

HB

216

<TARGET><BILL>HB 216</BILL><SUBJECT>HB
216</SUBJECT><COMM>HSTA28</COMM></TARGET>

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 216(STA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

**Offered:
Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES KREISS-TOMKINS, MILLETT, EDGMON, NAGEAK, AND HERRON,
Gara, Guttenberg, Foster, Drummond, LeDoux, Kito III, Kawasaki, Muñoz**

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act adding the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq,**
2 **Unangaġ, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in,**
3 **Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hĕn, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian**
4 **languages as official languages of the state."**

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

6 *** Section 1.** AS 44.12.310 is amended to read:

7 **Sec. 44.12.310. Official languages [LANGUAGE].** The English, Inupiaq,
8 Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangaġ, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag,
9 Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana,
10 Tanacross, Hĕn, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages are
11 **[LANGUAGE IS] the official languages [LANGUAGE] of the State of Alaska.**

12 *** Sec. 2.** AS 44.12.310 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

13 (b) The designation of languages other than English as official languages of
14 the state under (a) of this section does not require or place a duty or responsibility on

1
2

the state or a municipal government to print a document or record or conduct a meeting, assembly, or other government activity in any language other than English.

Nancy Manly

From: robertmcharlie@gmail.com on behalf of Robert Charlie <robert.charlie@alaska.net>
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 3:44 PM
To: Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB216

Hello Ak. state legislators I fully encourage your support Alaska'S FIST
PEOPLE'S LANGUAGE TO PASS BY 100%
THANK YOU.

--

Robert Charlie

Nancy Manly

From: Freddie Olin
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 4:28 PM
To: Nancy Manly
Cc: Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Subject: HB 216 Invited Testimony 4/1

Good afternoon Nancy,

We have a list of four people making up the invited testimony tomorrow morning:

1. Lance Twitchell and Selina Everson (in person)
2. Kim Reitmeier, CEO/Executive Director ANCSA Regional Association (off-net teleconference)
3. Paul Berg (in person)

Selina is an elder and Lance is a professor at UAS who will accompany Selina. Kim has brief testimony lined up over teleconference. Paul will close the invited testimony out.

Let me know if you have any questions!

Freddie

28-LS0905\P
Martin
3/31/14

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 216()

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

BY

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Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES KREISS-TOMKINS, MILLETT, EDGMON, NAGEAK, AND HERRON,
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*Gattis didnt
remove her objection*

AMENDMENT

*Keller offered
Gattis objects*

BY

*Isaacson ~~object~~
~~removed~~*

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

TO: HB 216

1 Page 1, following line 5:

2 Insert a new bill section to read:

3 **"* Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
4 to read:

5 LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature that the amendment to
6 AS 44.12.310 adding 20 languages as official languages of the state is symbolic and is not
7 intended to require the government to provide additional services in those 20 additional
8 languages."

9
10 Page 1, line 6:

11 Delete "Section 1"

12 Insert "Sec. 2"

*4/1/14
Keller removed*

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 216()

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES KREISS-TOMKINS, MILLETT, EDGMON, NAGEAK, AND HERRON,
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1 and records or conduct meetings, assemblies, or other government activities in any
2 language other than English.

Additional Documents
for the 4/1/2014 Meeting
HB 216

- Amendment U.3
- Email: Story Supports
- Letter of Support: Greene / Nana
- Email: Didrickson J
- Email: Geiger, W (2nd email of support)

A M E N D M E N T

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE

BY REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS

TO: HB 216

1 Page 1, following line 11:

2 Insert a new bill section to read:

3 **** Sec. 2.** AS 44.12.310 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

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5 the state under (a) of this section does not require the government to print documents
6 and records or conduct meetings, assemblies, or other government activities in any
7 language other than English."

Nancy Manly

From: Ellen Story <story.ellen@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 3:41 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

Hello,

I am a teacher in the Juneau School District and I am writing to share my support for passing this bill. This is more than a symbolic act. It comes down to civil rights. The bill doesn't require any additional resources or work on the part of the State of Alaska. These are not symbolic languages, but are living languages that were born right here in Alaska. This bill is a huge step towards equality and restorative efforts towards Alaska Native people. Please pass this bill as one small step to acknowledging the importance of the Alaska Native Language.

Thank you for your time,
Ellen Story



House State Affairs Committee
State Capitol Room 106
Juneau, AK 99801

March 27, 2014

Dear Chairman Lynn and Vice Chairman Keller:

I am writing you today on behalf of NANA to express our support for House Bill 216 to add “the Iñupiaq, Siberian Yup’ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena’ina, Deg Xinaq, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich’in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages as official languages” of the State of Alaska. Recognition of Alaska Native languages demonstrates the importance of our languages to the future generations of all Alaskans.

NANA is owned by more than 13,500 shareholders who are the descendants of the Inupiat people of Northwest Alaska. Restoring, revitalizing and perpetuating our Iñupiaq language is a common goal throughout our region. In recent village listening sessions, our elders, community members and leaders consistently reinforced that the Iñupiaq language is essential to the identity of our youth and communities. Language gives us a sense of who we are and a sense of belonging to our communities, environment and culture. This creates stronger individuals and communities who are able to contribute to a healthy and vibrant Alaska.

In recognition of the importance of perpetuating the Iñupiaq language, NANA provides direct funding and support for revitalization efforts through the Aqqaluk Trust and other programs. We funded and participated in the development of Rosetta Stone programs for the two predominant Inupiaq dialects in Northwest Alaska, provide funding to Nikaitchait Iligsavik, and to culture camps in the villages.

It is NANA’s hope that the State will join us in recognizing the essential role Alaska Native languages have in the future of Alaska Native communities and the entire State of Alaska.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Quyaanak,

Marie N. Greene
President and CEO

CC: Senator Donny Olsen
Representative Ben Nageak
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 9:27 AM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: House Bill 216 (Official Alaska Languages Bill)

-----Original Message-----

From: Will Geiger [mailto:will_geiger907@yahoo.com]
Sent: Saturday, March 29, 2014 5:23 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: House Bill 216 (Official Alaska Languages Bill)

Representative Bob Lynn,

After being present during the hearing regarding House Bill 216 on Thursday I would like to extend my continued support for the passage of the Bill as well as some of thoughts considering the discussion of the Bill. As a senior English student at the University of Alaska Southeast, my life is, at present, dedicated to studying the historic, theoretical, social, and ethical dynamics of language. Specifically, I have focused my studies on the relationship between the Tlingit and English languages through those various frameworks. I feel that there are some important points which were being overlooked during Thursday's hearing. I would like to bring some of these points your attention.

1) Indigenous languages and immigrant languages cannot be put in the same category. It is common belief that immigrants must "assimilate" into the "American way" by speaking English when they come to America. The vocabulary of "assimilation" was brought up in these terms as an American social imperative on Thursday. Conflating the, for example, the Russian and Inupiaq languages in this way runs the risk of overlooking the very sad chapter of American history during which State-sponsored boarding schools became sites for the violent extraction of Native languages from young children. There were elders in the room who were, in fact, beaten in boarding schools for speaking their Native languages. Thursday was an example of the symbolic power of language: those elders heard the vocabulary of "assimilation" put in the same terms in which it was used against them during the more actively violent process of Native suppression. Rigorous deliberation on this Bill is one of the best compliments that can be paid to it; however, we live in the very immediate wake of those historical wounds and it is important that we not make them any more painful.

2) This is not a purely Native or a Native vs. non-Native issue. This bill will touch everyone in Alaska in a positive way. The state-sponsored recognition of Alaska Native languages will—at minimum—instill pride in the living generations whom have been taught that their languages, and by extension, their cultural identities are inferior. We all live together on this land. Alaska Natives are over-represented in the prisons, foster care/adoption, substance/alcohol abuse, and suicide. To pin this as something which only effects Native peoples, one would have to disavow a substantial portion of American political history. Uplifting the Native populations that have been struggling is not a Native problem, it is a human problem. Instilling pride in the Native and partially-Native people will serve to narrow, rather than widen, the disjuncture which generates "Native vs. non-Native" conflicts.

3) Unity as a State is weakened by language shift. Without a doubt, literacy and fluency in the English language allows the many people of Alaska to be culturally united and share in a common political process. However, the positive contributions of wide-spread English fluency and literacy should not come at the expense of Native languages. "Language shift" refers to the shift towards fewer speakers of indigenous languages and the replacement of those languages by English. The disappearance of Alaska's Native languages is not a natural phenomenon in which people willingly decided to give up their languages. The Tlingit language did not become obsolete as a means of meaning-

production or communication with the arrival of Russians and Americans. In fact, the Russians sought to maintain the fluency and develop literacy in Alaska Native languages. The transfer to American rule brought with it unnecessary campaigns to erase these languages, a campaign which was religiously motivated. Whether actively or passively, allowing this shift towards the death of indigenous languages to continue in front of our eyes will mean allowing those embarrassing colonial campaigns to come to completion. This is not a way to promote unity between people. Instilling pride and respect in the particular Native groups is, in fact, the more effective route towards a stronger State-wide unification. English is not endangered by this bill. Instilling proud identity and fluency in the particular Native languages will produce a profoundly stronger reason for mutual respect and unification throughout the State of Alaska than a continued path towards the extinction of the languages and cultural pride. Let us take responsibility for those unfortunate historical moments we now all share as residents of Alaska and work towards repairing them as best we can. That is how we will become a resilient and unified State.

I thank you very much for your time in reading my thoughts, as well as for the time you have invested in deliberating and considering House Bill 216. Again, I would like to extend my strong support for the passage of this Bill. I do not seek to point fingers or direct shame towards any individual or group with these thoughts. Rather, I would like to make my opinion available for your consideration as an elected public figure. Thank you so much for investing your valuable time in this Bill.

Gunalchéesh (Thank you),
William Geiger

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 8:37 AM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: In Regards to HB 216

From: Jno Didrickson [<mailto:cfartino@gmail.com>]
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2014 2:03 AM
To: Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes
Subject: In Regards to HB 216

Dear Committee Members,

I urge you to consider supporting this bill HB216. I offer these few arguments.

Firstly, Language served America through code talkers of World War II. These Veterans were recognized for their service in 2008, after they have passed away. They had fought with their language at a time when these languages were prohibited and persecuted despite the constitution offering the freedom of speech. Shall Alaska only recognize the languages after it too has passed into history?

By any account these languages would be considered endangered. Federal and State entities spend a considerable amount of resources for the preservation and protection of such items. This is not asking for the allocation of resources, it merely asks that these languages be acknowledged. If the armed services found Native Languages a useful resource then they should at the very least be recognize. This bill is the proper vehicle to take such action.

As a matter of State pride, many Alaskan residents will identify themselves as "Alaskan" before announcing they are American. Language is molded by the land, just as much as the land is molded by its inhabitants. These languages should be officially recognized as a matter of Alaska's uniqueness. These languages are more representative than the malamute, forget-me-not, or willow ptarmigan. Recognition of these languages is an acknowledgement of the vastness and diversity of the land.

I have done my best to eliminate emotional arguments, but must respond to giving support for a single day or even month to Alaska native languages. I find it as offensive as Mother's day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day and Thanksgiving. These days are for those who wish to appear proper by paying lip service instead of living these concepts at all times. One should love and respect their parents, elders and significant others every day, as well as being thankful for what they have.

Sincerely,

Jno Didrickson

cfartjino@hotmail.com

Additional Documents *for* **HB 216**

- Amendment U.1
- MEMO – Legal Services Hilary Martin 3/26/2014
- 2nd MEMO – Legal Services Hilary Martin 3-26-2014
- SUPPORT LETTER – Sealaska Heritage Institute/World
- TESTIMONY – Jasmine D. James
- TESTIMONY – ANCSA Regional Assn
- SUPPORT EMAIL – numerous emails received last night

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

Library
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

March 26, 2014

SUBJECT: Official Languages (HB 216; Work Order No. 28-LS0905\U)

TO: Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Attn: Freddie Olin

FROM: Hilary Martin *Hilary Martin*
Legislative Counsel

You have asked what the result would be if the 20 Native languages in HB 216 were also added to AS 44.12.320.

AS 44.12.320 states:

Sec. 44.12.320. Scope. The English language is the language to be used by all public agencies in all government functions and actions. The English language shall be used in the preparation of all official public documents and records, including all documents officially compiled, published or recorded by the government.

In *Alaskans for a Common Language, Inc. v. Kritz*, the Alaska Supreme Court determined that the first sentence of AS 44.12.320 is unconstitutional.¹ The court then found that if the second sentence was read narrowly, so that "multilingual *official* documents are not prohibited so long as an English version of the document is published," the second sentence was not unconstitutional.²

If the 20 Alaska Native languages in HB 216 were also added to the second sentence of AS 44.12.320, it would mean that the government would be required to prepare all official documents and records in English and the other 20 languages. While the government is permitted to prepare official public documents and records in languages other than English currently, it is not required to do so. Amending the statute to add other languages would require the government to prepare documents and records in all of the languages. Note that even in this case, the government would still be permitted to prepare official documents and records in a language other than the official languages.

¹ 170 P.3d 183, 208 (Alaska 2007).

² *Id.* at 197.

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
March 26, 2014
Page 2

Additionally, the remainder of the statutes relating to the official language of the state, AS 44.12.340 - 44.12.390, would also have to be amended to reflect the change that the 20 additional languages are also required to be used for official documents and records by the government.

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

HVM:lem
14-159.lem

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

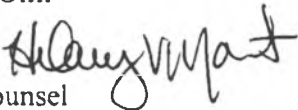
State Capitol
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Deliveries to 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

March 26, 2014

SUBJECT: Official Languages (HB 216; Work Order No. 28-LS0905U)

TO: Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Attn: Freddie Olin

FROM: Hilary Martin 
Legislative Counsel

You have asked whether HB 216, if adopted, would require changes for government communication. HB 216 adds 20 Alaska Native languages as official languages of the state.

AS 44.12.300 - 44.12.390 were enacted as an initiative on the 1998 ballot. In 2007 the Alaska Supreme Court issued an opinion in *Alaskans for a Common Language, Inc. v. Kritz* striking down part of the initiative as unconstitutional.¹

In *Kritz*, the court found that the first sentence of AS 44.12.320 was unconstitutional because it impacted the free speech rights of non-English speaking citizens and their right to petition the government, legislators and other elected officials, and public employees.² The court then determined that the sentence was not sufficiently narrowly tailored to achieve its end, and struck down the sentence.³

The court determined that the second sentence of AS 44.12.320, however, could be read in such a way so as to be constitutional. The court determined that the second sentence of AS 44.12.320 means "that multilingual *official* documents are not prohibited so long as an English version of the document is published."⁴

HB 216 amends AS 44.33.310. It does not amend AS 44.12.320, which states: "The English language shall be used in the preparation of all official public documents and records, including all documents officially compiled, published or recorded by the

¹ 170 P.3d 183 (Alaska 2007).

² *Id.* at 200 - 204.

³ *Id.* at 208.

⁴ *Id.* at 197.

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

March 26, 2014

Page 2

government." HB 216 does not require the government to prepare all official public documents in all 21 languages. The government could provide official documents in a language other than English, including one of the 20 languages included in HB 216, however the current statute, as interpreted by the Alaska Supreme Court, allows the government to do so already. Therefore, in my opinion HB 216 would not create an additional duty of the government to provide documents in another language.

The statement in AS 44.12.310 that English is the official language of the state, when read in combination with the rest of AS 44.12.300 - 44.12.390 as well as the *Kritz* case, can be seen as largely symbolic. While the government is required to provide official documents in English, there is nothing that prevents the government from providing copies of official documents in another language currently. In my opinion, a court would not find that the addition of 20 more languages to AS 44.33.310 imposes additional obligations on the government.

If I may be of further assistance, please advise.

HVM:ray

14-133.ray



Sealaska Heritage Institute

One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 301 • Juneau • Alaska • 99801-1249 • (907) 463-4844

www.sealaskaheritage.org • www.alaskanativeartists.com • Fax (907) 586-9293

March 26, 2014

Re: Support for House Bill 216 Official Languages of the State

To Whom It May Concern:

Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) strongly supports the House Bill 216 recognizing all Alaska Native Languages as official languages. The adoption of this legislation sends a powerful message that Alaska Native languages are valued and equally to English in the State of Alaska.

Nearly all twenty of Alaska's indigenous languages are identified as critically or severely endangered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) endangered languages listing. The Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian languages are no exception. With each obituary, we mourn the loss of an elder and another fluent speaker.

Native languages contain intellectual wealth accumulated through thousands upon thousands of years. They convey how Alaska Native people view and use the land. SHI recently published the most extensive cultural atlas of Southeast Alaska: "*Haa Léelk'w Hás Aaní Saax'u, Our Grandparents' Names on the Land*", edited by Thomas Thornton. This atlas contains thousands of indigenous place names of Southeast Alaska. These names, more than anything, remind all of us that this is truly *Haa Aaní*, our land. If this is truly our land, then maybe we should all know something about the languages of our land.

We believe that the collective wisdom of our ancestors and the beauty of culture hold our promise for the future. We firmly believe that Alaska Native students who know and accept who they are, even in the context of living in a society that devalues Native-ness or cultural and physical differences, will succeed academically, emotionally and socially. The transmission of our culture and language is the key to our survival and success. Moreover, we believe that one of the greatest richness of this State is represented by its cultural and linguistic diversity, and we must ensure that this remains a characteristic of the state of Alaska.

Passing of HB 216 supports and encourages the indigenous peoples of Alaska to be strong, educated, contributing members of their communities. Acknowledgement of the value of Alaska Native languages in the State of Alaska Constitution is a huge, historic and wonderful accomplishment. We need more awareness, support and recognition of the value of Native language revitalization.

We wish to express our gratitude to you for carrying forth legislation supporting the indigenous language speakers of the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Rosita Worl, Ph.D.
President

Testimony of Jasmine D. James
IN SUPPORT OF HB 216, OFFICIAL LANGAUGES OF THE STATE
Before the House State Affairs Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 216 "Official Languages of the State." The adoption of this legislation sends a powerful message that Alaska Native languages are valued and equal to English in the State of Alaska.

As a member of a generation of Tlingit removed from the intergenerational trauma that plagued my grandparents and bled onto my father. Whose mother, like so many others, refused to teach her children her Native tongue in an effort to spare them the pain she endured. As a result of this protective act my father's generation never learned their parent's language and my generation grew up without the opportunity to even hear our language spoken in our homes.

I understand why our languages are in the state that they are. I am encouraged by the shifting attitudes in our State of Alaska towards its first languages. I feel the urgency and responsibility to revive and nurture the Native languages we still possess. It is my generation's calling to breathe life into our dying languages until our language is no longer a kindling spark, but a thriving flame. A torch for my generation and generations to come to proudly carry; lighting the way to into a brighter, stronger future with the strength of our ancestors on our tongues.

I am thirsty for the rich knowledge of my ancestors held in their language and I am desperately for the opportunity for my children to learn their heritage language and culture. HB 216 gives me hope for the possibility of seeing the integration and celebration of Native languages in our education systems. Research shows that Native languages have the capacity to improve academic performance, contribute to the positive self-identity and the emotional wellbeing of Native youth. The use of and teaching of Native languages also promotes cultural diversity within schools and communities, and sustains the preservation of Native language and cultural.

There is a growing body of research demonstrating the cognitive and educational benefits of bilingualism. Sealaska Heritage Institute evaluations, as well as other studies, reveal that students' academic performance increases when they are taught Native language and culture. Educational institutions that integrate Native languages and culture or use primarily Native languages to deliver education have Native higher graduation rates and college attendance rates.

Through Native languages each Native child's emotional well-being and positive self-identity is lifted up and supported. Positive self-identity is essential to academic achievement. Native languages tie our peoples to their personal and cultural identity. When you remove a people from their language, you cut out the very heart of their identity. The State of Alaska's dismal suicide rates, domestic and substance abuse

statistics is evidence of that loss of personal and cultural identity. For as Dr. Walter Sobeloff stated, "When people know who they are, they don't kill themselves."

The use and preservation of Native languages is critical to the survival of our cultures. Native Languages and Culture are intricately woven together. Language is the way a culture and its collective intellectual property is carried from one generation to the next. Native languages not only hold rich personal, social, and cultural identity, but historical, scientific and environmental expertise. With the loss of language there is an irreplaceable deletion of the indigenous world view and the knowledge systems of that people's heritage. This is a loss not only for Native peoples, but for all people.

I strongly urge the committee to support HB 216 and validate the use of Alaska Native languages in our State institutions.

Sincerely,

Jasmine D. James

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

House District 34

rep.jonathan.kreiss-tomkins@akleg.gov

Committees:
Transportation
Fisheries
State Affairs



State Capitol, Room 426
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

(907) 465-3732
Toll Free: 1-888-461-3732
Fax: (907) 465-2652

SPONSOR STATEMENT HB 216

HB 216 will allow for 20 different Alaska Native languages to become official languages of the state of Alaska, along with English. HB 216 is a symbolic gesture, similar to Forget-Me-Nots and Chinook Salmon being the official flower and fish of the state of Alaska.

In current state law, English is the only official language of Alaska. The bill would expand the list to include Iñupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangaꜣ, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian.

The bill proposal may be symbolic, it is however, an important step in recognizing the living, breathing, Alaska Native languages of the state of Alaska, which continue to grow into daily use by many speakers around the state who both practice and teach as has been done for millennia prior to statehood.

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

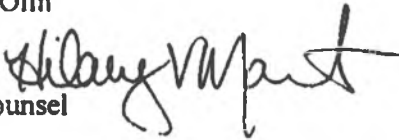
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

January 24, 2014

SUBJECT: Sectional summary of HB 216
(HB 216; Work Order No. 28-LS0905\U)

TO: Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Attn: Freddie Olin

FROM: Hilary Martin 
Legislative Counsel

You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill - the bill itself is the best statement of its contents.

Section 1. Adds the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangaġ, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskikwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages as official language of the state.

HVM:lem
14-027.lem

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2014 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 216
Fiscal Note Number: _____
() Publish Date: _____

Identifier: HB216-OOG-DOE-2-17-14
Title: OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE STATE
Sponsor: ** KREISS-TOMKINS, MILLETT
Requester: House Community and Regional Affairs

Department: Office of the Governor
Appropriation: Elections
Allocation: Elections
OMB Component Number: 21

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2015	Included in	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
	Appropriation Requested	Governor's FY2015 Request	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2015	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants & Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None							
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

Change in Revenues							
---------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2014) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 *(separate capital appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? **No**
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Initial version.

Prepared By:	Gail Fenumiai, Director	Phone:	(907)465-2644
Division:	Division of Elections	Date:	02/17/2014 10:36 AM
Approved By:	Guy Bell, Administrative Director	Date:	02/17/14
Agency:	Division of Administrative Services, Office of the Governor		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB216

Analysis

This bill has no fiscal impact on the division.

*Freddie
brought u 3/13/14*



Freddie Olin <freddieolin@gmail.com>

HB 216 in HSTA

Lawrence Kaplan <ldkaplan@alaska.edu>

Tue, Mar 4, 2014 at 11:50 AM

To: Freddie Olin <freddieolin@gmail.com>

Cc: "latwitchell@uas.alaska.edu" <latwitchell@uas.alaska.edu>, Annette Evans Smith <AEvansSmith@alaskanative.net>, Liz Medicine Crow <LizMedicineCrow@firstalaskans.org>, Gary Holton <gmholton@alaska.edu>, Representative Kriess-Tompkins <Jonathan.s.kt@gmail.com>

Freddie,

Thanks for the news. I suppose it depends what we mean by "symbolic." It wouldn't be purely symbolic, in the sense that the bill would become law. The symbolic aspect is that the bill doesn't require any action in regard to the role of official Native languages. In some cases where English is official, that is symbolic too, since nothing specific is required. But then sometimes it involves government meetings and documents and that is more than a symbol.

Larry

[Quoted text hidden]

--

Lawrence D. Kaplan, Director
Alaska Native Language Center
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Fairbanks, AK 99775-7680
tel: (907) 474-6582, fax: (907) 474-6586
email: ldkaplan@alaska.edu, www.uaf.edu/anlc



Alaska Native Language Center

P.O. Box 757680 • Fairbanks, Alaska 99775-7680 • (907) 474-7874 • fax (907) 474-6586 • www.uaf.edu/anlc

5 February, 2014

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express the support of the Alaska Native Language Center for HB 216, which would make all Alaska Native languages official languages of the State of Alaska, along with English, which already has official status.

Our twenty Native languages are an important cultural resource for our state, linking us to our past and to the populations of other Arctic nations, including Russia, Canada, and Greenland. The state of endangerment of Alaska's Native languages is profound and ever increasing as speaker populations age. A number of our languages have only a handful of elderly speakers remaining, and only one, Yup'ik, has child speakers who learn the language at home as their primary language.

The Alaska Native Language Center, founded by state legislation in 1972, continues to provide support for Alaska Native languages through research, teaching, and service. The publications, writing systems, and archival documentation developed at ANLC provide a strong foundation for official language status.

The preservation and maintenance of Alaska Native languages are of great importance to Alaskans, both the Native population whose heritage is closely tied to cultural and linguistic knowledge, as well as the non-Native population who benefit from this extraordinarily rich cultural landscape.

For these reasons, I urge you to work to pass HB 216 and show support for Alaska's Native languages by granting them official status.

On behalf of the Alaska Native Language Center,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'L D Kaplan'.

Lawrence D. Kaplan, PhD

Director



Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council

February 3, 2014

To Whom this may concern

The Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council supports House Bill 216 recognizing all Alaska Native languages as official languages.

As the authority representing all Alaska Native languages, we strongly urge you to continue to work with members of this council, Legislature, Governor and partner with organizations across the state to pass HB216 to help revitalize Alaska Native languages.

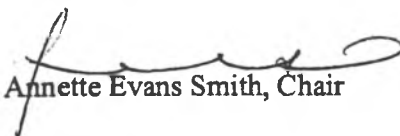
This is a critical time for Alaska Native languages and their continued survival. The Alaska Native Language Center has identified 20 indigenous languages spoken in Alaska. Nearly all of the twenty languages are listed as critically or severely endangered by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO Endangered Languages listing, and two Alaska Native languages are listed as vulnerable.

Recognition and revitalization of Native languages adds richness to our state's heritage and culture. We seek your support for Alaska Native language preservation and revitalization, and commend your efforts.

Thank you for your service to Alaskans.

Sincerely,

ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND ADVISORY
COUNCIL


Annette Evans Smith, Chair

Sen. Donald Olson
(Inupiaq)

Rep. Benjamin Nageak
(Iñupiaq)

Annette Evans Smith, Chair
(Athabaskan, Alutiiq, Yup'ik)

April Counciller,
Vice-Chair (Alutiiq)

Delores Churchill (Haida)

Bernadette Yaayuk
Alvanna-Stimpfle (Inupiaq)

Walkie Charles
(Yup'ik)

The mission of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council is to advocate for the survival and revitalization of Alaska Native languages through collaboration and sharing for all.

HB 216 Written Testimony

From: Bernadette Alvanna Stimpfle <ehp.dir@kawerak.org>
To: Freddie R Olin IV

Tue, Feb 18, 2014 at 1:55 PM

Hello Mr. Olin,

This morning I listened in on the testimonies for HB 216 and was inspired to give a written testimony as well. Thank you for this opportunity.

My name is Bernadette Y. Alvanna-Stimpfle. My parents are originally from King Island, Alaska. I was born and raised in Nome and that is where I reside now. I have taught Inupiaq language and culture, ESL and the regular classroom with Nome Public Schools for 25 years. I now work at Kawerak Inc. as the Eskimo Heritage Program Director. I am also a member of the Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council. I am representing myself and I am in full support of HB 216. I grew up speaking only Inupiaq until I entered Kindergarten. I learned to speak English pretty much from osmosis in school since no special programs existed for English as Second Language. For the first few years of formal education, I was wondering why my teachers didn't speak in my grandmother's language. In my child's mind, she was the smartest person I knew!

I would like to share my experiences to foreign countries and other states where their indigenous language is an official language. The indigenous people gain such personal PRIDE in their language and culture. I can see it in their faces and posture and in all the good works they do. The message of pride is passed on to the younger generations. They in turn are eager to learn in their Native language. Once the younger generations learn their language as one of their first languages, then learning in that Native language is not only natural but their knowledge is broadened.

HB 216 will bring that pride to our own Alaska Native peoples. This is a way to have today's children and grandchildren to grow up, having PRIDE in their language and culture. To be eager to learn and excel both in the Native language and English as well. The bill will bring even more than just to preserve our Native languages but to work towards developing our own teaching materials from our own perspectives. Thanks to Senators that brought this bill forward.

Iliganamiik! (Heart-felt thanks)

"Yaanyuk"

Bernadette Y. Alvanna-Stimpfle
Eskimo Heritage Program Director
Kawerak, Inc.,
PO Box 848
Nome, Alaska
443-4386

Freddie Olin

From: Walkie <swcharles@alaska.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 1:49 PM
To: Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Cc: [REDACTED] Freddie Olin [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: HB 216 Written Testimony

Waqaa, Mr. Olin,

My name is Walkie Charles, Yup'ik originally from Emmonak on the Yukon River delta. I grew up speaking Yugtun (Yup'ik) even when I was taken away to boarding school (Wrangell Institute) where our heritage languages were forbidden to be used. The long and the short of it is that today, I teach my heritage language as a baccalaureate degree at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. We've come a long way to find a way to incorporate our heritage languages and the re-learning of our cultures within the same walls where they were once condemned. I am in strong support of HB216 which provides a venue for us to recognize our heritage languages as national languages. True, it is symbolic but it also provides a sense of strength, belonging, and hope to all our languages in Alaska. I truly support this effort for us as stakeholders of our languages and also for our future generations.

Sincerely yours,

Walkie Charles, PhD
Professor of Yup'ik
Inaugural Chair of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council
University of Alaska Fairbanks

Freddie Olin

From: April Counciller <aprilcounciller@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 11:36 AM
To: Freddie Olin; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Subject: HB 216 Written Testimony

Cama'i Mr. Olin,

I am writing to provide written testimony related to HB 216, the Official Languages Bill. I am a member of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council, who have also provided a letter of support to this Bill. I am a faculty member of the University of Alaska Anchorage, Kodiak College campus, where I teach Alutiiq Language and Culture. Regionally, I am a founding organizer of the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit (Alutiiq People of the Island) Regional Language Advisory Committee and the Alutiiq Language Club.

Most personally, I would like to write in support of this Bill as an individual second-language speaker of my Native language. I have studied Alutiiq for the past 12 years and have reached basic advanced fluency. The survival of our Alaska Native languages is very important to myself, my family, and my community. HB 216 is an incredibly vital symbolic gesture to show the whole state that our Alaska Native languages are a valuable part of our State heritage. This Bill does not require that documents, signs, or public notices be translated into all 21 of the Native languages listed – merely that these languages be acknowledged and celebrated. This sends a message to young people in our state that the languages of all of our Native groups are special and important. This can contribute positively to the various regional efforts to promote and revitalize Alaska Native languages.

Quyanaasinaq for this opportunity to provide written testimony.

Best Wishes,
Isiik April Counciller

April Gale Laktonen Counciller, Ph.D.
aprilcounciller@yahoo.com

One state, 21 languages

Posted: February 6, 2014 - 12:04am

<http://juneauempire.com/art/2014-02-06/one-state-21-languages#.UvbQuXkhFcR>

By XH'UNEI LANCE A. TWITCHELL

FOR THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

A bill has been proposed this legislative session that would make Alaska Native languages the official languages of the state. This is in addition to English, which is already on record as the official language of the state because of a 1998 bill that many interpret as English-only legislation. Looking back on those times, we find quotes like this one, "most Natives, even in villages, speak English. Why all of a sudden, now, are they going to go backwards? Some of their languages weren't even written. If we want to have all the Native people stay in the villages the rest of their lives, that's fine, but times have changed" ("In the Battle Over English, Two Sides Enter Swinging" by Cynthia Deike-Sims on <http://alaskool.org>. That was Susan Fischetti, the official spokesperson of Alaskans for a Common Language, a group that sponsored the bill.

Times have indeed changed. The notion that English is progress and Alaska Native is backwards or barbaric is outdated and rooted in false beliefs in cultural and racial superiority. Still, these ideas sometimes surface in comments like, "don't forget about English," and "our children need to be ready for the real/modern world." These are ideas we should be talking about more, with the idea that we can become a better place, we can become better people, and we can actually fix a lot of things that our shared history have wrecked.

Many elders have told me stories about times when they were shamed and beaten for speaking their languages. They were abused and ridiculed by teachers, public officers, supervisors, religious leaders, and even their own people. The past two hundred years have seen an incredibly successful assault on languages and cultures worldwide, but instead of looking at fixing the world we can look locally and see incredible results.

Many linguists have come to a consensus that of the estimated that "at least half of the world's 6,000-7,000 languages will disappear (or be on the verge of disappearing) over the next century," and in order for that to happen a language will have to die every two weeks (Grenoble & Whaley, 2006, p. 1). Sometimes this leads us to discussions about ancient languages that became other languages, like Latin to Italian, Spanish, French. We enter a discussion of evolution, which leads us back to some of the fundamental beliefs that allowed entire groups of people to kill off other groups of people without feeling too awful about the whole thing.

When we talk about genocide in the world we often look far across the globe or back in time and think about how awful those places or times must have been. Rarely do we think about our role in genocide right now, and how plans to eliminate entire cultures and languages are coming to fruition on our watch.

It's tricky business. The way out of the forest, so you can see the trees, is to stop what you are doing and think this thought: what can I do to help? What am I doing that keeps the process going. When we look at indigenous languages and colonization, we are not looking at an example of evolution. We are, in fact, looking at the outcome of unimaginable inhumanity. The irony of the human rights movement in the world is that it came after tremendous crimes had been committed right in our own homeland.

But why all this negativity? Because there is a twist towards hope, and that twist is about self-determination, awareness, compassion, and a place where languages, people, cultures, and knowledge live with one another. This is a push towards revitalization. By saying that I am not stating that languages are dead or dying; I am saying that we can keep them from dying, and we can do this together.

If you have a favorite movie where the underdog wins, despite all odds, then prepare to have that feeling in reality and not just imagination. The history leads us to a place where the highest suicide rates, dropout rates, and rates of violence mirror what is happening with our languages. We can stand up as a people and say, "abusing children while killing their languages is wrong."

Oftentimes we may feel helpless in the face of human history. But it was only people who did this, and we are people just like them. This is a time of incredible awareness when it comes to Alaska Native languages. The revitalization movement begins with you. Call a member of your state legislature and let them know that you support equality, that you in fact demand it.

One of the things I hear repeatedly is that there is not enough resources to allocate towards language revitalization. This always leaves me confused. We can extract millions and billions from the land, but we cannot look to fix something that grew here with the land over tens of thousands of years. We can look back and see federal employees, state employees, and religious leaders who all played the pivotal roles in walking these languages to the brink of death, yet no one is fiscally responsible.

It is time to stand united for our collective future. If Alaska Native languages continue to die, then our children will continue to die. If we want healthy communities, then we need healthy languages. Within these languages are the keys to good living for the people that have been born out of them. Within these languages are is knowledge of the land, cures for illnesses, pieces of knowledge that cannot be recorded in books because it actually flows through your blood.

I am blessed to work with elders and language advocates, but I know a bill like this would not seem as obviously beneficial to others as it does to me. It seems like a home run, a no-brainer, but I am sure doubts will emerge. Some may think that English is somehow threatened, even though it is killing hundreds of languages as we speak in North America. Some will think that we will be causing harm to our children or holding them back, when we will actually be teaching them how to be culturally diverse, enriched, and responsible human beings.

I don't know what other arguments are out there, but I do know this: times have changed, and they have changed for the better. Racism is powerful and can hide very well in discussions about what language we should be speaking. This is Tlingit country. We have names for everything here and we still know them. The door to learning this language with us is wide open, and it will make your life better.

If you are on the hill with a vote, then you should know that you have a place in history. There are two sides here: help languages survive and thrive, or continue the movement that tries to rise to the top by killing everything around it. We are better. We are hopeful. We are on the verge of a revolution of languages and thought, and our future generations are going to thank us for stepping out of the centuries of policies, habits, and behaviors, that violate the basic rules of humanity: love and respect one another, help those who need it, and protect that which is sacred.

• Xh'unei - Lance A. Twitchell is Assistant Professor of Alaska Native Languages at UAS.

From: wmolson@qci.net [mailto:wmolson@qci.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 18, 2014 3:37 PM
To: Rep. Benjamin Nageak
Subject: Feb 18th

Representative Nageak,

This morning on Gavel to Gavel testimony about have all Native languages listed as "official languages". I am all in favor of that bill.

To me as a historian, an anthropologist and resident of Alaska for 52 years, I support that bill.

If there is any debate about this bill, I would like to let you know my feelings and opinion. In my college years, I studied several languages - Latin, Greek, French and even Norwegian. Then when I came to Alaska and began to live among Native people, I found that there were other languages I needed to understand if I wanted to understand the people around me. And so over the years I have studied Yupik, Innupiak, "Athabasan" (Dene) and then Japanese, Spanish, and other languages. At the University of Alaska Southeast I even taught "introduction to linguistics" courses. I am not "fluent" in all the languages I have studied, but as I told my students, "I can at least get breakfast and find a toilet and museum in at least six languages."

But beyond that there is something more important. **That is that every time a person learns a different language, their mind has to be open to see things in a different way. So if someone say that Innupiak is a language of the past, or not important in the world today, please let them understand that learning any language opens a person's mind to understand the way of life, the culture, the way people see things.** That is what it takes in the modern world - people who are willing to learn something about another language so they can talk to Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Spanish speaking people or others with an open mind. **People with two languages or more will have more opportunities in life than those who only know one language.**

A story.

Way back in 1968, in Denmark on my first trip to Europe, I stood in line at an airport and listened to the young woman ticketing passengers. She spoke German to a German passenger, then French to French passenger and then perfect English to me. Then as I looked at her I asked if she might be Inuit and she answered "Ii" "Yes I am an Inuit from Greenland" !!!! The language was not as important as much as it was the ability to understand and work with people with entirely different languages and cultures.

Wally Olson, Auke Bay

Wallace M. Olson, Prof. of Anthropology (Emeritus) University of Alaska Southeast.



Alaska Federation of Natives
Legislative and Litigation Committee Resolution 14-3

- TITLE:** DESIGNATE ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES AS OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF ALASKA
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska and its membership includes 151 federally-recognized tribes, 134 village corporations, 12 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and run federal and state programs; and
- WHEREAS:** The mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community; and
- WHEREAS:** In current state law, English is the only official language of Alaska; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska Native languages have existed for millennia prior to statehood; and
- WHEREAS:** Adding Alaska Native languages as official languages of the State is an important step in recognizing the long-standing cultures of Alaska Natives; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska Native languages continue to be used by many speakers around the state who practice and teach their Native languages and cultures; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska Native young adults and students throughout the State have demonstrated remarkable success in revitalizing Alaska Native languages that has contributed to improved self-identity and academic performance.
- NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska Federation of Natives supports the passage of HB 216 ("An Act adding the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages as official languages of the state.") and efforts to include Alaska Native languages as official languages of Alaska.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the policy of AFN until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

Passed on February 25, 2014



Julie E. Kitka

Julie Kitka
President

28-LS0905\N
Martin
3/26/14

IN HSTA
CS NOT
Offered
3/27/14

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 216()

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

BY

**Offered:
Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES KREISS-TOMKINS, MILLETT, EDGMON, NAGEAK, AND HERRON,
Gara, Guttenberg, Foster, Drummond, LeDoux, Kito III**

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act adding the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq,**
2 **Unangaġ, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in,**
3 **Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian**
4 **languages as official languages of the state."**

5 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

6 *** Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
7 to read:

8 LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature that the amendment to
9 AS 44.12.310 adding 20 languages as official languages of the state is symbolic and is not
10 intended to require the government to provide additional services in those 20 additional
11 languages.

12 *** Sec. 2.** AS 44.12.310 is amended to read:

13 **Sec. 44.12.310. Official languages [LANGUAGE]. The English, Inupiaq,**
14 **Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangaġ, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag,**

1
2
3

Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages are [LANGUAGE IS] the official languages [LANGUAGE] of the State of Alaska.



Sealaska Heritage Institute

One Sealaska Plaza, Suite 301 • Juneau • Alaska • 99801-1249 • (907) 463-4844

www.sealaskaheritage.org • www.alaskanativeartists.com • Fax (907) 586-9293

March 26, 2014

Re: Support for House Bill 216 Official Languages of the State

To Whom It May Concern:

Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) strongly supports the House Bill 216 recognizing all Alaska Native Languages as official languages. The adoption of this legislation sends a powerful message that Alaska Native languages are valued and equally to English in the State of Alaska.

Nearly all twenty of Alaska's indigenous languages are identified as critically or severely endangered by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) endangered languages listing. The Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian languages are no exception. With each obituary, we mourn the loss of an elder and another fluent speaker.

Native languages contain intellectual wealth accumulated through thousands upon thousands of years. They convey how Alaska Native people view and use the land. SHI recently published the most extensive cultural atlas of Southeast Alaska: "*Haa Léelk'w Hás Aaní Saax'u, Our Grandparents' Names on the Land*", edited by Thomas Thornton. This atlas contains thousands of indigenous place names of Southeast Alaska. These names, more than anything, remind all of us that this is truly *Haa Aaní*, our land. If this is truly our land, then maybe we should all know something about the languages of our land.

We believe that the collective wisdom of our ancestors and the beauty of culture hold our promise for the future. We firmly believe that Alaska Native students who know and accept who they are, even in the context of living in a society that devalues Native-ness or cultural and physical differences, will succeed academically, emotionally and socially. The transmission of our culture and language is the key to our survival and success. Moreover, we believe that one of the greatest richness of this State is represented by its cultural and linguistic diversity, and we must ensure that this remains a characteristic of the state of Alaska.

Passing of HB 216 supports and encourages the indigenous peoples of Alaska to be strong, educated, contributing members of their communities. Acknowledgement of the value of Alaska Native languages in the State of Alaska Constitution is a huge, historic and wonderful accomplishment. We need more awareness, support and recognition of the value of Native language revitalization.

We wish to express our gratitude to you for carrying forth legislation supporting the indigenous language speakers of the state of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Rosita Worl, Ph.D.
President

Paulyn brought in
3/13/14

The phrase "official language" does not appear anywhere else in the Alaska statutes.

The amendment proposed by the bill does not change the requirements of the other parts of the Official English Initiative that expressly provide for government documents and publications in English, not in whatever is the "official language."

There was a court case following the English only initiative passage, *Alaskans for a Common Language v. Kritz* in that case the court stated that a statute reduced to the statement that English is the official language of that State of Alaska could not be given legal effect because it would only be a statement of policy. Based on this, the amendment appears to be nothing more than a policy statement with no legal impact.

Alaskans for a Common Language, Inc. v. Kritz, 170 P.3d 183, 211 (Alaska 2007)

The selection of an official language (or no official language) is often contentious.^[4] An alternative to a single official language is "official multilingualism" where a government recognizes multiple official languages. Under this system, all government services are available in all official languages. Each citizen may choose their preferred language when conducting business. Canada, Philippines, Belgium, Switzerland, and the European Union are examples of official multilingualism systems. In all these areas the policy is considered controversial and in other areas where it has been proposed, the public has rejected the idea.^[4]

Ballot measure from 1998

enacted all of these official languages...

The bills leaves intact that English language shall be used...

It's unclear of the effect of "official language"

The first sentence the court says is unconseq...

What unintended consequences if we pass this.

You might read a challenge on the ballot initiative that the court ruled on.

English is the language.

Free speech you can't stop governme

What do we have to do to add other ...

It's a little hard to predict unintended consequences...

If this pass – all of these language...

It could happen – that people using these languages could ask for ballots...

Statutes saying you have to identify the costs involved in preparing docs

You can't provide proficiency in a...

You can bring suit to enforce the section...

The supreme court interpreted 44.12.320 they invalidated that.

Right now you can use the language other than English with informal documents. State records must be in English but not all records must be in English.

The statutes are a little broader based on the way the courts ruled. It's not just English. There is nothing in statute that prevents if from being in another language.

It's hard to predict what might happen. Right now, it's just adding to the official languages.

There is like 10 sections of statute.

You could add in any language you wanted.

Alaskans for a common language vs Kritz
Citation 170P.3D183
Access to West Law

Article 04. OFFICIAL LANGUAGE Sec. 44.12.200. State agency office hours.

(a) It is the policy of the state that, to the extent practicable, state agency offices that are intended to provide services directly to the public shall schedule the hours of work of their employees so that the offices are open at the times most convenient to the individuals being served and staffed by employees working 40 hours per week. Each office shall review the preferences and needs of its clientele and shall recommend to the commissioner or other executive head of the state agency the most suitable hours of operation for that specific location. Each office shall periodically review its hours of operation.

(b) In this section, "state agency" means a department, institution, board, commission, division, authority, public corporation, committee, or other administrative unit of the executive branch of state government, including the University of Alaska, the Alaska Railroad Corporation, and the Alaska Aerospace Corporation.

Sec. 44.12.300. Findings and purpose. The people of the State of Alaska find that English is the common unifying language of the State of Alaska and the United States of America, and declare a compelling interest in promoting, preserving and strengthening its use.

Sec. 44.12.310. Official language. The English language is the official language of the State of Alaska.

Sec. 44.12.320. Scope. The English language is the language to be used by all public agencies in all government functions and actions. The English language shall be used in the preparation of all official public documents and records, including all documents officially compiled, published or recorded by the government.

Sec. 44.12.330. Applicability. AS 44.12.300 - 44.12.390 apply to the legislative and executive branches of the State of Alaska and all political subdivisions, including all departments, agencies, divisions and instrumentalities of the State, the University of Alaska, all public authorities and corporations, all local governments and departments, agencies, divisions, and instrumentalities of local governments, and all government officers and employees.

Sec. 44.12.340. Exceptions. (a) The government, as defined in AS 44.12.330, may use a language other than English when necessary for the following purposes:

- (1) to communicate health and safety information or when an emergency requires the use of a language other than English;
- (2) to teach another language to students proficient in English;
- (3) to teach English to students of limited English proficiency;
- (4) to promote international relations, trade, commerce, tourism or sporting events;
- (5) to protect the constitutional and legal rights of criminal defendants;
- (6) to serve the needs of the judicial system in civil and criminal cases in compliance with court rules and orders;
- (7) to investigate criminal activity and protect the rights of crime victims;
- (8) to the extent necessary to comply with federal law, including the Native

American Languages Act;

(9) to attend or observe religious ceremonies;

(10) to use non-English terms of art, names, phrases, or expressions included as part of communications otherwise in English; and

(11) to communicate orally with constituents by elected public officials and their staffs, if the public official or staff member is already proficient in a language other than English.

(b) An individual may provide testimony or make a statement to the government in a language other than English, if the individual is not an officer or employee of the government, and if the testimony or statement is translated into English and included in the records of the government.

Sec. 44.12.350. Public accountability. All costs related to the preparation, translation, printing, or recording of documents, records, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, or other material in languages other than English shall be defined as a separate line item in the budget of every governmental agency, department, or office.

Sec. 44.12.360. Non-denial of employment or services. (a) No governmental entity shall require knowledge of a language other than English as a condition of employment unless the requirements of the position fall within one of the exceptions provided in AS 44.12.340, and facility in another language is a bona fide job qualification required to fulfill a function included within one of the exceptions. (b) No person may be denied services, assistance, benefits, or facilities, directly or indirectly provided by the government, because that person communicates only in English.

Sec. 44.12.370. Private sector excluded. AS 44.12.300 - 44.12.390 shall not be construed in any way that infringes upon the rights of persons to use languages other than English in activities or functions conducted solely in the private sector, and the government may not restrict the use of language other than English in such private activities or functions.

Sec. 44.12.380. Private cause of action authorized. Any person may bring suit against any governmental entity to enforce the provisions of AS 44.12.300 - 44.12.390.

Sec. 44.12.390. Severability. The provisions of AS 44.12.300 - 44.12.390 are independent and severable, and if any provision of AS 44.12.300 - 44.12.390, or the applicability of any provision to any person or circumstance, shall be held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of AS 44.12.300 - 44.12.390 shall not be affected and shall be given effect to the fullest extent practicable.

REPRESENTATIVE JONATHAN KREISS-TOMKINS

(907) 465-3732 | State Capitol Building, Room 426 | <http://www.rejonathankreiss-tomkins.com>

HB216

 [Statement PDF](#) | [Sponsor's BILL Listing](#)

Sponsor**Statement****House Bill 216 "Official Languages of the State"**

HB 216 will allow for 20 different Alaska Native languages to become official languages of the state of Alaska, along with English. HB 216 is a symbolic gesture, similar to Forget-Me-Nots and Chinook Salmon being the official flower and fish of the state of Alaska.

In current state law, English is the only official language of Alaska. The m G Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian.

The bill proposal may be symbolic, it is however, an important step in recognizing the living, breathing, Alaska Native languages of the state of Alaska, which continue to grow into daily use by many speakers around the state who both practice and teach as has been done for millennia prior to statehood.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JKT".

REPRESENTATIVE JONATHAN
KREISS-TOMKINS

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2014 Legislative Session

Bill Version: HB 216
Fiscal Note Number: 1
(H) Publish Date: 2/19/14

Identifier: HB216-OOG-DOE-2-17-14
Title: OFFICIAL LANGUAGES OF THE STATE
Sponsor: ** KREISS-TOMKINS, MILLETT
Requester: House Community and Regional Affairs

Department: Office of the Governor
Appropriation: Elections
Allocation: Elections
OMB Component Number: 21

Expenditures/Revenues

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below. (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY2015 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2015 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services								
Travel								
Services								
Commodities								
Capital Outlay								
Grants & Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
Total Operating	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Fund Source (Operating Only)

None								
Total	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Positions

Full-time								
Part-time								
Temporary								

Change in Revenues								
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2014) cost: 0.0 (separate supplemental appropriation required)
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2015) cost: 0.0 (separate capital appropriation required)
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

ASSOCIATED REGULATIONS

Does the bill direct, or will the bill result in, regulation changes adopted by your agency? No
If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed?

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Initial version.

Prepared By:	Gail Fenumiai, Director	Phone:	(907)465-2644
Division:	Division of Elections	Date:	02/17/2014 10:36 AM
Approved By:	Guy Bell, Administrative Director	Date:	02/17/14
Agency:	Divisio of Administrative Services, Office of the Governor		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS #1

STATE OF ALASKA
2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. HB 216

Analysis

This bill has no fiscal impact on the division.

Nancy Manly

To: LAA Legal
Subject: HB 216 Official Language of Alaska

HB 216 will be assigned to the House State Affairs on Friday. Representative Lynn wants something in writing from Legal on the following:

If "English" is the "official" language of the state and you tinker with it by adding an additional 21 languages, what does that mean? What does "official" mean?

What is the state's obligation to all of these languages if they are all classified as "official."

Can you see any "unintended consequences" of making all of these languages the "official language" of Alaska?

Please respond at your earliest. Thanks.

Nancy Manly, Chief of Staff and
House State Affairs Committee Aide *for*
Representative Bob Lynn
House District 23
907-465-2794 Fax: 907-465-4316

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

House District 34

rep.jonathan.kreiss-tomkins@akleg.gov

Committees:
Transportation
Fisheries
State Affairs



State Capitol, Room 426
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

(907) 465-3732
Toll Free: 1-888-461-3732
Fax: (907) 465-2652

January 26, 2014

To: Representative Bob Lynn, Chair
House State Affairs Committee
Fr: Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Re: HB 216 Hearing Request

Dear Representative Lynn,

I respectfully request a hearing on HB 216: "An Act adding the Inupiaq, Siberian Yup'ik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuck, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Han, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages as official languages of the state," at the convenience of the Chairs of House State Affairs Committee. I would also request the teleconference line be open for public testimony in lieu of travel to the State Capitol, if and when a hearing date would be set. My staff member Freddie Olin will be assisting our efforts in moving the bill along the legislative process. He can be reached at (907)465-6848.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "JKT".

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

United States

See also: English-only movement

The pro-English-only website "*U.S. English*" sees a multilingual government as one in which its "services actually encourage the growth of linguistic enclaves...[and] contributes to racial and ethnic conflicts."^[14] Opponents of an official language policy in the United States argue that it would hamper "the government's ability to reach out, communicate, and warn people in the event of a natural or man-made disaster such as a hurricane, pandemic, or...another terrorist attack."^[15] Political professor Alan Patten says that disengagement – that is, officially ignoring the issue – works well in religious issues but is not possible with language issues. The government must offer public services in some language or another, and even if conscious effort is made not to establish an official language, a de facto official language, often called the "national language", will still emerge.^[4] For example, in the United States, roughly two thirds of the population believes that English is the official language, despite the fact the country does not recognize any official language.^[16]

In the United States, public debate during the last few decades has focused on whether Spanish should be recognized by the government, or whether all business should be done in English.^[4] At the national level, the United States has no official language, but 27 US states have designated English the official language and courts have found that residents have no right to government services in their preferred language.^[15]

official language

Web definitions

An official language is a language that is given a special legal status in a particular country, state, or other jurisdiction. Typically a country's official language refers to the language used within its government – its courts, parliament, administration, etc. ...

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Official_Language

Ballot Measure 6 Requiring Government to Use English

BALLOT LANGUAGE

This bill requires the state to use English in all government functions and actions. State records must be in English. "The state" means the legislature, all state agencies, local governments, school districts, public corporations and the university. Those entities may use non-English languages for international trade, emergencies, teaching languages, court suits, criminal inquiries, for elected officials to talk to constituents or to comply with federal law. Costs of non-English records must be identified. Persons who speak only English may not be denied state jobs or services. The bill does not affect private sector use of non-English languages.

SHOULD THIS INITIATIVE BECOME LAW?

Yes []

No []

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY SUMMARY

This measure will make English the official language of the State of Alaska. English will be the language to be used by each public office in all functions. This measure will apply to each office of the state, to public corporations, and to local governments.

The government may use another language for some things. They are as follows:

- (1) for health and safety or when there is an emergency;
- (2) to teach the language to students who know English;
- (3) to teach English to students who do not know it well;
- (4) to promote foreign relations, trade, tourism, or sporting events;
- (5) to protect rights of persons charged with crimes;
- (6) to serve the needs of the court system;
- (7) to investigate crime and protect the rights of crime victims;
- (8) to the extent necessary to comply with federal law, including the Native American Languages Act;
- (9) to go to or observe a religious function;
- (10) to use a term of art, name, or phrase as part of a statement in English;
- (11) if the elected official or the official's staff can speak the language, to talk to a constituent.

A person who is not a public officer or employee may make a statement to the government in another language if it is changed into English and made a part of the record. The costs to do that and the cost of producing things in other languages will be a line item in the budget of each government office.

Most of the time the government may not require a person to know another language for a job. But, the government may require a public employee to know another language if it is needed to do an act that the government is allowed to do in a language other than English. No person may be denied a government service or benefit because the person knows only English. The government may not stop the use of another language in a private function. A person may sue to enforce this measure. The provisions of this measure are severable.

FULL TEXT OF PROPOSED LAW

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Alaska:

Section 1. Findings and Purpose

The people of the State of Alaska find that English is the common unifying language of the State of Alaska and the United States of America, and declare a compelling interest in promoting, preserving and strengthening its use.

Section 2. Official Language

The English language is the official language of the State of Alaska.

Section 3. Scope

The English language is the language to be used by all public agencies in all government functions and actions. The English language shall be used in the preparation of all official public documents and records, including all documents officially compiled, published or recorded by the government.

Section 4. Applicability

This Act applies to the legislative and executive branches of the State of Alaska and all political subdivisions, including all departments, agencies, divisions and instrumentalities of the State, the University of Alaska, all public authorities and corporations, all local governments and departments, agencies, divisions, and instrumentalities of local governments, and all government officers and employees.

Section 5. Exceptions

(a) The government, as defined in Section 4 of this Act, may use a language other than English when necessary for the following purposes:

- (1) to communicate health and safety information or when an emergency requires the use of a language other than English,
- (2) to teach another language to students proficient in English,
- (3) to teach English to students of limited English proficiency,
- (4) to promote international relations, trade, commerce, tourism or sporting events,
- (5) to protect the constitutional and legal rights of criminal defendants,
- (6) to serve the needs of the judicial system in civil and criminal cases in compliance with court rules and orders,
- (7) to investigate criminal activity and protect the rights or crime victims,
- (8) to the extent necessary to comply with federal law, including the Native American Languages Act,
- (9) to attend or observe religious ceremonies,
- (10) to use non-English terms of art, names, phrases, or expressions included as part of communications otherwise in English, and
- (11) to communicate orally with constituents by elected public officials and their staffs, if the public official or staff member is already proficient in a language other than English.

(b) An individual may provide testimony or make a statement to the government in a language other than English, if the individual is not an officer or employee of the government, and if the testimony or statement is translated into English and included in the records of the government.

Section 6. Public Accountability

All costs related to the preparation, translation, printing, or recording of documents, records, brochures, pamphlets, flyers, or other material in languages other than English shall be defined as a separate line item in the budget of every governmental agency, department, or office.

Section 7. Non-Denial of Employment or Services

(a) No governmental entity shall require knowledge of a language other than English as a condition of employment unless the requirements of the position fall within one of the exceptions provided in Section 5 of this Act, and facility in another language is a bona fide job qualification required to fulfill a function included within one of the exceptions.

(b) No person may be denied services, assistance, benefits, or facilities, directly or indirectly provided by the government, because that person communicates only in English.

Section 8. Private Sector Excluded

This Act shall not be construed in any way that infringes upon the rights of persons to use languages other than English in activities or functions conducted solely in the private sector, and the government may not restrict the use of language other than English in such private activities or functions.

Section 9. Private Cause of Action Authorized

Any person may bring suit against any governmental entity to enforce the provisions of this Act.

Section 10. Severability

The provisions of this Act are independent and severable, and if any provisions of this Act, or the applicability of any provision to any person or circumstance, shall be held to be invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Act shall not be affected and shall be given effect to the fullest extent practicable.

STATEMENT IN SUPPORT

A common language is common sense. That is why you should vote YES on Ballot Measure 6 to make English the official language of Alaska government.

This initiative has been overwhelmingly supported by Alaskans from all 40 voting districts and from all cultures, religions, and political parties.

Your fellow Alaskans support this bill because they know it makes sense. First, as our state population is becoming more diverse, this bill will help keep Alaskans unified by a common language. Second, in the Alaska tradition of limited government, this bill will prevent the increased bureaucracy and costs due to offering documents and services in multiple languages.

Opponents will try to scare you with misrepresentations and lies about what this bill does. Our response is simple: Read the actual text of Ballot Measure 6. You will see that it is a limit only on the government. Private citizens will still be able to use any language they want, anywhere, at any time.

Everyone agrees Alaska Native languages must be preserved and protected, so this bill has a specific exception for the Native American Languages Act. No matter what opponents say, this bill will have no impact on public or private use of Alaska Native languages!

The bill also has commonsense exceptions for things like public health and safety, police work, international trade, and the teaching of foreign languages.

There are 105 languages spoken in Alaska homes. Our diversity can be a strength, but only if we have one common language so everyone can talk to everyone else. Learning English empowers people to get better jobs and to integrate into Alaskan society. Mastery of English helps immigrants increase their incomes by 30%. We need to help people learn English, not discourage them.

As Americans and Alaskans, we share a commitment to democracy, equality, and freedom. But that shared commitment is only possible if we have a common language that allows us to talk to each other. Like our flag, the pledge of allegiance, and our national anthem, English as our official language is a symbol. These symbols remind Americans and Alaskans of every race, religion, and background of what we all have in common.

We Alaskans pride ourselves on common sense. We know, for example, that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Right now our state government uses English most of the time. By making English the official language, we make sure that Alaska will not end up like California, where they offer driver's license exams in 33 languages. Other states may offer routine documents and services in dozens of languages, but that does not make sense for Alaska.

Please join your fellow citizens in voting YES on Ballot Measure 6. Remember that English unifies our state, and this bill will prevent future problems. For Alaska, a common language is common sense.

Alaskans for a Common Language
Edgar Paul Boyko
(907) 274-1600☎, (888) 722-1699☎

STATEMENT IN OPPOSITION

Proponents of Ballot Measure #6 would have you believe that this law proclaiming English to be the "official language" of Alaska is as harmless as proclaiming the bald eagle to be the official bird of the United States. Don't be fooled! This law will have severe consequences for the many non-English speaking residents and citizens of Alaska.

1.) The proposed English-Only law does NOT protect Native languages. Although the proponents would have you believe that the Native American Languages Act protects Alaska Native languages from this English-Only law, that is incorrect. The courts have held that the Native American Languages Act is not enforceable against state and local governments. If Ballot Measure #6 passes, the business of local government, such as city council and school board meetings, in many Native villages would have to be conducted in English rather than in the local language which is easily comprehended by all.

2.) There is no need for an English-Only law in Alaska. For all practical purposes, English already is the common language in Alaska. This proposed English-Only law merely fosters divisiveness by saying to our indigenous and non-English speaking residents that they are not accepted in Alaska, even though many non-English languages

and cultures predate English. The key to unity in Alaska is not to punish persons with either limited or no English proficiency by effectively precluding them from receiving essential government services and denying them access to the political process. The way this law is drafted, if a non-English speaking resident calls a government agency on the phone or goes into a government building seeking assistance, the government employees who greet this individual are prohibited from communicating in any language other than English even when they know the other language. This English-Only law will have the undesirable effect of making government less efficient and less responsive to the needs of Alaskans.

3.) The proposed English-Only law is based on unfair and inaccurate stereotypes of immigrants and indigenous peoples. This law falsely presumes that today's immigrants are not learning English and thus threaten the primacy of English as our common language. Nothing could be further from the truth. Today's immigrants are striving to learn English as quickly as possible in order to acquire citizenship, succeed in business or succeed academically. Classes in English as a second language are over-subscribed and have long waiting lists. If anything, we should increase funding for classes to teach English rather than pass punitive laws which would in effect bar non-English speakers from receiving many services to which they are entitled.

4.) The proposed English-Only law is unconstitutional. This law violates Alaskans' constitutional rights to speak in the language of their choice and to petition their government for redress of grievances. Furthermore, this law violates Alaskans' constitutional right to equal protection of the laws.

Vote NO on Ballot Measure #6. The bond that unites our nation and our state is not linguistic or ethnic homogeneity but rather a shared commitment to democracy, liberty, equality, and tolerance.

Alaska Civil Liberties Union
Jennifer Rudinger, Executive Director
(907) 276-2258

Alaska Division of Elections Home Page

1998 Official Election Pamphlet Introduction Page

Additional Documents *for* HB 216

- SUPPORT EMAILS

- Alexander
- Argetsinger
- Bayou
- Bolivar
- Brudie
- Burge
- Crass
- Dahlberg
- Dewees A 1st email
- Dewees A 2nd email
- Eggleston
- Frizzell
- Geiger M
- Geiger W
- Georgette
- Hall
- Hayton
- Hill
- Hilts
- James Kolene DaxKilatch
- Johnson Princess 'Daazhrai'
- Johnson S.imla.xw
- Lang Ka'lljuus
- Leigh A
- Parker
- Steere
- Story M
- Story Mike & Andi
- Tomalonis
- Tumulak Gunalchéesh tlein
- Willard
- Williams M
- Williams T Deixh Teexli

*all of these
have been
scanned
& posted
to Basis
3/28/14*

Nancy Manly

From: Edward Alexander <1edward.alexander@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 7:56 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: HB 216

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen of our Alaskan Legislature,

As a lifelong Alaskan, a certified English teacher, and a former principal, I encourage you all to support this important bill. I am also a lifelong resident of the longest speaking English and French speaking community in the state of Alaska, Fort Yukon. We were speaking English in Fort Yukon back when the only other European language around was Russian.

I know that some may feel some consternation over the recognition of Native Languages as "Official" languages, and I hope that you will familiarize yourself with the history of this important issue before making your decision. Many Alaska Natives were severely beaten for speaking their languages (including many of my relatives), many more were disenfranchised from voting for important issues like statehood (which had resulted in Alaska being subject to the Voting Rights Act for many decades), and many were even subject to Indian Relocation in the 50's and 60's as the federal government adopted policies hostile to our peoples. I think we've learned in the meanwhile, that subjugation, violence, and the destruction of Alaska Native languages is a fruitless endeavor that doesn't befit our great state.

Some say our Native languages shouldn't be recognized as "Official", but I would counter that even the name of our state, Alaska, is derived from a Native Aleut word. How is that for "official" usage? Let's take a different path people, one where we celebrate our people's differences, one where we celebrate our history, and one where we look to a more tolerant and accepting future. I know many people who suffered through these previous eras, and for what end? Are we not capable of speaking more than one language? I write this letter from my vacation in Hawai'i, which is an 'officially' recognized language incidentally, and I find it interesting that many non-Native Hawai'ians say "Aloha" and "Mahalo" as we travel around, and it does give a feeling here of acceptance and a cultural richness that my family cherishes. No one is being forced to speak Hawaiian. I think we can do something similar in Alaska, don't many of our tourists come to visit our Native cultures? I see buses full of them touring my home village in the summer, and they all seem to enjoy Gwich'in culture.

Gwich'in culture, or Tlingit culture, or Yupik culture, and those languages (along with all of the rest), tell the story of our state, they enrich us all. For those members who are Republican let's, instead of forcing all people to be homogenous, let's embrace some principals of small government a government that doesn't dictate what its people should speak or look like, and for those of you who are Democratic let's recognize and celebrate all of the diversity in our State. I know many students across the State will be watching and learning from your actions, will they learn lessons of intolerance and the failed policies of the past, or will they be inspired to celebrate the origins of the word "Alaska" and the origins of our many Native Peoples and languages, one of the true sources of human wealth in our state? I hope the latter.

I know that a commission or agency of some sort has already stated that there will not be an increased administrative burden, so increased costs isn't an issue. It appears that respect, and simple recognition that there is a place for these languages, is the issue, and one that I hope you will all move forward with an affirmative vote on this important bill.

Please support HB 216, and please help others to understand the importance of an inclusive and respectful Alaska. An Alaska that isn't afraid to move forward together.

Thank you, Mahsi' choo, and Quyana,

Edward Alexander

Joanna Lewis

From: Timothy Argetsinger <timothy.h.argetsinger@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 7:58 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: Support for HB 216

Hello Bob,

I am a lifelong Alaskan emailing you to encourage your support of HB 216. This bill is vital to symbolically elevating the status of Alaska Native languages in ways that will help bring them in from the margins of our society. As you know, Alaska Native language stealing was a deliberate goal of federal education policy that has separated the past four generations of Alaska Natives from our languages. Alaska can become a nationwide leader in efforts to support the revitalization of indigenous languages by passing this bill into law and providing the symbolic albeit important social support needed to leverage and legitimate statewide language revitalization movements.

Thank you
Tim

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 12:25 PM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: HB 216

From: Theo Bayou [<mailto:dziish@hotmail.com>]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 12:23 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

My name is Theo Bayou, 66 year old Elder here in Anchorage, of the Tsimshean tribe in Southeast Alaska. I struggle to Learn my own language. The Anchorage Alaska Native Heritage Center held classes for the Southcentral area of Alaska and I am a student. I truly believe as a student myself, that the language of our people is so important. Please support HB 216.

We are holding a language class two nights a week from an instructor who was with the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and funds were no longer there, but yet she is hanging in there, and holding classes on her own with the use of the one building for us to continue.

Please support the HB 216. LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT FOR OUR NATIVE PEOPLE OF ALASKA AND OUR COUNTRY.

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 8:27 AM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: HB 216

From: Cynthia Bolivar [<mailto:bolivar@aci.net>]
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 8:19 AM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

Honorable Representative Lynn,

I strongly support HB 216, designating Alaska Native Languages official state language alongside English. All Alaskans are strengthened by the rich and diverse cultural resources of the Alaska Native peoples. The recognition of their languages is timely (given that many face extinction) and of great benefit to our state in embracing a shared heritage for residents and visitors alike.

Cynthia Bolivar

1741 Hamilton Dr.

Anchorage, AK 99515

Nancy Manly

From: ODIN BRUDIE <odin@gci.net>
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2014 11:15 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

Honorable Representative Lynn:

I urge you to support the bill to acknowledge Alaska Native languages as official languages of the State. Language has been the key trait that distinguishes our Native people from one another. People outside of Alaska have no idea of the diverse Native languages and cultures that exist here; with this bill they will take note. With this bill we recognize and thank the Native elders that bear their cultures. And, we credit those Alaskans who work very hard to preserve their language. Thank you and Sincerely,

Odin Brudie
512 6th St.
Juneau Alaska 99801
odin@gci.net

Nancy Manly

From: Heather Burge <hdburge06@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 10:34 PM
To: Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn
Subject: HB 216

My name is Heather Burge, and I am a senior at the University of Alaska Southeast. I support the passage of HB 216.

"This is more than a symbolic act. It is a fight for equality and civil rights. The bill does not require any additional resources or work on the part of the State of Alaska. These are not symbolic languages, but are living languages that were born right here in Alaska."

Gunalchéesh!

--

-Heather Dawn Burge
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Nancy Manly

From: Rep. Bob Lynn
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 2:10 PM
To: Nancy Manly
Subject: FW: I support HB 16!!!

From: Trista Crass [<mailto:mrs.world@gmail.com>]
Sent: Friday, March 28, 2014 1:55 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: I support HB 16!!!

Lifelong Alaskan, and I believe we should recognize the Native peoples' languages as the official language of the land. Let's join New Zealand in doing the right, and the BEST thing for Alaska! It'll make us stand out as a cultural destination, as a place that respects instead of trammels NATive cultural heritage.

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Cheers,

Trista

Nancy Manly

From: Sigrid Dahlberg <sdahlberg@carsondorn.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 26, 2014 10:38 PM
To: Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett
Subject: Official Alaska Languages Bill = HB216

Dear House State Affairs Committee Members,

Please support HB216 and help Alaska move toward showing equality and respect for the indigenous people of the land. All of our lives will be enriched by revitalizing the use of Alaska Native Languages.

Respectfully,
Sigrid Dahlberg
Juneau, AK

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Sigrid Dahlberg, P.E.  
Environmental Engineer  
Carson Dorn, Inc.

*712 W. 12th St., Suite 1  
Juneau, AK 99801  
907.586.4447 phone  
907.723.8896 mobile*

Dewees 1st email

Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Andrea Leigh <andrea.alaska@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 3:43 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** in support of The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

I am a lifelong Alaska resident and Alaskan voter. I remember when the English Only bill was passed (before it was struck down as unconstitutional) and I remember protesting it in front of the Loussac Library. I was still in high school then. I couldn't vote, but I remembered feeling ashamed of the history of xenophobia and narrow-mindedness that has robbed Alaskans of some of our linguistic diversity and attempted to silence our voices.

Alaska is a multilingual state. I was privileged, while studying to become a teacher at UAA, to have valuable internship experiences in Chevak and Toksook Bay and hear fluent Yupik and Cupik elders teach us about living on and caring for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta. I was especially moved to see the Yupik first immersion school in Toksook Bay. Students there become fluent in two languages, and are so much the richer. They can communicate with their grandparents at the same time as they prepare for college studies in English. Sadly, other Alaskan children are not currently able to learn the languages of their grandparents and great-grandparents because of our colonial history and the short-sightedness of educators and other officials. We have a responsibility to safeguard the languages of Alaska and this bill is a small step in recognizing different communities' grassroots efforts towards language revitalization.

I learned Spanish as a second-language in the Anchorage School District, and my son speaks Spanish with us at home. There are many other Alaskans who speak more than one language--languages from Alaska and languages which, like English, have migrated here. As a language instructor I know the benefits of language learning: the cognitive benefits, the community benefits and the benefits for enhancing intercultural communication--so important in our globalized world.

Alaska should be proud of its linguistic diversity and we should do everything in our power to protect that diversity and grow as a multilingual state. I don't know if you have had the opportunity to learn another language, or if you grew up bilingual like my son, but I assure you that it is an enriching and transformative experience. Let's honor our first Alaskans, our elders, and our multilingual Alaskans by standing together to say that "We are multilingual and proud." Please support Official Languages Bill HB216.

Sincerely,

Andrea Dewees, PhD

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Andrea Leigh <andrea.alaska@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 28, 2014 9:25 AM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** why I support HB 216 and official indigenous languages

### Why I support HB 216:

I am a lifelong Alaskan and Alaskan voter. My parents, who are white and of German/Dutch/English descent, came here during the oil boom of the 1970s. For most of my childhood growing up on the Kenai Peninsula and in Anchorage I knew and learned nothing about the peoples and languages that have inhabited Alaska for millennia, prior to the Russian occupation and prior to its purchase by the United States.

By speaking with fellow Alaskans, and by reading books at the Loussac library, I learned about Alaska's shameful history with regard to Native Alaskans. I learned about forced labor, institutional discrimination, boarding schools and the prohibition of cultural practices and languages. I saw how Alaska Natives experienced discrimination in the Anchorage. **I do not want this history of oppression and discrimination to continue to define Alaska in the future.**

I certified to teach at UAA and as part of my coursework I was able to spend two weeks in Toksook Bay. Toksook Bay has a Yupik-first program and children there, in stark contrast to other parts of the State, speak Yupik with their families and learn to read in Yupik in lower primary. I saw happy, self-confident and intellectually stimulated children and young people. I saw multiple generations of a family communicating fluently in the same language and dancing together. I saw young people successfully transitioning to English-language instruction in upper primary and earning high scores on achievement tests (higher scores, even, than students in schools whose only language of instruction is English). More than 10 years later many of these students are now in college, or have graduated from college, and continue to speak Yupik **as well as English. They are successful in both languages. Remember, this bill adds the indigenous languages as official languages, it does not detract from English's status in any way.**

I learned Spanish as a second language, and am a near-native speaker. I have spoken Spanish and English for over 20 years. As a language educator (with 15 years' experience) I hear many misconceptions and fears about language from folks who have not had this opportunity. I can assure you that: 1) humans are capable and excel at learning more than one language, even when they learn them at the same time 2) learning another language does not make a person less fluent in English (and, actually, research shows that the best way to create strong readers and writers is to teach them in their first language as those skills are directly transferable between languages). If Alaska's educators and administrators had recognized the benefits of multilingualism and bilingualism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and encouraged indigenous language education instead of prohibiting it, Alaska would today be a much more equitable state. **The state that I want to live in is a multilingual and multicultural one where all people are respected and the first languages and peoples of this land are honored alongside English.**

I hear opposition to this bill in a few forms. Sadly, some people believe that only English is useful. I imagine that people that say that have never had the opportunity to learn another language or, maybe, that they have lost language in their own family (I would remind those who have lost a family language about the difference between that language loss and indigenous language loss. Indigenous language loss has consequences for entire

cultures and generations, not to mention the very real risk for humanity of complete language loss via language extinction). I am sorry for those that can only speak one language. Learning another language is a rewarding experience, at any age, and I encourage everyone to do so (and I myself am looking forward to learning Tlingit, the language of my new home). Truly, being monolingual is a limitation and we have only to look to Europe, where language education is emphasized in elementary school, to see the alternatives. **Furthermore, as an Alaskan, and as an educator, I can say that indigenous languages in this state are essential. This is the only place where many languages are spoken, and these languages have been spoken here for millennia, much, much longer than English or Russian. Quite simply, they deserve recognition because they were here first, and for longer. Finally, officially recognizing the languages of this state is an important symbolic gesture necessary to healing the very real wounds of the past, including the suppression of language and culture. I do not think that any just person can be proud of Alaska's history with respect to Alaska Natives and I do not want that history to continue to define our state. The vision that I have for Alaska involves supporting communities' efforts towards language usage and revitalization. Hawaii has taken a promising path in this respect, and we would do well to build on their success and help lead the way for other states.**

The other opposition to this bill regards its potential financial consequences. I would defer to the State's own legal experts on that matter and both have testified that passing the bill would not create a financial burden. However, I think that there is a basic misunderstanding that prompts this fear. **This bill adds languages, it does not take them away.** The reality is that after 100+ years of language prohibition and discrimination we are an English-speaking state. We need and use English to communicate with one another. This bill does not detract from English. The concerns that legislators express regarding printing pamphlets or providing services in other language are concerns about Limited English Proficient (LEP) speakers. Those speakers are provided for under Title VI of the (federal) civil rights act. **It is essential not to confuse this bill, which is about adding the indigenous and first languages of this State as official languages alongside English, with provisions for LEP speakers. These are separate issues.**

**I encourage you, as you discuss this bill, to keep in mind the vision you have for our state. I encourage you to think about equity, justice and democracy and to meditate on the errors that have been committed in the past and the discrimination and injustice that Alaska Natives have endured. I encourage you to think about how we can support communities' grassroots efforts at language revitalization and I encourage you, if you have been invited, to visit a bilingual community and witness for yourself how knowing the language of one's land, family and community adds to our quality of life. Finally, if you only speak English, I'd encourage you to learn a second language. So much of our fear is borne of ignorance. I want Alaska to be a State that is proud of its indigenous heritage, of the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages. I want Alaska to recognize those languages officially.**

Thank you,

Andrea Dewees, PhD

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Keri Eggleston <kerimichon@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 9:27 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** HB 216

Dear Representative Lynn,

This note is in support of HB 216. I am a non-Native native Alaskan whose life has been greatly enriched through the study of Alaska Native languages. Our state is rich in so many ways, but our twenty-some Native languages is one of our unique resources that is largely uncelebrated. Many of these languages are highly endangered, with great efforts being made among their remaining speakers and learners to revitalize them. I see nothing but positive outcomes given the passing of this bill. Let's do what we can to right past wrongs and show support for a linguistically rich and diverse state. Please vote in favor of HB 216.

Sincerely, Keri Eggleston

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Sent:** Friday, March 28, 2014 2:10 PM  
**To:** Nancy Manly  
**Subject:** FW: HB 216

**From:** Amber Frizzell [<mailto:frizzell.amber@gmail.com>]

**Sent:** Friday, March 28, 2014 12:41 PM

**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett

**Subject:** HB 216

Dear Representatives,

I encourage you to pass HB 216. The facts to support and pass the bill have been presented. Passing this Bill will tell the people that were here time immemorial, that they are important, they have value. I don't need to repeat the known recent history of trauma that has been layed upon the Native Alaskans that carries over to future generations. This would be another small step in moving forward as a whole community of Alaskans.

Thank you for your consideration,

Amber Frizzell

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Meribeth Geiger <beth\_geiger@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 12:01 AM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Subject:** The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

To the members of the House State Affairs Committee,

My name is Meribeth Geiger and I am a resident of Juneau. This is a message voicing my support of the passage of House Bill 216, the Official Languages Bill. This bill is an important step in the preservation and revitalization of our State's original languages. There is fiscal note of \$0, and this can act as an acknowledgment of the great value of the diverse cultures and people found within our State. I urge you to do everything within your power to see the passage of this bill.

Thank you very much,  
Meribeth Geiger

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Will Geiger <will\_geiger907@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 4:04 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Cc:** Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Subject:** House Bill 216 (Official Alaska Languages Bill)

Members of the House State Affairs Committee,

My name is William Geiger and I am a resident of Juneau, Alaska. I understand the public testimony regarding House Bill 216 will be very limited; as such, I would like to voice my strong support for the passage of this Bill regarding Alaska Native languages here. I am currently involved in the community of Tlingit language learners and activists working to revitalize the language. It is a dynamic and growing group of individuals from extremely diverse backgrounds, ages, identities, and histories. By passing this Bill you will show a great support to those of us who are working to learn these languages, which have endured a long legacy of trials imposed on them by various American agencies. Please show your support for the revitalization of Alaska Native languages by passing this Bill. It is hard work and a lifetime commitment to truly learn these languages, and with the support of the Alaska State Legislature, I believe those efforts can be lessened and the vitality of these languages raised to a safer level. The revitalization of these languages is a movement that will promote an extreme amount of much needed healing, inter-cultural dialogue, and diversity.

Gunalchéesh á (Thank you very much),  
William Geiger

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Susan Georgette <susangeorgette@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 9:49 PM  
**To:** Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Anna Fairclough; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Hollis French; Rep. Tammie Wilson; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Eric Feige; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
**Subject:** Ambler Road Project

Dear House and Senate Transportation Committee Members:

I am writing in opposition to the proposed Ambler Road in northwest Alaska. I have lived in the Northwest Arctic Borough for almost 30 years, and I have had the good fortune to spend extended periods of time in the upper Kobuk communities and fish camps. My family and I have traveled and camped extensively in that area in all seasons of the year.

Northwest Alaska is blessed with abundant wildlife and fisheries, vast healthy ecosystems, clean water, and a way of life in which the Iñupiat retain considerable control over their entire traditional homelands (unlike their counterparts in Alaska's road-connected areas). These qualities—all rare in the world today—are among our region's greatest assets, and ones I believe will be seriously eroded by a road linking our region to the state highway system.

For the past 20 years, one of the most contentious issues in the Northwest Arctic Borough has been the conflict between non-local sport hunters and local subsistence hunters. Year after year local communities express concerns about sport hunters deflecting the caribou migration, engaging in inappropriate hunting behaviors, or in some other way disrupting subsistence activities. A road to the upper Kobuk would only make these problems worse.

I am not necessarily opposed to mining development in the Ambler area. Red Dog Mine has certainly been a beneficial economic engine for our region, and the Ambler Mining District has the potential to similarly be so. But Red Dog has a road that is strictly industrial and not connected to the state highway system. I believe that the Ambler Road, if built, would eventually be opened to public use, with primarily negative results to the local communities, subsistence resources, and way of life we cherish. A road—even an industrial one—connected to the state highway system is simply too high of a price to pay for mineral development in the Ambler Mining District.

Sincerely,

Susan Georgette

PO Box 278

Kotzebue, AK 99752

[susangeorgette@gmail.com](mailto:susangeorgette@gmail.com)

907.442.3336

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Millie E Hall <mehall3@uas.alaska.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 11:20 PM  
**To:** Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller  
**Cc:** Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes  
**Subject:** Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

Dear Honorable Members of the House State Affairs Committee:

I am writing to you to voice my support of the Official Languages Bill (HB 216) which will be heard by you tomorrow morning.

I am from the Yukon Territory in neighbouring Canada, and I have moved to Juneau to study the Tlingit language at the University of Alaska Southeast. I have left my home, my family and my job for two years, because the language of my ancestors is in danger of being lost forever, and it is important to me to do something to stop this from happening.

Alaskan Native languages are in grave danger: fluent speakers are elderly and languages are not being transmitted to children.

It is important to keep our precious languages from dying, because our identity is tied so intimately to them, and our languages keep us connected to our ancestors, our homelands, and to each other.

Indigenous languages have had much violence done to them in the past; it is now time for all of us to make reparations and to give them a safe space where they can once again grow and flourish. Indigenous peoples have a right to speak their language on their homelands, and it is now time to have those languages recognised, protected and honored.

I urge you to show your support of native languages by elevating them to official language status in Alaska.

Thank you, Gunalchéesh,

*Millie Hall*

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Allan Hayton <notyah.nalla@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 10:12 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** HB 216

Rep. Lynn,

I am writing to express my support for HB 216. Alaska Native languages are presently in a dire state, and it would be a shame to lose these valuable repositories of knowledge, history, and culture. I grew up in Arctic Village at a time when everyone young to old spoke Gwich'in as their first language. Today there is no one learning Gwich'in as their first language. That is quite a shift in just a few generations. While Gwich'in is one of the stronger Alaska Native languages with about 250 speakers remaining, as compared to Deg Xinag or Hän that are on the verge of extinction, it is still endangered due to the fact that no young people are learning Gwich'in as their first language (or even bilingually). I am hopeful we will soon see a resurgence in Alaska Native languages across the state, and young people will be passing these languages on to future generations. Alaska Native languages are unique in all the world, and are spoken nowhere else but this wonderful state. Thank you, mahsi' choo, hai' for your support. ~Allan Hayton

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Program Manager

Gwich'in Steering Committee

122 First Ave. ♦ Fairbanks, AK 99701 ♦ 907.458.8264 ♦ Fax 907.457.8265

"In no case may a people be deprived of their own means of subsistence." International Covenants on Human Rights



**Joanna Lewis**

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**From:** Erica Hill <ericahill88@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 6:26 PM  
**Subject:** Support Official Languages Bill

I write to express strong support for passage of the Official Languages Bill. This bill recognizes the incredible contributions that Alaska Native cultures have made to our state. As a valuable first step toward language revitalization, the bill expresses a commitment to equality that is long overdue.

I strongly support passage of the Official Languages Bill.

best regards,  
Erica Hill  
Auke Bay, Alaska

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** ehhilts@gmail.com on behalf of Sunni Hilts <sundog@ptialaska.net>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 7:25 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** Native Languages

Dear Representatives,

I am so glad to hear that you are considering elevating our indigenous languages to an official status.

We are such a unique state, and the desire to keep those languages alive and the importance to the identity of our Alaska Native citizens is one of the things that marks us.

Through adoptions we have 5 Alaska Native grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. We would appreciate this part of their heritage being given your support.

Sincerely,

Rod and Sunni Hilts  
Seldovia, Alaska

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Kolene James <daxkilatch@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 11:45 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Subject:** The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

Greetings House State Affairs Committee,  
Gunalcheesh for your time and careful consideration of the official languages bill (HB216). I am writing on behalf of my family. My English name is Kolene James, my Tlingit names are DaxKilatch and Sheeyixh. I am Gaanax.adi and adopted Taalkweidi. I am also Tsimshian, the Gitlaan Ghanhada Clan and Irish. I am married to Lyle James, Xeetli.eesh, a Tlingit Kaagwaantaan from Glacier Bay, Filipino, and Hawaiian. My father's people are the Tsimshian, Irish, and adopted into the Tlingit Kaagwaantaan Clan. My Grandfather's and Great Grandfather's people are the Tlingit Neix.adi Clan, Tsimshian, and Irish. My Great Great Grandfather's people are the Tlingit Teikweidi Clan, the Tsimshian, and the Haida, that's four generations I just acknowledged. Thank you for reading about my relations.

My family, they spoke several World languages (this includes Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Chinook, and Eyak) until 4 generations ago. My family, like many of the Alaska Native families, valued not only the language of their tribe but the language of their loved one's Tribe or Nation. This ability to communicate in several languages was how we showed respect and honor for one another. This speaking several languages allowed for successful family businesses to thrive, we had access to a traditional holistic education inclusive of many subjects such as math, science, communication, lending to many life skills such as hunting, gathering, crafting homes and transportation that stood the test of weather and time, all of this contributing to healthy families in Southeast Alaska and beyond. All of my family knew their purpose, their history, ability to be self-reliant, self-confident, they were contributors to the welfare of the larger community. This was pre-colonial time.

Post colonial time my family speaks English with very limited knowledge of Tlingit, Tsimshian, and Haida. Some of my family members have discovered their purpose, some are doing research on their history, some are self-reliant, some maintain self-confidence, some are contributors to the welfare of the larger community. Some family members are not as successful as they could be. This bill could impact the 'some' to 'all' of my family members being successful, self-reliant, contributing to the welfare of the larger community with the acknowledgement of our Alaska Native languages. With the passing of this bill, languages would be valued and implemented in all of our classrooms, validating our identity, our history, and our way of living. The percentage of social ills could literally be turned around to reflect healthy communities, higher graduation rates, higher rates of successful young individuals creating jobs, generating more revenue and giving back to their communities. Our Alaska Native communities could start the healing process from trans-generational grief. Gunalcheesh, Haw'aa, T'oyk'shm, Thank you for your time and consideration of making (HB216) all of the Alaska Native languages the official language our great State.

Respectfully,  
DaxKilatch, Kolene James

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Princess Lucaj <princesslucaj@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 9:08 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Subject:** HB 216

Dear Representatives,

I write this in honor of my late grandmother (shitsuu), Katherine Peter, who received her honorary doctorate for her many, many years working with the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and writing a great many books, including the first dictionary in our Gwich'in language.

Let's join Hawaii in recognizing our Indigenous languages with HB 216!

What a wonderful, solid way to show our great respect and admiration for the original inhabitants of this great land.

Mahsi'choo shalak naih! Thank you very much my relatives!

Princess 'Daazhrai' Johnson  
Fairbanks, Alaska

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Michele K. Johnson <michelekjohnson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 5:25 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Subject:** Support for The Official Languages Bill (HB 216)

Dear Members of the House State Affairs Committee,

I would like to applaud you in your consideration to recognize Alaska's Native languages as official state languages. As a Tlingit language learner, in the Yukon Territory, I know how precious our Indigenous languages are, and also how fragile. There is a beauty and poetry in our languages, and they deserve every possible support.

Gunalchéesh, thank you,

Michele Johnson (S.imla.xw)

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Lisa Lang <lisaverosh@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 4:08 PM  
**To:** Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn; Moriah Sallaffie; Gail Dabaluz; Benjamin Young; lil\_hagoo@hotmail.com; Wendy Smythe; Doreen Witwer; haidagram1@hotmail.com; sidedenshaw  
**Subject:** SUPPORT FOR THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE BILL (HB 216)

The Official Languages Bill (HB 216) will be heard by the House State Affairs Committee tomorrow morning. They meet at 8am. The time available for oral public testimony will be extremely limited, but written testimony from members of the public would be a valuable show of support. It would be great if the committee members had emails start flowing in over the next 16 hours, supporting the bill. The messages can be short and sweet – it's honestly better if they are.

—  
Please show your support for this bill. Here are some facts:

Alaska's current laws which elevate English as the official language of the state have been ruled unconstitutional and qualify us as an "English-Only State"

There are over 700,000 people in Alaska, and an estimated 15,000 (2%) can currently speak an Alaska Native Language

Fewer than 20% of Alaska Natives can currently speak their own language

The State of Alaska has an obligation to take legitimate steps to protect and revitalize Alaska Native Languages because Alaska Natives are citizens of the State, and both State and Federal Governments have a historical role in endangering and attempting to destroy Alaska Native Languages

Out of the 50 states, only Hawaii has an official languages bill that recognizes an indigenous language. That is 2% of the states, and Alaska can be an innovator and double that statistic.

We have already seen the last fluent birth speakers of two Alaska Native Languages (Eyak and Holikachuk) pass away in the last ten years, and there was no one there to give them security that their languages would live on.

This is more than a symbolic act. It is a fight for equality and civil rights. The bill does not require any additional resources or work on the part of the State of Alaska. These are not symbolic languages, but are living languages that were born right here in Alaska.

The bill is a huge step towards equality and restorative efforts towards Alaska Native people. As languages die, so will people as they lose their sense of identity and the connections that tie them to ancestors, places, and each other.

Again, there is not much time for public testimony tomorrow, because we want the bill to move out of the committee and onto the floor. If we have too many people tomorrow who want to testify, we could run out of time and the bill could be stalled in a committee. We want to see it move forward so our state can take a monumental step forward in recognizing intellectual equality among all its citizens.

Here are the members of the committee. Please send a short and supportive message before tomorrow morning.

Members of the House State Affairs Committee, minus Rep. Kreiss-Tomkins@akleg.gov  
Rep.Bob.Lynn@akleg.gov (Chair)  
Rep.Wes.Keller@akleg.gov (Vice Chair)  
Rep.Lynn.Gattis@akleg.gov  
Rep.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov  
Rep.Doug.Isaacson@akleg.gov  
Rep.Charisse.Millett@akleg.gov

I am sending this note to both the legislators and to individuals who may take the time to send an email to the committee. It is a labor of love and a deep emotional issue for those who have devoted their lives to revitalization at all levels. Please take the time to support this bill and let the committee members know IT MATTERS TO US ALL!!! Thank you Lance for keeping us updated.

Ha'waa

Ka'illjuus

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Louise Parker <louiseparker@northwestel.net>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 4:53 PM  
**To:** Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Subject:** Support for the Language Bill

Representatives for Alaska,

I am a Tlingit member from Canada and I support the language bill for Alaska and I commend all of you on the important work you are doing. Alaska is the only place I can take the Tlingit Language at the University of Alaska Southeast and I had to leave my family in Whitehorse to pursue my Tlingit language, which was taken from me in residential school. I have had to make this sacrifice to take this training and I do not regret one minute of it. Please, Please, continue to implement critical plans for financial aid and strong Tlingit Language Revitalization plans to keep our language alive.

Átlein Gunalchéesh!!!

Kheyawk Louise Parker

29 Tamarack Drive, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 4W3

In Juneau: 907-500-3232

[louiseparker@northwestel.net](mailto:louiseparker@northwestel.net)

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Victoria Hykes Steere <hykessteere@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:55 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Cc:** Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Subject:** HB 216

Chair, Vice-Chair, Committee members:

As a voter and Alaskan, I strongly support the passage of HB 216. Alaska Native Languages are important to the history, culture, and fabric of Alaska. Alaska, as the only state in the United States singled out in the Roadmap to a Safer Native America report, would provide positive leadership with the passage of HB 216 and become a national leader in the move to preserve Native American/Alaska Native languages, which would attract funding for language preservation efforts statewide.

Thank you.

V. Hykes Steere. Assistant Professor  
Alaska Pacific University  
4101 University Drive  
Anchorage, AK 99501

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Mallory A Story <mastory@uas.alaska.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 11:20 PM  
**To:** Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** HB 216

Dear House State Affairs Committee,

I am a resident of Juneau and I am learning the Tlingit language at the University of Alaska Southeast. I am proud that our state is showing the value of Alaska Native languages by offering degrees in Alaska Native Studies and Languages. It is so inspiring to learn with people dedicated to their right to speak their own language despite previous State policies and a political atmosphere that once aimed to destroy Alaska Native languages.

I am in full support of The Official Languages Bill (HB 216) because it sends a message of encouragement to people who are working hard to learn their heritage language. If passed, this bill sends a message to fluent speakers of Alaska Native languages that they are a valued population in our state. Most importantly the passage of this bill sends a message of respect. I have learned that respect is a fundamental value in Tlingit culture and I hope it continues to be a value of the state of Alaska. Thank you for your time.

Gunalchéesh,  
Mallory Story

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 10:41 AM  
**To:** Nancy Manly  
**Subject:** FW: Support for HB 216 The Official Languages of the State

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**From:** Mike and Andi Story [<mailto:andimike@ak.net>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 9:00 AM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
**Cc:** Rep. Sam Kito; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Sen. Dennis Egan; 'School Board'  
**Subject:** Support for HB 216 The Official Languages of the State

Marcy 27, 2014

Dear Honorable Representatives,

I am writing in support of HB 216, The Official Languages of the State and urge you to pass this bill out of your committee today.

I am so proud of the State of Alaska and I have a great love of this place and its diverse people. I urge you to recognize the first languages of our state. Your leadership on this will elevate and revitalize our Alaska Native Languages. It builds awareness of the knowledge, history, sciences and culture that make up our state. Making sure this is passed on to our children's children is critical for the knowledge of the history of our state and for progress in the present, and a powerful statement of how we value all our languages spoken here and that we do not want to lose any of our languages.

This bill does not require any additional resources or work on the part of the State of Alaska. It clearly states how we value and want to keep the knowledge and languages that are part of this land.

I serve on the local school board here in Juneau. Our Board, with the support of our Native organizations, elders and partners, are offering the option of Tlingit language K – 12<sup>th</sup> grade to students. We also are working to infuse place based and cultural knowledge and language throughout our school's curriculum. Passage of this bill so compliments and validates this work.

Thank you for your service to the people of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Andi Story

12069 Cross Street

Juneau, Alaska

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Vincent Tomaloni <vjtomaloni@alaska.edu>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 7:39 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** Please support Alaska Native Languages

Please help to preserve our languages.

Vincent Tomaloni  
White Mountain/Anchorage, Alaska (**Iñupiat**)

## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Nae Tumulak <l.yanwudaghaat@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 12:38 AM  
**Subject:** HB 216

Alaska Leaders:

I was in the 7th grade when I learned the truth about my grandfather and his time in boarding school. He went in a fluent speaker of Lingít; a full understanding of our way of life. He came home to shame his family As only English came from his mouth. I heard the pain in his voice, and I heard him push it back down with a deep sigh. It wasn't until much later in life that I began to fully understand how my grandfather's story was that of many and how that very fact has contributed to the state of our beautiful languages today.

I have been studying Lingít formally for five years. I have been reconnecting with my history, my heritage, and most importantly, my ancestors in a way that I have never imagined before. Even with this remarkable connection, there is something else I long for: recognition.

I recently stood in a crowded mall in Anchorage, asking my 17-month-old daughter in Lingít if she was hungry. She signed back, "eat," followed by "please". I continue in Lingít, telling her we shall eat when a heaviness overcomes me: the likelihood that we are the only family speaking Lingít in the mall is high, let alone another Alaska Native language and no one even recognizes it.

The ability to even hear someone say "quyana," "chin'an," "gunalchéesh," is recognition enough to know that we have not been forgotten. We have not been pushed aside or under a rug. I am in love with the idea of a walking into a store and being thanked by the clerks in our native languages!

With my whole heart, and with my daughter in mind so that she may never know that heaviness, I support HB 216, and hope you will, too.

Gunalchéesh tlein.

**Joanna Lewis**

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**From:** Rose Natkong <Rosen@jys.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 3:26 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Cc:** Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Wes Keller  
**Subject:** HB 216 - The Official Languages Bill

Hello Members of the House,

I would like to ask for your support in passing Bill HB 216. As a student studying the Lingit language, I believe it is very important for all Alaska Native Languages to be recognized and supported here in the state of Alaska. Passing this bill will encourage many Alaska Natives to hold on to the language and culture that makes Alaska so unique and beautiful. This bill will come at no financial cost to the state, but if passed it will in turn bring a richness to the state that money cannot buy. Please, support HB 216 and help encourage the Alaska Native Community by enhancing self-identity, connections with each other and the land.

Thank you,  
Rose Anna Willard

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## Nancy Manly

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**From:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 10:24 AM  
**To:** Nancy Manly  
**Subject:** FW: ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

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**From:** Maria D Williams [<mailto:mdwilliams6@uaa.alaska.edu>]  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 10:11 AM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett  
**Subject:** ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

Dear esteemed Representatives Lynn, Keller, Gattis, Hughes, Isaacson and Millett:

I am so pleased to hear that Alaska Native Languages will be recognized as Official Languages. I believe this is an amazing and affirming piece of legislation that supports our beautiful state and it's history.

I teach at the University of Alaska Anchorage and the language programs there include Yup'ik, Tlingit and I have taken the Tlingit language course and just loved it! I learned so much about culture and values and it just added such richness to my education.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislative action,  
Maria Williams  
250-2049

**Joanna Lewis**

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**From:** Terry Williams <insidepassagearts@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:55 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** Fw: HB-216

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 9:44 PM, Terry Williams <[insidepassagearts@yahoo.com](mailto:insidepassagearts@yahoo.com)> wrote:

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:51 PM, Terry Williams <[insidepassagearts@yahoo.com](mailto:insidepassagearts@yahoo.com)> wrote:

On , Terry Williams <[insidepassagearts@yahoo.com](mailto:insidepassagearts@yahoo.com)> wrote:

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:46 PM, Terry Williams <[insidepassagearts@yahoo.com](mailto:insidepassagearts@yahoo.com)> wrote:

On Wednesday, March 26, 2014 8:42 PM, Terry Williams <[insidepassagearts@yahoo.com](mailto:insidepassagearts@yahoo.com)> wrote:

Dear Representative Lynn, Please allow the house to vote on HB-216. As a member of the Tlingit Sockeye/Raven Clan I want to encourage you to make Alaska the 2nd. state in the Union to grant Native Language speakers official equality status with English speakers before our native languages are forever lost to our descendents. There are 15,000 Alaskan residents that speak their native language and we would like to see that number increased. Sincerely, Deixh Teexli, Terry Williams, 30 year resident of Skagway Alaska

# Bill making Alaska Native languages 'official' gets pushback

By MIKE COPPOCK

Associated Press March 27, 2014

JUNEAU -- A bill that would symbolically make 20 Alaska Native languages as official languages of the state got some real-world pushback Thursday.

House Bill 216 sponsor, Anchorage Republican Rep. Charisse Millett, was questioned about ramifications of such designations.

Currently, English is the only official language for official business in Alaska.

North Pole Republican Rep. Doug Isaacson said during the House State Affairs committee meeting that he worries that others will read an intent in the bill that's not there.

Supporters said the symbolic recognition could help preserve languages, but Wasilla Republican Rep. Wes Keller questioned if another method shouldn't be found to do that.

Millettt said she was offended by such questions and doesn't understand the resistance.

The bill remains in committee.

CHECK BACK FOR AN UPDATE ON THIS STORY.

Read more here: <http://www.adn.com/2014/03/27/3396130/bill-making-alaska-native-languages.html?sp=/99/188/189/295/#storylink=cpy>

## Additional Documents *for* **HB 216**

- SUPPORT LETTERS & EMAILS-2
  - Letter - Alaska Municipal League
  - Email: Story E
  - Email: Wright G
  - Email: Medicine Crow L
  - Email: Wallace
  - Email: Lovick Olga Dr
  - Email: Edwardson D



217 Second Street, Suite 200 • Juneau, Alaska 99801

Tel (907) 586-1325 • Fax (907) 463-5480 • www.akml.org

March 31, 2014

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tompkins  
Room 426  
State Capitol Building  
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Representative Kreiss-Tompkins,

On behalf of the Alaska Municipal League, I would like to offer our support for HB 216. One of the many strong aspects of life here in Alaska is our cultural diversity. To attempt to make everyone the same would be a terrible thing to do to the cultures that have called Alaska home for thousands of years and to the non-Native populations that have recently made Alaska their home.

Many of the Native languages in this state are in dire straits, as there are very few speakers left. We have already lost speakers in Eyak; one of the most beautiful languages in the world. To think that the State of Alaska would not do everything in their power to keep these languages alive is a sad concept to think about.

The membership of AML is made up of all municipalities in the state, to include the small Native municipalities where English may not be the common language. As a united group, we support the ability of those people to have their language acknowledged as a part of their culture, their identity, their past and their future.

I heard a few people mention that their grandparents had also given up their language when they moved to Alaska. There is the crux of the discussion. Those languages of which we speak did not come to Alaska from elsewhere; they originated here.

We would request that all pass HB 216 and show support for the Native population of Alaska in helping them retain their primary languages.

Sincerely,

Kathie Wasserman  
Executive Director

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Grady Wright <ygdratwighr@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 31, 2014 11:17 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** HB 216

Mr. Lynn,

My name is Grady Wright and I am an Alaska citizen, writing in support of House Bill 216. I believe that the passing of this bill will help lift up Alaskans who have been historically mistreated and disrespected. The acknowledgement of indigenous languages as part of Alaska's heritage will be a boon not just for indigenous peoples, but Alaskans of every creed. We are not responsible for the crimes of our forebears, but we can become complacent in the consequences of those crimes if we are not vigilant. I hope you will consider this before tomorrow morning. Don't let anyone tell you this bill is controversial, English isn't going anywhere, but Tlingit might if we don't reverse current trends.

Best intentions,

Grady MK Wright

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Liz Medicine Crow <LizMedicineCrow@firstalaskans.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 01, 2014 9:22 AM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** RE: HB 216-SUPPORT

Good Morning, Representative Lynn - I watched the House State Affairs Committee this morning and was so happy HB 216 was moved out of Committee. Gunalcheesh, Haw.aa, Thank you for supporting this bill. Have a great day, Liz

**From:** Liz Medicine Crow  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 27, 2014 7:58 AM  
**To:** 'Rep.Bob.Lynn@akleg.gov'  
**Subject:** HB 216-SUPPORT

Dear Representative, As a member of the House State Affairs Committee, you have the opportunity to take historically significant action by making Alaska Native languages official languages of the state. It is not a complicated bill nor a complicated issues, it is the distance between right and wrong. We ask for your support of HB 216. Please pass it out of your committee so it can move on to a vote of the floor of the Alaska House of Representatives. Gunalcheesh, Haw.aa, Thank you! If you have any questions for me, please do not hesitate to call or email. Take care, Liz

Elizabeth Laa.guen.gei, Kaa Tsáas Medicine Crow (Haida, Tlingit)

*President/CEO*

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*Progress for the next 10,000 years...*

True to identity, heritage, and values Alaska Natives are informed and engaged in leading the decisions that shape the future.

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Liana J Wallace <lwallace@uas.alaska.edu>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 01, 2014 8:59 AM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** Alaska Native Languages walking a Thin Line of Survival in Alaska



Honorable Bob Lynn,

Please give as much attention as you can offer in support of HB216.

The Alaska Native Language Center which was formed in 1972 and then the recent Alaska Native Language Preservation Council which was just recently formed are said to represent our efforts to preserve our languages. They do not, represent all languages in Alaska equally. If you look at their council make up or even their home pages, all the languages represented are mostly the upper regions of Alaska. In the meantime, more and more fluent language speakers in the lower parts of Alaska are dying and in some cases taking the language with them as in the case of the Eyak. Please reconsider the thought that these two organizations will satisfy the need for us to have equal access or resources to keeping our own language alive and please give us your support in HB 216 for it is only when all Alaska Native Languages are kept alive and supported by our government that we remain as Alaskans are enriched by knowledge and traditional ways of knowing about our environment and with our cultural tourism businesses.

Thank you for your attention in this matter,

Liana Wallace

Aak'w Indian from Juneau Alaska.

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** olga@lithophile.com <olga.away@gmail.com> on behalf of Olga Lovick <Olga@lithophile.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 01, 2014 7:13 AM  
**To:** Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Bob Lynn  
**Subject:** Support for HB 216

I write in strong support of HB 216, "An Act adding the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unanga^, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages as official languages of the state."

Due to the great degree of endangerment of all of these languages, this bill is largely symbolic, but this does not detract from its importance.

Alaska's linguistic heritage is very rich, including 20 languages belonging to four different language families. Alaska's record in protecting its Native languages has been overwhelmingly poor: in particular the boarding school system has contributed greatly to the demise of these beautiful languages. Today, all of the languages that remain are endangered, many severely so, and Eyak went extinct six years ago. While the proposed bill will not be able to halt or even reverse this trend, it has great symbolic power. It will send a signal to the speakers of Alaska Native languages, and to those who are working on learning and teaching the languages. It will not endanger the status of English as the dominant language of the State, but it will give recognition to the languages that were spoken before the first white people ever came. Senate Bill 130 (the creation of the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council) was a step in this direction. HB 216 will continue this positive trend.

I have worked with Alaska Native languages for over a decade now, and have seen the speaker numbers dwindle rapidly. I know how much it would mean to the elders who speak their language, and to their children who do not speak it anymore, if their languages finally gained the recognition they deserve.

Sincerely,

Dr. Olga Lovick  
Associate Professor of Linguistics and Dene Language Studies Department of Indigenous Languages, Arts and Cultures  
First Nations University of Canada  
1 First Nations Way  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
Canada S4S 7K2

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Tel. (306) 790-5950 ext. 3311  
Fax. (306) 790-5995

## Joanna Lewis

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**From:** Debby Edwardson <debby.dahl.edwardson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 31, 2014 11:18 PM  
**To:** Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Rep. Shelley Hughes; Rep. Doug Isaacson; Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins  
**Cc:** Rep. Benjamin Nageak  
**Subject:** House Bill 216

To the House State Affairs Committee: [Representative.Bob.Lynn@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Bob.Lynn@akleg.gov)

I support House Bill 216 and applaud those who have sponsored this important and historic piece of education. It is a travesty that Alaska is currently considered an English-Only state. The Native cultures of this state, and their languages, predate the state and are among our most prized resources. We cannot be proud of the fact that the state government played an unfortunate role in driving Alaska Native languages to the brink of extinction but we can be proud of this legislation.

This is more than a symbolic act. It is a fight for equality and civil rights. Please support it.

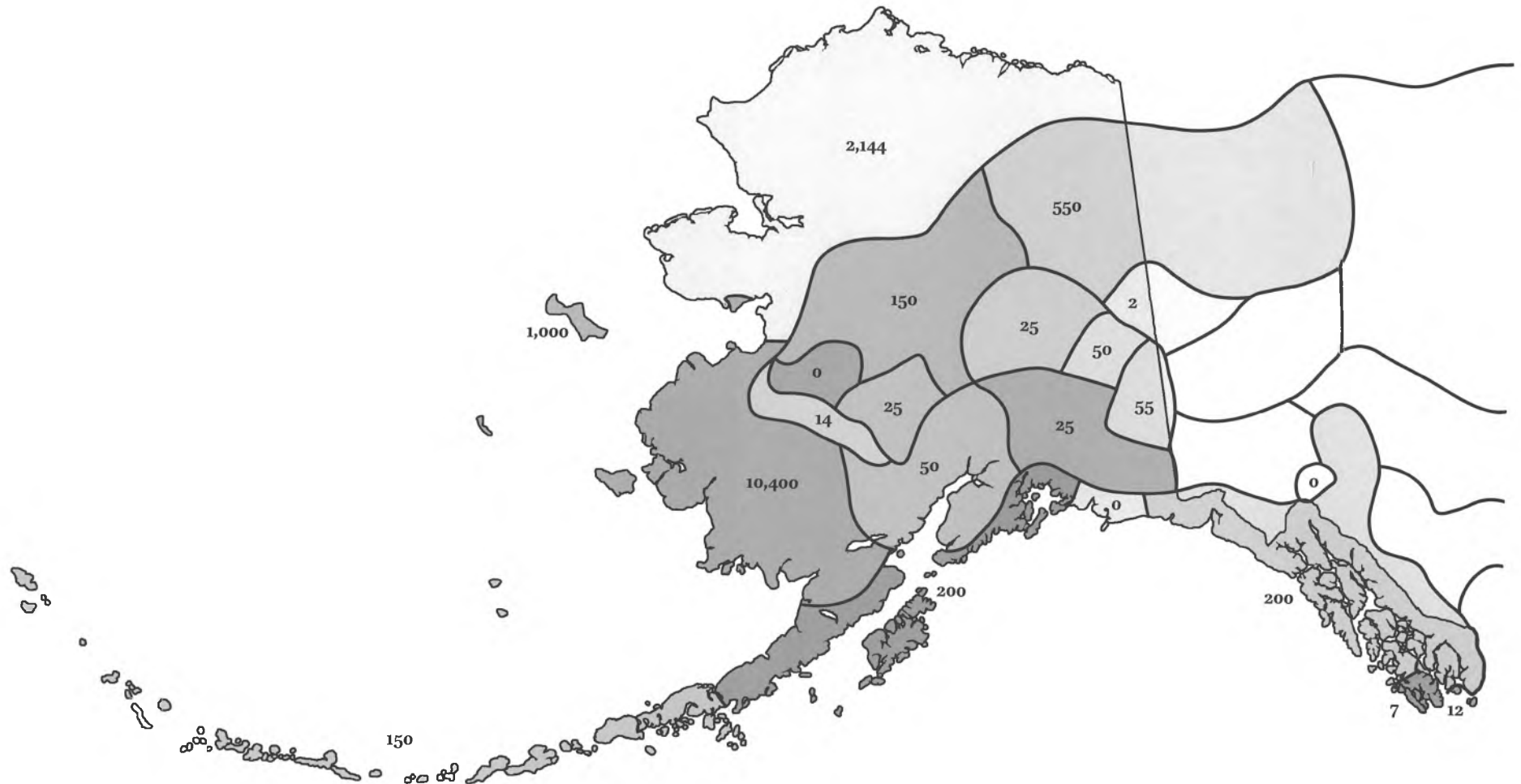
Debby Dahl Edwardson, President, North Slope Borough School District

**My Name is Not Easy**, Marshall Cavendish/Amazon 2011  
A National Book Award Finalist, A Junior Library Guild Selection  
Best Children's Books of 2011, Washington Post

**Blessing's Bead**, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2009  
ALA/YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults 2011. Booklist Top 10 First Novels for Youth: 2010

# Alaska Native Languages

## Estimated Number of Speakers



Alaska Native  
Language Center

Alaska Native  
Languages & Studies



| Language Family | Language Name     | Population | Speakers | EGIDS           |
|-----------------|-------------------|------------|----------|-----------------|
| Eskimo-Aleut    | Ungangan (Aleut)  | 2,300      | 150      | 7 (shifting)    |
|                 | (*Russia)         | 200        | 5        |                 |
|                 | Sugpiaq (Alutiiq) | 3,500      | 200      | 7 (shifting)    |
|                 | Central Yup'ik    | 25,000     | 10,400   | 6b (threatened) |
|                 | Siberian Yupik    | 1,400      | 1,000    | 4 (educational) |
|                 | (*Russia)         | 900        | 300      |                 |
|                 | Inupiaq (Inuit)   | 15,700     | 2,144    | 6b (threatened) |
|                 | (*Canada)         | 30,500     | 24,500   |                 |
|                 | (Greenland)       | 47,000     | 47,000   |                 |
| Tsimshianic     | Coast Tsimshian   | 1,400      | 30       | 7 (shifting)    |
|                 | (Canada)          | 3,200      | <400     |                 |
|                 | Nisga-Gitksan     | <100       | 0?       |                 |
|                 | (Canada)          | 5,400      | <1,000   |                 |
| Haida           | Northern Haida    | 650        | 10       | 7 (shifting)    |
|                 | (Canada)          | 1,100      | 30       |                 |

|                                 |                      |        |     |                     |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|--------|-----|---------------------|
| Athabaskan-<br>Eyak-<br>Tlingit | Tlingit <sup>†</sup> | 10,000 | 175 | 8a (moribund)       |
|                                 | (Canada)             | 1,000  | 25  |                     |
|                                 | Eyak                 |        | 0   | 9 (dormant)         |
|                                 | Ahtna                | 650    | 25  | 8a (moribund)       |
|                                 | Dena'ina             | 1,000  | 50  | 8a (moribund)       |
|                                 | Deg Xinag            | 250    | 14  | 8a (moribund)       |
|                                 | Holikachuk           | 180    | 5   | 8b (nearly extinct) |
|                                 | Koyukon              | 2,300  | 150 | 8a (moribund)       |
|                                 | Upper Kuskokwim      | 100    | 25  | 8a (moribund)       |
|                                 | (Lower) Tanana       | 400    | 25  | 8a (moribund)       |
|                                 | Tanacross            | 200    | 50  | 8a (moribund)       |
|                                 | Upper Tanana         | 300    | 55  | 7 (shifting)        |
|                                 | Han                  | 60     | 12  | 8b (nearly extinct) |
|                                 | (Canada)             | 250    | 7   |                     |
|                                 | Gwich'in             | 1,000  | 150 | 7 (shifting)        |
| (Canada)                        | 1,900                | 400    |     |                     |