs and they develop a little self respect they ~~no~~ longer abuse alcohol quite as much.

Rep.
Binkley:

So more of a social attitude.

Rob
Clift:

In the last few years the city itself has had quite a few state funded programs. This provided jobs which seem to me would make quite a difference in attitude. We still have problems but not nearly as bad as we had five or six years ago. I think the more that could be done to encourage employment would make a great deal of difference.

Rep.
Binkley:

That's one of the problems we foresee down the road that's coming rapidly the decline in state revenues.

Rob
Clift:

Right, I don't necessarily think state funded jobs are or make work things are what's important we're trying to style it here from creating free enterprises because of lack of lands. I think after maybe 1991 the land issues are resolved there will be more free enterprise and so forth. I think now everything is on hold waiting until this is resolved. We've had lots of people interested in starting small businesses. We planned on capitol revenue but no way to put this into affect.

Rep.
Binkley:

Rob, you mentioned that you felt the present laws were fine and that the current statutes were working. Do you think, and I don't know if that was speaking to the overall local options through out the state the availability of those local options or just this specific one for Aniak.

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Rob

Clift: Well, I can only speak for Aniak and maybe not for Aniak, but I think as far as government should go laws exist and I think the place to concentrate is to prosecute people for crimes that they commit while they are intoxicated, not to try and prevent intoxication. I don't think it's our place to try to protect people from everything they can do to themselves. But, we should prosecute people that commit crimes while their intoxicated.

Rep.

Binkley: How about the other people that might be affected? You know that might of course not be actually drinking the alcohol but might be the victims then of people who are.

Rob

Clift: Then, their victim of crime and the crime should be prosecuted. I don't believe that we'll have that much problem if things continue going. I think the problem has improved in the last four or five years. It's improved quite a bit.

Mark

Earnest: Just a couple questions Rob, in terms of prosecuting people under the existing statute where you're allowed to import into Aniak, but not allowed to sell. Do you see a difficulty there? You talk about prosecution, is there difficulty in making a case to get people in the community to testify against other people who are immoral.

Rob

Clift: No, I don't see that as the problem. The kinds of crimes we have are usually D.W.I. and assaults and maybe neglect with children. Well, that's probably pretty hard one to prosecute there, but basically people here are not criminals that they do as far as serious crimes we don't have any. Things like D.W.I. and assaults can be prosecuted by the V.P.S.O. The testimony that he gets would be enough. I really don't have more to add to that.

Rep.

Binkley: Ok, thank you Rob. I appreciate that. (A lady started talking) Maybe you could keep track of some of those things Lyn, and we could hear from you later on. We'll keep moving down the list here. Laurie, who's next on our list there?

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Laurie

Otto: LaMont.

Rep.

Binkley: Mayor? Are you still the mayor?

LaMont E.

Albertson:

No, Clift the gentleman who just spoke. My name is LaMont Albertson and I've been in Aniak going on nineteen years right now. I think I see less abuse of alcohol. I still see abuse of alcohol and drugs in our community, but I see less abuse in our community than I think existed ten years ago. I have some reasons written down why I think that is happening. One of them I think is the counseling program. The money that Social Services has invested in that counseling program I think certainly has helped our community out. I think the media coverage sees the positive media coverage you see encouraging people not to abuse alcohol on the state satellite channel. I think that has led to less abuse. I think that t.v. itself has led to less alcohol abuse by having that entertainment right there in your home in the evening home. I think the local hire, trying to use local people in the jobs locally rather than bringing people in. It's not only given the people we have locally jobs, but it tends not to depress people who are perfectly capable of work, but can't get jobs because outsiders are coming in to get those jobs. I think the Kuskokwim Native Association they've also been working not just through their counseling program, but through different things that they do to encourage less drinking in their communities. I think the fact that Billy Morgan and other people were successful in bringing housing program into our community. I think people having nice houses to live in and warm comfortable environment leads to less drinking also. The concerted effort that the health clinic has made in the last few years certainly has contributed also. We have better school programs, better education in Aniak than what we had ten years ago. I certainly think incorporating drug abuse programs right into our curriculum has helped us somewhat. I see more active participation on the part of local churches, particularly the Roman Catholic community in dealing up front and not being afraid to say things in their sermons or say things in the open about the alcohol problem we have. I think when we first got here we tended to sometimes look the other way, not address the

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thing up front, but that's probably on the part of all churches. I think generally just a better standard of living in Aniak than there was ten years for various reasons. I think that's contributed to less abuse. This is just basically my observations I appreciate getting to share those with you.

Rep.
Binkley: Senator.

Sen.
Fischer: This is a marvelous run down LaMont. With respect to the existing laws you have enforced here. As I understand importation is permitted, sale is prohibited. To what extent is there bootlegging and infact selling?

LaMont
Albertson: There's some bootlegging which goes on here. I'd imagine at least three weekends out of the month you could buy a bottle in Aniak if you wanted to.

Sen.
Fischer: Do you know what the going price would be?

LaMont
Albertson: No, I don't. I'd say I've heard forty or fifty dollars for one and I'd say a dollar a can for beer or something like that.

Sen.
Fischer: Did you indicate before that there had been some convictions previously?

LaMont
Albertson: I think there's been a couple. Yes, there have been.

Mark
Earnest: I just wanted to follow up on that because one of my concerns is the ability to get testimony with in a community or village to convict either under the existing law or one of the options we're looking at banning the possession. What's your opinion of that, of people willing the size of Aniak to testify against another person here of violation of a liquor bottle?

LaMont
Albertson: I could speak for myself and tell you that I wouldn't testify against somebody else unless it was a manner of life or death or some sort of

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criminal activity or something like that. I've got to live in this community. I may know who's selling booze and who's not selling, but just as an individual I'm not going to testify. I think most people in the community feel like it's their right or it's not wrong to be able to go out and pick up a bottle some where if they want it. It's not saying that most people in the community would support opening up a liquor store here, but they don't see anything wrong with going out and buying booze like that. I'm being as frank as I can be. I would certainly hesitate and I can imagine somebody who is related to somebody in some sort of offense like that would certainly hesitate.

Mark

Earnest:

You feel that (just to follow up on what your saying) perhaps it may be wrong and you may not like it, but you can deal with it personally in a different manner other than going to court through the peer pressure of the group or something.

LaMont

Albertson:

I would, I'm the principal of the school here and I would not hesitate to move against somebody who would contribute somehow or another. I think the delinquency of a child or had done some sort of abuse there. As far as deals between adults no I'm not going to get involved in anything like that.

Rep.

Binkley:

So as far as the sale of alcohol then you would (though it's against the law in Aniak) think it would be ok to sell alcohol to somebody else?

LaMont

Albertson:

I'm not saying that. I think that, but I think that other people feel like that's ok and right for them to do that and I think that's why it goes on. I probably wouldn't go out and buy a bottle like that myself you know. No, I'm not saying I think that, but other people do. As long as other people feel that way you can have all these hearings you want to, but basically things are not going to change.

Rep.

Binkley:

How about, LaMont in other villages do who have any idea about other communities or any feel for other communities around this area as to how those communities that have chosen to ban

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importation how that's working in those communities?

LaMont

Albertson: I would defer to Lyn Kvamme's judgement there I think she's probably got alot more insight into that than I have. One option I've wondered about is the beer and wine option. Is that available to communities where they can just get that?

Rep.

Binkley: That might be another option that's a consideration. Right now there isn't it's just alcohol and it doesn't specify between beer or wine but that's a good point. That's something we may want to consider. I mean some communities may want to have that option.

Laurie

Otto: Infact Johne, there is that option available now through working with the A.B.C. board. Who can restrict the kind of license that is available in the community. As you know from, I think you participated in that hearing about the Red Devil liquor store. You know whether or not the A.B.C. board goes along with what a community wants to do is not quite as definite as having it in ... like.

Rep.

Sund: I guess I would just like to follow up. In terms of being principal do you see much evidence of alcohol related incidence of any child abuse or domestic violence?

LaMont

Albertson: Like I said, but not nearly as much as I did ten years ago. Occasionally I see an example of something like that, but I think it was much more of a problem ten to twelve years ago than it is present.

Rep.

Sund: Do you agree with Rob's statement then that basically he's tied, to related alcohol abuse level to the employment level?

LaMont

Albertson: Yes, I also say that too. I think that's one of the reasons that we've had less abuse here because we do have a local hire policy. A lot of the kids, young men and young ladies that I taught in the high school here ago are employed by the city or other agencies here within the

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city. I definitely think that's probably one of the strongest contributors to less alcohol abuse is gainful employment.

Rep.
Sund:

If that employment drops off then you would expect under this formulation to see an increase of alcohol abuse, if that were to change?

LaMont
Albertson:

Yes, I think you would see some change. I think we've established, by building with what we've done and accomplished with what we've accomplished within the last few years in Aniak. We've encouraged service type industries. There's always going to be more employment than what there has been in the past. Things have been resolved to the expenditure of oil money in the community. Yes, I think that once the employment drops off you will see more alcohol problems.

Rep.
Binkley:

LaMont what do you think about, (of course we've got a list right now of local options that communities can pick and choose from) expanding and of course Aniak has just chosen the one that bans the sale? What do you think about expanding that list to allow other communities that may be different from Aniak and may have different problems than Aniak, allowing them personal option to choose from and to deal with their problem in their communities?

LaMont
Albertson:

Yes, I think nobody knows home problems better than home people. If they need more options I definitely think that those options should be expanded. I'm not sure that everybody is aware of this bureau wine thing that A.B.C. apparently controls that the lady (Laurie Otto) mentioned 'cause I've heard that mentioned at several other communities before. That might be a good option.

Rep.
Binkley:

Would that be something that you would like to see statute rather than something that's left to an appointed board that would allow in again an additional law options that a community could choose from that might include beer and wine?

LaMont

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Albertson: Yes, I'd say that. My natural reaction is to say that I think we should probably keep the government out of our communities as much as we possibly can that's toward interference. It's truly a problem and I think where you have a true problem the government is obligated to address the problem. Yes I think it should be a option which should be addressed in statute.

Rep.
Binkley: OK, Thank you LaMont. Let's see Sheryl Kepler.
Good morning Sheryl.

Sheryl Z.
Kepler: Good morning. My name is Sheryl Kepler and I think in one aspect...(a lady interrupted...something about some people that want to come to the meeting from Holy Cross they want to know if you'll be here long enough or some other meeting? "Maybe they could come to Akiachak" said Rep. Binkley.)...Ready now? As far as the state I think the laws as they stand right now are fine as far as Aniak. I'm not aware of the other villages but I do feel though that the criminal aspect, crimes committed while under the influence could be helped alot if the judicial system would be, instead of the minimum use which is usually the case. I think after a few maximum sentences that they might get the picture. They don't do that any more and I think that would help the criminal aspect of the influenced instead of having just minimum fines or minimum sentences.

Rep.
Binkley: So your talking Sheryl about the crimes that people commit as sometimes as the results of being under the influenced of alcohol? Not necessarily the crimes for maybe being convicted of importation in a community that bans importation or convicted of bootlegging?

Sheryl
Kepler: Yes, I'm not really aware of that as far as Aniak is concerned you know. I don't think there's been any real big cases. There's been a few but, I don't notice the bootlegging as being a problem.

Mark
Earnest: In terms of problems do you see alcohol in the communities out here and Aniak as a problem though?

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Sheryl
Kepler:

Not a major one, no. I don't notice that much. I just feel that when there are cases that are taken to court I just read them in the paper. You know the little court reports and their just messed with minimum fines and minimum sentences and stuff. A lot of times you see these names repeatedly in the Drums and in the River and the various. You see them repeatedly maybe if they were given stiffer sentences to begin with that it wouldn't be repeated. That's my main worry about alcohol is the crime that is involved with it.

Rep.
Sund:

Do you see any other effects besides the crime? I'm getting into domestic violence, the child abuse and neglect that may be wrong and as a result of alcohol, they may not be a criminal.

Sheryl
Kepler:

Well, I would say the domestic violence could be criminal.

Rep.
Sund:

Oh, it probably should I just mean there is just an underlying layer there.

Sheryl:

Yes, and I'm not really aware, I'm sure it happens I know it happens I mean it would be heaven if it didn't happen but I'm not really aware of that.

Rep.
Binkley:

Thank you Sheryl. ^{William}~~Wilbur~~ Morgan Jr.

(Guy)William
Morgan Jr:

^{William}~~Wilbur~~ Morgan Jr. I was born here in Aniak and I lived in the majority of these villages from a couple of weeks to a few months.

I see a lot of the problem is lack of education about alcohol. They don't really know how it affects them. They drink to ~~ex~~cess the majority of the time. Mostly the people I think who bootleg are just trying to support their families. They either have a part time job or a low paying job. A lot of the people that import their booze from out of town when they run out they do rely on the bootleggers to buy their - the rest of what they need for the night. There are a few cases where juveniles do drink but any more it's a very few. Maybe about two or three a weekend who go out and party with adults. Out in

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the villages I think they need more out reach. Say I got this job as a traveling alcohol counselor and I'll be traveling maybe twice a month. For my self I don't think that's enough because the people who are trying to quit drinking need this support. The people who drink to excess need education on it. They need help to understand what they're dealing with, where they drink to excess where they don't know what they're doing and they get in trouble.

Rep.

Binkley:

Do you see any correlation, or does your area go up towards stony River then and down the river over where-to Kalsgag? Up to Lime village?

Guy:

Yes.

Rep.

Binkley:

Have you seen any difference in the villages surrounding Red Devil where the alcohol is sold there? The closest bar I guess in this liquor store in this area. Have you seen any correlation with some of the alcohol related crimes and abuse related to alcohol. Related between the proximity of the location to Red Devil? Like Sleepm⁺ute and Crooked having more crime maybe than Stony River or Chuathbaluk or Lime village?

Guy:

No, Sleep⁺m⁺ute, well, when I was living up there they couldn't buy liquor from Red Devil or Red Devil wouldn't sell any so they were just going to Mc Grath. Most of the crimes are committed under the influence of alcohol. When ever they need or want alcohol they get together and pool their money together to get their alcohol. From my understanding the people who are related to the enforces up there don't get turned in for importing alcohol. So if they had someone responsible enough to enforce the laws and not be biased whether they are related or not. Then they would be able to enforce the law.

Rep.

Binkley:

So some places are selective enforcement by the local community?

Guy:

Yes. Even though Red Devil doesn't have any booze they'll go anywhere and get it. Whether they order it out of Anchorage or Mc Grath.

Laurie

Otto:

Mr. Chairmen, why did the liquor store in Red

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Devil not sell to the people in Sleetmute?

Guy: I don't know. Maybe because they got a petition started to try and close the bar. The bar owners wouldn't sell to specific people from Sleetmute.

Laurie

Otto: One of the other things people mentioned is the tie between employment and the amount that people drink. In the village that you've gone to, Stony ~~the~~ Sleetmute, Crooked what kind of jobs are there?

Guy: Most of the people I knew were pretty much subsistence. Winter time sometimes they work for the school, and little odd jobs around town. The majority of the people are subsistence.

Laurie

Otto: What percentage of the people in those villages do drink to the point where they cause problems for themselves and other people?

Guy: I'd say over sixty percent - which is dropping slowly.

Laurie

Otto: You were talking about how Aniak has improved in terms of juveniles that are drinking. How about in the villages, are there a lot more juveniles drinking in the villages?

Guy: Yes, I'd say up ~~the~~ river here there is a few juveniles that do drink, more than here in Aniak. I think they were raised in the atmosphere of alcohol. They don't usually have baby sitters as here. Most of the people who go out and party they drop their kids off at a baby sitter and pick them up later when they sober up or when they're going home. Up ~~the~~ river they sometimes take their kids with them to the parties. So their kids stay up all night with them.

Laurie

Otto: Then the kids start drinking, and then they get married and have kids then it starts all over again.

Guy: Yes.

Laurie

Otto: What percentage from your point of view of the violent crime that you've seen over the past ten

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years in this area, is not related to alcohol abuse?

Guy: I don't know that's pretty low.

Laurie
Otto:

Are there any of the murders, rapes or any of them not alcohol related?

Guy: I don't know I'd say almost all of them are related to alcohol.

Rep.
Binkley:

Thank you very much. Father Andy.

Father
Andy
D'Arco:

Father Andy D'Arco, Catholic Priest. I cover an area from Tuluksak all the way up the Kuskokwim. Then I cover the Yukon from Holy Cross up to almost Fairbanks.

Rep.
Binkley:

Big district, isn't it?

Father
D'Arco:

I don't know what the motivation of this committee is, but I can tell you what I see. I got a call from Laurie the other day and she asked me if I would speak to you or ~~write~~ a letter. First, I come from a biased stand point because I get everybody who has to be buried. I even get the kids that are a result of being buried. Like the little four year old. The case with the Napoleon boy he was murdered and then we buried him up at Kalskag. Prohibition has never been a good deterrent in and of itself of a alcohol or drug condition. In the villages it really isn't a very good deterrent in and of itself either. What I've found in all of my villages is that the problem lies with not prohibition of liquor, as much as it is the enforcement of laws to prevent the abuse that's pretty clear. I think if you talk to the judges and you talk to the troopers and you talk to the V.P.O.'s your going to find that almost all if not all of the crimes are somehow alcohol related. A minimum is drug related. What you'll also find if you talk to the troopers and the V.P.O.'s is that there is slots open in almost every village for V.P.O.'s. There are an incredible number of slots open for troopers of which the state of Alaska went out and solicited applications for those placements. A matter of

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fact in Holy Cross right now there is no trooper. Once the trooper left and the V.P.O. went on vacation the boot leggers that you refer to have a picnic. So one of my suggestions right off the bat is if you have state trooper positions open you ought to hire one. Instead of allocating 28 or 38,000.00⁴ for Cambell Creek to clean it up. I saw Cambell Creek and I tell you I would drink the water in Cambell Creek if you would hire a trooper. A matter of fact I have no difficulty with that because if you go to Kals~~ag~~ you won't even find water. So that is one of my points. The second is one is I find that people who were convicted or at least picked up with crimes related to alcohol. Generally, when they went down to Bethel, It's not so bad here but I do slight the Bethel penal system they get off with a slap on the wrist. Just go through the records in your newspaper. How many times down there committed crimes and were not sentenced or where sentenced and received probation? Which in and of itself is very good; however, if you put someone on probation you certainly need the man power to keep an eye on them. You don't have it at all! Where else, I doubt in Anchorage that you would send people back to the villages on drugs like Thorazine, Mellaril, Haldel that you would send back people who were convicted of rape, murder, and arson. Back in the village on probation and not keep an eye on them. You do that in Anchorage, you'd have a probation officer who'd be there and check on him on a regular bases. In Anchorage social work, and I've checked all this stuff. Social workers in Anchorage are under powered and under staffed. But they go out and check every single case that they get and on a regular bases. In our villages were under powered and under staffed but to the point where our folks can't. They can't check all the places where they've had trouble with families. In Anchorage you'd create jobs out in the bush you forget. I think another problem is that in Anchorage or Fairbanks if someone leaves a bar intoxicated and goes out and gets killed. I think you can go back to the bar owner who served him right, is that not right you can hold him responsible for something? Well, out here in the villages we get people like party time liquors who ship to the bush to kids, that's a fact. I can not give you the names but I can tell you I get them in confession. As long as I don't mention any names I don't have to worry about anything else I'm not breaking the seal. They ship to the bush without checking age, or

identity. They use the post offices. You buy the money order, you call the place, you give them the money order number, the amount, and they ship. No big problem. The villages that have chosen to go dry stay dry except that within the proximity of those villages there are some villages that allow importation. I have no problem with Aniak. I have problem with the Yukon river. I guess the bottom line is I have no difficulty with allowing villages to vote whether they want to be wet or dry. I think that's a right that they have, absolutely. I don't want to give the impression that all my folks are alcoholics that's a farce, that's bologna. It's a very small number but it's the same number that if you go back in your records you are going to find out that they've been involved in all kinds of things. I remember one case last year if you go back through your newspaper records where somebody was on a probation, committed a crime on probation was put on probation longer. I mean how many times are you going to do that? Would you do that in Anchorage? I don't think so. You asked about kids and child abuse, well yes, there is a lot of it. It is alcohol related. If the state really cares about the people out in the villages they would provide a few things. One, when there's employment, crime goes down, and so does the abuse of alcohol and drugs. Two, if there's adequate protection for the civil rights of others and the law has the capability of enforcing that I think you'll see those things drop by as well. I think the third thing is that there needs to be shelters in every village for the abused and shelters for those who are being used or are just being left outside for one reason or another. I don't think the answer with our kids is to send them to a place like Bethel, or Anchorage, or Fairbanks, or the lower forty-eight when they have a problem. The only think you do is create a second problem and that is that they have difficulty going back into their own village. Bottom line is it's going to cost you bucks. But look at the bright side I don't own a bar, I'm not an alcoholic and I've nothing to gain. The only thing I have to gain is what I gain for my family and that is always religious. Come follow me around and you see how many people I bury and why they died. It's a real tragedy. Right now we have health problems in the villages that it seems that know body in the legislature really wants to be involved in. It took me almost a year and finally getting the commissioner of the

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "22"

water program, Bill Ross on the phone to get them to at least look into the problems that Kalslag was having help. But if you can't even get passed help do you think that legal problems are going to be any easier? You have one judge up here, a magistrate, and one V.P.S.O. and a helper and a trooper who runs around like a chicken without a head because he's got so many things to do. A game warden who stuck also, because he covers an enormous amount of territory. This isn't a turn of the century where we have - what ever his name was who came out of the west on his dog team who handled everything by himself. These folks have the same needs and the same rights as people in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, and the lower forty-eight. My folks are getting tired. So what they'll do is whatever everybody else will do and we'll take anything that you give us. If it's a pork barreling project will take it. That's the bottom line.

Rep.
Binkley:

Andy, how about the local options. You mentioned that you thought that a community ought to have the right to vote dry. Then you talked some about enforcement too. Some of the things I've heard down in my district and mine is just from Akiak on down river and out to the coast. Is that a lot of the communities tell me that even though they perceived that they voted dry through banning and importation, banning the sale. That is simply does not work because you can't enforce banning the importation of alcohol. The people, even though the community has chosen that route still continue to import alcohol. It's just impossible to enforce that because you can't be out there to meet every flight, every plane that's coming in. You can't legally search people as they come in. So, it becomes unenforceable. One of the thoughts that many people have suggested is to allow communities an additional option to choose from, which would be to ban possession of alcohol. Which in effect would make it easier for them to enforce then within that community. The person had alcohol.

Father
D'Arco:

Johne, I think that would be more difficult to enforce. I think you're going to find that to go into someones house to see if they have a bottle when they can make the bottle with cranberries or blueberries is going to be real difficult. Are you going to watch everybody who's buying

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "23"

packages of yeast at Swansons? That's a booming business go down there and look in the store. The same problem that your going to have if you really want to go into-when I was in Bethel the biggest problem we had was the people buying lysol at Swanson and going into the honey bucket room. Then drowning their sorrows in lysol or listerine. So I don't think you can go into someones house and try to prevent possession of it. I think that's kind of out of the question. I think what you can do is, I think you can provide adequate services to protect those you chose to have that village dry.

Rep.

Binkley:

So mean to have somebody to meet every flight then to search people and to see if they are bringing in alcohol.

Father

D'Arco:

No, but I certainly mean that you should have enough troopers to go around. You have had three slots open in Bethel for years? The trooper from Holy Cross went to Bethel, and now Holy Cross is having difficulties.

Rep.

Binkley:

You know there's financial realities that the state finds itself in these days with declining revenues.

Father

D'Arco:

Right, right and I don't want to get argumentative about it but the bottom line is everybody wants to tap the permanent fund. But I see more difficulties with projects like I said like Cambell Creek. I think we can afford some troopers, I think we can afford some fish and game people if we wanted. I think that we don't have to go into peoples homes and we don't have to arrest everyone who buys a drink. I think we have a right, not only a right but I think we are forced to protect the innocent.

Rep.

Binkley:

How about those communities that want to do something about alcohol that say, "we do want to ban the possession of alcohol in this community"? Do you think we should allow them that option within that community?

Father

D'Arco:

Absolutely! Absolutely! I think that if a community decides they want to have a bingo game

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they ought to have that right. If they vote and it's a good majority, I don't know what would constitute a good majority—a legal majority maybe ~~four~~ fifths. I think they should have that right. I think they should have that right to go dry. I think they should have that right to have a doctor within a close proximity, not two hours away. I had to bribe a doctor to go to Holy Cross for an illness and it was only because they were in this village that we were able to get him to go over there. Because it was in the middle of the night and the Bethel doctor couldn't tell how serious the case was. As it was it didn't turn out to be that serious. But, I think we have to provide certain services because we need to.

Rep.
Binkley:

But, just dealing with the local option specifically, what if basically what were here to talk about and to get input from people on local options. You think that villages should have that right if they want to chose by majority in that village to ban possession of alcohol?

Father
D'Arco:

Right, beyond a shadow of a doubt. Possession makes me nervous. I think possession you have to be careful if talk to them; because, it might be very difficult to enforce. That may be more difficult than importation and sale. At least importation and sale you can prevent. Possession will still allow those people who brew, which is mostly the old folks to continue to do that.

Rep.
Binkley:

Well, if the possession ban included home brew.

Father
D'Arco:

For personal purposes just like a...

Rep.
Binkley:

I mean it would just be if the community so desired that they could ban possession of alcohol. Whether it be home brew or store bought whiskey, beer, or wine whatever.

Father
D'Arco:

I think the question of alcohol in and of itself is a question that each community needs to face on its own. But, there has to be legislation there to allow them to do that. That's the bottom line. You have to give each community the ~~atomity~~ to do that. As a state government you

autonomy

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "25"

have to provide the means to enforce what they chose.

Rep.
Binkley:

What would you think Father Andy, if a community could--given the reality of our financial situation in the state and the reality that were not going to be able to get troopers in every village. That were not going to be able to get the standard of medical care and attention that we'd like to have in all the communities. Of allowing those communities the ability to deal with that problem themselves. If that possession ban were simply a local ordinance that a community could adopt. That a community could enforce on their own without having to call the state troopers whenever they had a problem. Without having to arrest the person, without having to take them to Bethel. Without having to take provide a public defender for them. Without having the district attorney to deal with it, full judicial trial by jury situation. If a community could have a local ordinance in which they could deal with the problems similar of possession of alcohol. Similar to what would be a parking violation in some communities or traffic ticket.

Father
D'Arco:

I have real difficulty with that. The reason I have real difficulty with that is, I think it's the state's responsibility to provide--no matter how the community wants to deal with that problem the local magistrate or whatever. I think it's the state's responsibility to enforce the laws that the community chose. It's an awful lot to ask in some cases your father or your brother or your uncle to arrest you because you broke the law. So, communities don't have the appeal. For troopers it's the same thing, you have one trooper covering a lot. That's the bottom line. It goes right back to the state has possessions they just refuse to fill.

Sen.
Fischer:

Father, let me follow up on this. Didn't these communities in the olden days have sort of traditional ways of dealing with those who stepped out of line? Out of their own traditional ways of punishing ostracizing taking care of those who violated community laws.

Father
D'Arco:

I've only been her^e ten years. Three years in

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "26"

this area. Ten years in Alaska, three years out here. I don't want to say about the old days because I wasn't here for the old days. My understanding from reading old diaries of priests was that in the old days they were kicked out of the village. That's how you got villages like Bethel.

Sen.
Fischer: Well, maybe...

Father
D'Arco: Of course you were allowed into another village that was somebody else's hunting area.

Rep.
Binkley: Put him on a boat and ship him down river to Bethel.

Sen.
Fischer: If a village chose that option and they wanted to enforce whatever laws or policies they wanted. To protect their community, to protect their families, to protect the children. Maybe there should be another option that ought to be available to them.

Father
D'Arco: Well, I think there are certain laws that are state and federal laws that have to be-whether one chooses to have them or not. I mean this village can not say drunk driving is ok. So you have to be very careful what you're saying about enforcement. It's the state of Alaska that says to the magistrate, it's not ok, to say it's ok. Whether the folks chose it or not.

Sen.
Fischer: My thought was the other way. That a village, adopt a certain option and there isn't a trooper around and there isn't a state official to enforce the laws. Maybe they have ways of dealing with violations of their laws.

Father
D'Arco: My understanding that a village can't expel somebody. I had a case where someone was asked to leave the village, and asked to leave the village, and asked to leave the village. They had no legal leg to stand on. Now, if the state wants to give that right to each village - legislate the right to toss them out. I think the villages would accept that with great relief.

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "27"

Sen.

Fischer: We're going to Akiachak this afternoon. We'll probably get a different response.

Rep.

Binkley: Any further questions? Thank you Father Andy we appreciate it. Chief Billy Morgan. Glad to see you could make it today. I know you were heading up to Alakanuk for another meeting up there. We're glad to have you here.

Chief

Morgan: Right, but the weather was bad so we didn't want to take the chance. My name is Bill Morgan from Aniak. I'm also the chairman for the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation. I don't know what we're discussing here today. This is a problem that they've been trying to solve for quite a while. Even out there that gangsters, during prohibition days, up here even during the prohibition days there's always home brews you see. They had commissioners in those days instead of a magistrate. They'd get the word that the prohibition officer was coming and they might start for McGrath with a boat. But, they didn't know which day he was coming. So everybody would clean out their barrels out, stills and everything. That's a problem that is going to be hard to solve. You can't stop it from coming in. It's hard to stop people from using it, because you know that a lot of people don't know how to handle it. I went through that myself, you know.

Rep.

Binkley: Do you think though Billy, we should give communities that choice? If they want to within that community to pick one of those?

Chief

Morgan: I've got a problem with that. I could be three-quarters of the people that agree with it then you have a quarter of the other people that don't agree. To me it's taking their rights away. Everybody should have rights. If you should drink, drink. If not, ok you don't have to. I was in Kalsag quite a few years ago and they wanted the program. But the people in Kalsag...

Rep.

Binkley: You mean like a counseling program?

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "28"

Chief

Morgan: Right! The people in Kalskag were all for it you see because they were having too much problems and the old people and everybody got together and had a meeting there with a bunch of people from Juneau and they said ok we start a program up here. But K A A got it. To me that's one of the best things they could do is have this out reach program like Y.K. has that. It has done a lot of good to all the villages.

Rep.

Binkley: The Village based alcohol council program?
That's excellent.

Chief

Morgan: Right! The only thing is everybody is yelling about the money being so tight and the people can't go out there and give the service. I think they should find somebody for that because you're helping the people. It's stopping a lot of that. It's a good program because a lot of drinking there is going on, the guy is depressed or whatever you know.

Rep.

Binkley: Do you think the current law which says you can, even if one-quarter of the village wants to allow booze to be sold in the village or imported into a village. Right now if the three-quarters, votes or even half votes to banned importation or to banned the sale they can do that. Do you think that's a good law now, the one you've done?

Chief

Morgan: You know that's just it you see. The majority rules and you'd have to go with it; however, you've got the other portion of people saying your taking my rights away. I live in that town and I want to do what I want. If I want to go and have a drink ok. Importing, just take a look at Bethel it's been a good business for the bootleggers down there, stopping liquor. By stopping liquor in the other villages I've seen, they go to Bethel and Bethel gets the blame you know. It's the wettest-dry town in the world; because the other villages are dry and then they go to Bethel and raise hell, you know. I don't think that's right either if their going to be - which I've told one of the City Managers down there in Bethel. You get them guys that you're having to spend money for them you know drying

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "29"

them out. Find out what village he's from and let that village pay for it because they voted it dry.

Rep.
Binkley: Pay the bill, that's right!

Chief
Morgan: Sure!

Rep.
Binkley: Would you think Billy, if any changes need to be made in the local option laws that maybe we should get rid of that one to allow communities to import booze?

Chief
Morgan: Well, I don't know. It's pretty hard to try and make decisions for somebody else. You can't please everybody, if you did do it you'd fight somebody else. It's just a losing battle you know. I belong to the Alaskan Native Health Board too and we've been discussing this for years and we haven't come up with anything. Which we've been trying to work with the state. To try and get a program, get something going and bring it out to the villages.

Rep.
Binkley: I know that village based counselor program, alcohol counselor program that Y.K. has is an excellent one. I wish we could put more funds into that to expand that because it's effective.

Chief
Morgan: It really could help. I wished they would. Just like up here they need it up here to take care of this area here. But I don't know about stopping that booze coming in here. You know that's a tough one.

Rep.
Binkley: Tough one. John did you have a question?

Rep.
Sund: Father Andy raised a motivation of the committee or where ever I'm from Ketchikan which is the other end of the state. There's an alcohol problem down in the area that I'm at and in some of the villages and that. But it seems that everybody agrees that alcohol is a major problem and could be a major social problem in some cases, especially in a closed community. My motivation of this committee is one, is or isn't

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it a problem, most people say it is. The second question is, how do you deal with it. You can either try and ban the possession and go the prohibition route or some modification of that. If I understand your testimonies it's more the education, and treatment of it. Rather than try and stop it on the front end. Just try to educate people and treat them after they've started it. Is that ...

Chief
Morgan:

That's my point there. Your going to find what you get into. The bad, or if it does you any good or does you harm. And educated person you could let him know it's harming you, more than it's doing good. But how can you do that when you don't have a program where a person can go there and get treated and talk with them. I went to a couple of meetings where they had these programs-the law says you have to go to the program and discuss your problems. You go in there and tell your name, you tell them your an alcoholic and you tell everything you did there when your drinking and then when your sober. A lot of people tell me that when they come out of there they feel a whole lot better, because they discuss their problems and that's why I think the program is going to work. Pretty soon they'll say well, look how foolish I was. You know even me I know if I do something wrong when I'm drinking boy I feel terrible the next day and I don't want to see anybody. When you go to a place like that, you discuss that they give you help. They say, "Well why do you do it" and all that. I think that works.

Rep.
Binkley:

Laurie.

Laurie
Otto:

Mr. Chairman, Billy you not only lived out here all your life, you're the traditional Chief, right? You're on A.V.C.P. Board, the Native Health Board, and chairman of Y.K.H.C. What we've been talking about, what you've been talking about mostly so far is - What to do about alcohol. Do you educate, do you prohibit it. From your point of view and I think you're in a good position to be able to judge this - How serious a problem is this in this region and in the villages, not just Aniak but in the villages of this area with alcohol? How big a problem is it?

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "31"

Chief

Morgan: You take in the thirties it wasn't so bad because you didn't have transportation. All there was was home brew.

Laurie

Otto: How about now?

Chief

Morgan: Now, it's easy to get. It's not only that, no matter what you do-you keep preaching to somebody a little kid, I don't care what it is. You keep preaching to a kid you tell them don't do this because it's wrong you know he's going to try it. After he tries it your going to tell him, "You see, did it do you any good or did it harm you?" and that's the time to catch him you know. If nobody talks to you you'll say that's good. I'm having a lot of fun. That program that's what I'm talking about, the program to help him stop it. Discuss it with them.

Laurie

Otto: But looking at alcohol as a problem. I guess we call it a problem because it causes other things to happen. Crime is related to alcohol abuse. What kinds of problems, what other things do you see happen as a result of people abusing alcohol. More crime?

Chief

Morgan: Well, everything I tell you-I don't know. You can't pin point it. It seems like everything happens if your drinking. A lot of times you ask yourself, "Would it happen if I was sober?" and it wouldn't. That's what I'm trying to get at here you know is to educate the people. I know it's a losing battle. I think this is one thing that they won't ever stop. But you can slow it down.

Rep.

Binkley: Vic.

Sen.

Fischer: Billy, could you say something about the economic impact of this alcohol situation. LaMont was saying before that bootleg booze may cost forty-fifty dollars a bottle. I assume we're dealing with people who really don't have too much money. What impact does spending so much on booze would have on buying food for the family, generally on their life.

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "32"

Chief

Morgan:

To tell you the truth I think if there was more jobs you wouldn't see any bootlegging. The reason a lot of them bootleg is because they can't afford to buy a snow machine or an outboard motor or something. I know a lot of bootleggers and that's why they do it. They don't sell it to anybody. They just sell it to a few people they know. Just to get enough money to buy an outboard motor. We can discuss this - there's no work around here. In the city there they hire the most people. Here you have ten at the most. Then you fifty of them sitting around doing nothing. They have to survive some way. Finding jobs - you'd see a lot of difference if there were more jobs out in the villages, where they can be kept busy. You wouldn't see any bootlegging.

Rep.

Binkley:

Anything else Vic? Mark?

Mark

Earnest:

Yes, what I think Sen Fischer was ^{alluding} ~~saluting~~ to is: What impacts are there to the families of an alcoholic or someone who is purchasing booze from a bootlegger? What impact does that have to that individual family whose someone in the household - who someone is dependent on alcohol? In other words the children, how are they affected?

Chief

Morgan:

They're taking food away from them sure! Yet, I don't know if there's anything you can do to prevent it. The only way you can stop that (I hate repeating myself, but) it's by getting counseling. And saying, "Look what you're doing to your kids". Let them face it, when they face the truth a lot of times it makes them think...

Rep.

Binkley:

To make them aware of what it's done to the rest of the family.

Chief

Morgan:

Yes, right. Look at that you buy a jug of whiskey and here your kids don't eat all day.

Rep.

Binkley:

Well Billy, I think you've brought up some excellent points and I appreciate your testimony, the time you've taken to come here and talk with us and for sharing your knowledge and experience

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with us. We appreciate that. Anything else that you've got?

Chief

Morgan:

No, its just about it. There'll be other poeple who will want ~~of~~ talk to you I guess.

Rep.

Binkley:

Ok, we're running kind of late. Thanks again.

A man

from the

audience:

Could I put a little input about the people-this is short-about half the people who buy bootleg whiskey pool their money together at a party. They get their money together and go see a bootlegger...

Rep.

Binkley:

To buy a bottle or something to have a party?

Man from

audience:

So the majority of the time it's more than one person buying one bottle?

Rep.

Binkley:

Ok.

Sen.

Fischer:

Ok, thanks.

Rep.

Binkley:

Clara.

Sen.

Fischer:

Is that Billy's wife (Chief Morgan)?

Rep.

Binkley:

I think so. Is the sun in your eyes?

Clara

Morgan:

Yes. I'm Clara Morgan, Billy's wife. I was a health aide for 23 years. Got medical retirement in 1982. I traveled to Kalskag up to Lime village the last two or three years I worked as a health aide. For about two years now I've been working as a supervisor/instructor for YKHC going to the villages.

Rep.

Binkley:

Well good!

Clara

Morgan:

The health aides are the most over worked under

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payed people. So. we see a lot of alcohol related incidents. It affects the whole family and the whole village. I just wanted to say from the medical point alcohol ruins your health and affects everybody else in the family.

Rep.
Binkley:

I know that the health aides a lot of times - they're the only ones in the community there that are the real back bone. They're the health relief system in that community. A lot of times so many of the problems in the community are focused on the backs of the health aides. It's a real critical position.

Clara
Morgan:

Right now, the health aide is on call 24 hours a day. Gets payed for 6 hours. They just started with Y.K.H.C. was paying health aides to work on weekends. Those villages that are not paying their health aides for weekend coverage. They don't have any coverage on weekends. That is the time they have most of their emergencies - alcohol related things. A health aide doesn't want to work on weekends if she's not getting paid. There's a lot of them that are working on weekends, even though they don't get payed.

Rep.
Sund:

In terms of your experience over the 23-25 years as a health aide. Are there very many instances of crimes or abuses or neglect that are not alcohol related in the villages? Is it safe to say most of those problems are related with alcohol?

Clara
Morgan:

Most of them, just about all that I saw working as a health aide were alcohol related. There's very very few beaten women that aren't alcohol related. We get calls at night, a women has been beat up and at that time they didn't have the V.P.S.O. they had a trooper off and on. Right now with a V.P.S.O. you can send them to the house and have the person who's doing the abuse taken out of the house. They have a two room jail here where they keep them or at the court house there. There's a lot of child neglect, malnourished kids. They wonder why ~~unlike~~ their children are so small and others are so much bigger the same age. Their finding out now it's from alcohol. Not taking care of themselves while they're pregnant.

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "35"

Rep.

Sund: Over the years you've obviously had to reflect upon what the solution is, in terms of the alcohol problem in the villages. I would appreciate it if you would share with us - how you would go around solving that problem?

Clara

Morgan: As a health aid solving the abused problem just recently the health aides are calling the V.P.S.O. to come in when it's alcohol related incident. So when the V.P.S.O. comes in then he arrests the person that's doing the abuse. In this way they can find out if the person is on probation and they find out if they broke their probation when their picked up.

Rep.

Sund: I guess on the level of saying that - I know we're running out of time John. There's a structure-an attempt here. To say maybe we ought to treat the alcohol problem by maybe looking at the alcohol problem. You can't buy it, you can't sell it, you can't import it into a community. Communities have different options they can look at. One is we're looking at a community to say ban the possession of it. A lot of the testimony here today is that, if I understood it right that alcohol is a symptom of a problem. Maybe the solution is to creating jobs or to have employment, rather than try to attack or banning alcohol. Just curious to your opinion, is it worth trying to slow the flow of alcohol down to the communities or is it just a problem that's not solvable?

Clara

Morgan: The only way it seems to solve it is to get rid of the alcohol.

Rep.

Sund: To get rid of the alcohol.

Clara

Morgan: The villages where they're dry they make their home brew and they get it any way they can. I was just up to Stony River, this last week. I was there for all day Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday left on a late Thursday plane. Those three days there was drunks all around you know. They can't get it now at Red Devil. Red Devil doesn't get it in any more and sell.

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "36"

Rep.
Binkley: Have they shut down Red Devil or have they just voluntarily?

Clara
Morgan: They just voluntary since July-August. They just voluntarily quit, they got in so much trouble on them. So now the airlines go from here (Aniak) all the villages up, goes to McGrath stays 45 minutes and comes back down. The health aide at Stony says that the problem has gotten worse since then...

Rep.
Binkley: Because people take the mail plane up, buy booze and come right back on it.

Clara
Morgan: Make a plane fare up and down you know. They pool their money together when their chartering. That is just air plane foot there and more money for them to buy booze with.

Rep.
Binkley: So, because they can take the mail plane as cheaper, they go to McGrath and back rather than having to charter. so that has increased the easier access because of being cheaper to go to McGrath and back. It's increased the incidents of alcohol with in Stony River.

Clara
Morgan: So you can see that with all these villages that used to go to Red Devil they don't have it now. If they don't have a plane coming in - Northern air or other freight planes then they can get a mail plane to McGrath and save more money for buying booze.

This concludes both sides of Aniak, tape 1.

We will resume the hearing - part 3 of Aniak, on tape 2.

Pam
Westjohn: I know you're in a hurry. I just think this whole alcohol problem is more an economic issue more than anything else. I think we need to look at the reasons why people drink and try to do something about that. I think that by banning importation or banning possession I think we're treating a symptom and not really looking at the cause. I've been out here four and a half years I didn't grow up out here so I don't know exactly

Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "37"

how much people's lives have changed out here. I do know they've changed pretty fast and they've changed drastically. I think it's hard for a lot of people have a real identity crisis. They were used to living subsistence and now they're not so much. It's harder for them too. They're not used to working, they want to work, there aren't a lot of jobs. It's not quite as bad in Aniak, because there are more jobs than there are in a lot of villages. Aniak's local hire system has worked out real well. I know, just from knowing a lot of people that I work with at the city - when their working their a lot better off. They feel better about themselves and they don't drink and their real happy. I think that would be a big answer more jobs for people out here. Money coming to the municipality as we've had here so they can use the local people to work. One other thing I wanted to mention to you is, I've been told that if we lose our V.P.S.O. if Fred Holmberg quit he's not going to be replaced. They're not going to fund another position for Aniak. They said they were basing that on the fact that Aniak has a trooper here. Our trooper here as you know goes to a lot of other villages, and isn't really in Aniak all the time. Well, I know Fred might leave someday. Fred might want to be a trooper himself or something. I would sure hate to see it if we didn't have any V.P.S.O. in Aniak. I know that position is really needed, especially to help out the health aides and all the alcohol problems that we have here. I don't really know what the answer is, I don't think banning importation would help though. I think they would get it somehow. I think bootlegging would be a problem in Aniak if we did ban importation. As far as child abuse I haven't seen that much - child abuse. I have seen neglect. I have seen cases of children ignored a lot or parents drinking for a weekend maybe and the kids are just outside. I'm sure they don't do very well, that's all.

Rep.

Binkley:

Thank you Pam. Do you think, I know you mentioned that you didn't think importation was the answer for Aniak. Do you think communities should have that choice?

Pam

Westjohn:

Yes, I do. I think in other villages where everybody wants to ban it they should all have choices. I think that...

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Rep.
Binkley: Even going on as far as allowing them to ban possession if they so choose in that village?

Pam
Westjohn: If they choose to do it, sure! See it's hard for me to say, because I don't agree with that. I think they should have a choice yes. If they think that's a problem and they want to ban possession they should be able to do it.

Rep.
Binkley: Ok, thank you. Senator?

Sen.
Fischer: Billy, LaMont, and now you have each stressed the value that employment has kind of reducing problems of alcohol. You have just come back from Alaska Municipal League where they talked about the outlook for municipal revenue sharing and you're familiar with the problem that the state has ~~with~~ declining revenue. How can we get more jobs in Aniak and the villages to create the situation where we can deal with it in the most effective manner?

Pam
Westjohn: I think clearly we're going to have to come back to the day of taxes. We're going to have to support ourselves. I think a lot of it will have to come from there. We'll just have to start taking responsibility for our own lives and start paying for some of these things. I think that's just going to happen. Yes, I know the money is not there like it use to be. I know we can't just keep looking to the state saying we want money for this, we want money for that, because I know it's not going to be there. I don't know. I just know that it has helped out in Aniak when people are employed they don't drink as much anyway.

Rep.
Sund: Coming in from the airport Pam, you mentioned a few alcohol related incidents that occur in this area. Maybe, just for the record you could relate those for us again. If there's any deaths, or rapes, murders I don't know about the Aniak area.

Pam
Westjohn: Well, there has been quite a few this year. A person died Friday night that was apparently

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alcohol related. I'd feel better if Fred Holmberg or somebody else talked about it because I just heard about it from other people.

Rep.
Binkley: Fred, could you come forward? How are you today, Fred?

Fred
Holmberg: Fine. My name is Fred Holmberg, I'm the V.P.S.O. in Aniak. I've been working as a V.P.S.O. for about a year and four months now.

Rep.
Binkley: Are you originally up from McGrath that Holmberg up there?

V.P.S.O.
Holmberg: Yes, their related to me. Their my Uncles and Aunts up there.

Rep.
Binkley: Ok, good.

V.P.S.O.
Holmberg: I would like to answer the question that was asked of Pam. So far in a year and a half we had five alcohol related deaths here in Aniak. This is here in Aniak alone. Most of our criminal cases are alcohol related about 95% of them. We average about three to five assaults in Aniak per month. Two out of five assaults are domestic violence, which are alcohol related. Other criminal cases relating with alcohol are driving while intoxicated. Criminal mischief, charges, criminal trespass that's about all we have here that are mostly alcohol related charges.

Sen.
Fischer: Fred are you from Aniak?

V.P.S.O.
Holmberg: I'm actually from upper Kalskag.

Sen.
Fischer: Can you comment on what was mentioned before, the possible problem of enforcing laws and being strict? When a law enforcement officer (not you personally) is related to people in their given community.

V.P.S.O.
Holmberg: You mean arresting a family member?

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Sen.

Fischer: Arresting a family member, arresting people in a small community where their friends and everybody is related to everybody. /

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Yes, I think there is some problem since some of the villages - right now here's only two V.P.S.O.'s on the Kuskokwim right now, that aren't white. The other villages had V.P.S.O.'s, but they've quit because of similar reasons to that. Arresting family relatives, having trouble dealing with that. It is hard to arrest a family member. I've done it quite a few times in Aniak. I have a lot of relative up here. It is hard to do.

Rep.

Binkley: Fred, have you just worked in Aniak as a V.P.S.O.? Of course right now Aniak has adopted the local option for people to import alcohol, but does not allow for the sale of alcohol. Have you, do you know of any cases of bootlegging or have you been involved in any bootlegging cases here in Aniak?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: There's at least five or six bootleggers here in Aniak. It's really hard to catch them for the fact that they've been doing it for quite sometime. Their pretty well educated how to avoid being prosecuted for this. They wouldn't sell to any police officer. They wouldn't sell to a person who is a friend of a police officer. They won't sell to anybody they don't know. It's just hard to catch them.

Laurie

Otto: Mr. Chairman. Fred, how many of the violent crimes, assaults, murders and sexual assaults are alcohol related?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Just about a 100%. I've never had a case where domestic violence and assaults where there was ~~no~~ alcohol involved.

Laurie

Otto: That's true about the homicides too, the murders?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Yes.

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Laurie

Otto: How about the juveniles that you arrest, what percentage of your cases are juveniles?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Their ~~is~~ very low. There are a lot of juveniles who drink, again they wouldn't tell where it's coming from. If we do get them - we just start to mutter.

Laurie

Otto: I guess I wondered of the juveniles that you arrest for crimes or that you investigate for having committed crimes they don't technically get arrested. Are those people 100% all intoxicated too?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: No.

Laurie

Otto: What percentage?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: I'd say about 5% are. Some of the students, minors would be drinking and get their nerve up to go to the cops, but not very many.

Laurie

Otto: One thing Billy Morgan Jr. said and I think Lyn Kvamme said people drink in their homes here. Would you agree with that?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Yes.

Laurie

Otto: Would you agree of the 100% of the violent crimes are alcohol related people in most cases started out drinking in their homes?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Yes, I'd say so. Another problem with juveniles is when the household is drinking and everybody gets real high the juvenile would go and take their booze and consume it without being seen. Most of the kids drink in the household after their parents get drunk or everybody is real intoxicated. They can also go and take a can of beer that's sitting on the table or sneak a bottle of whiskey out of the bedroom.

Laurie

Otto: Do you help the social service worker when he

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goes out to pick up children who have been abandoned or neglected? How many of those incidents are related to the parents being intoxicated?

V.P.S.O.
Holmberg:

Yes. We haven't had very many of those maybe he hasn't called me everytime he's gone to pick up kids. He hasn't called me here in a long time concerning domestic violence and violence or a kid being neglected. I do go and help him and the social services.

Rep.
Binkley:

Ok, any further questions Fred? Ok, Mark.

Mark
Earnest:

Do you know how many other villages in this part of the Kuskokwim do not have V.P.S.O.'s or V.P.S.O. officers in their communities?

V.P.S.O.
Holmberg:

In the Kuskokwim Native Association ^{area} here there is Lime Village and Stony Village don't have one. Sleetmute has one, but he hasn't been trained. Red Devil, Crooked Creek, Chuathbaluk, Upper Kalsag doesn't have one. Lower Kalsag has one that's being trained there now.

Rep.
Binkley:

So you're really the only one here in this region that's apparently the only V.P.S.O. that's working right now?

V.P.S.O.
Holmberg:

Yes.

Laurie
Otto:

So what happens when people get drunk and wild in the village, nothing? Let's say Crooked Creek what if people get drunk and start shooting up the village, what happens?

V.P.S.O.
Holmberg:

Sometimes incidents will keep going on because ~~no~~ nobody wants to report their brother, sister, or relative. No investigations are done because there are no reports.

Rep.
Binkley:

But, if they do report it then they call the troopers?

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V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Yes, then the one trooper Ron Bel~~l~~don who has just came to Aniak. He's been out of town just about everyday going out to the different villages.

Laurie

Otto: The people who have eventually been caught or convicted of committing a homicide or committing a murder, are those generally people who have had a prior history of alcohol related incidents? Lots of times those haven't been reported for the reasons who said?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Yes.

Rep.

Binkley: Mark?

Mark

Earnest: Some of the villages you've named or listed have had V.P.S.O.'s in the past. They have lost their positions what I understand A.V.C.P. has a limited number of positions available and there isn't enough for every village in their region. From your understanding and your knowledge of the communities in this area have you noticed a change increased or decreased with a presence of a V.P.S.O. officer in alcohol and alcohol related problems. Does it help those communities to have a position?

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Yes. Yes, I've noticed the increase~~d~~ in violent crimes, assaults and domestic problems in other villages. There has been more sexual assaults I've noticed in the villages. More sexual assaults of minors.

Mark

Earnest: So you do feel that enforcement is effective to have a V.P.S.O. in that community, With enforcement it's much more possible to control the alcohol related problems.

V.P.S.O.

Holmberg: Yes, It's definitely more.

Rep.

Binkley: Thanks Fred. I appreciate it. The last one we have this afternoon is Myrtle Van Doorn. Good to see you this afternoon.

: I'm Mrytle Van Doorn. I'm a certified health practitioner here in Aniak. I've worked here a year and ten months in Aniak. During that year and ten months I've seen a lot of alcohol related incidents and tragedies that have happen here. Infact, when I first started working I arrived here on January 13 and I was initiated. I was to start work on the 14th, but instead I was initiated on the 13th by three alcohol related incidents. This kept us up from 7:00p.m. to 5:00a.m. Medi-vac people out because they were injured by three-wheelers, snow machines alcohol related incidents. It gets pretty stressful at times. I have seen I have attended a lot of funerals that were due to alcohol related situations and it's very sad. I really don't know what you can do about it. I think the thing that needs to be done it's here we can look away, we can't put it away, is to teach the people. AS health aides it's very hard for us to teach. We are 24 hrs. service members, with the lowest payed in the Southeast Alaska. In Akiak and Aniak there is only two of us and we take turns pulling on call duties, which are seven days a week. Our weekends are very busy with alcohol related incidents. Infact I was busy this weekend cause I was on call. In the last two months we've had four alcohol related deaths. It's very hard to say what can be done about it. I don't think you can take it away from people. The only thing you can do is to educated them. Educate the children.

Do you thing Mrytle it makes a difference how easy the access is to alcohol?

It is very easy.

Do you think that makes a difference? In some communities access to alcohol is more difficult. Do you think that has any correlation between how many people actually drink in the community as to how easy easy it is to get?

It depends on the individual. If a person is an alcoholic he'll get it every which way he can. You can ban a village from alcohol. If there's a person in there that's an alcoholic he'll go to that village to drink.

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Aniak; Local Option Hearing: "46"

Mrytle: Ok, friends getting together drinking that drink can maintain their alcoholic intake. Alcoholics drink to get drunk they consume and consume and consume they don't know when to stop drinking. If they run out they'll find some someplace else or something else that's got alcohol in it.

Sen
Fischer: So, were talking of people who are alcoholics. Not who are casual drunks, occasionally that go on a binge. This is not just the occasional drunk. We're talking real alcoholics.

Mrytle: Yes. Not just occasional drunks, alcoholics.
Yes.

Laurie
Otto: I'm just confused. I wondering whether or not you're saying that only alcoholics are the ones who are on your case lists as alcohol related injuries.

Mrytle: No. That's not what I saying. I'm saying is that the people who do consume alcohol are the ones that have lots of accidents.

Laurie
Otto: So people who are - the kind of people Sen. Fischer was describing. People who binge drink once every two weeks, those people are also getting into trouble because of the booze.

Mrytle: Yes.

Rep.
Binkley: Ok, Mrytle I guess that's about it, appreciate it. Lyn Kvamme did you have a few more things you wanted to add?

Lyn
Kvamme: No. The things these folks said are the same I wanted to say.

Rep.
Binkley: Is there any other further testimony? Pam Westjohn?

Pam
Westjohn: I just want to say thank you for coming out here.