

HB

2000

<TARGET><BILL>HB 200</BILL><SUBJECT>HB
200</SUBJECT><COMM>HJUD29</COMM></TARGET>



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of
Health and Social Services**

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

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April 4, 2016

The Honorable Gabrielle LeDoux
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Room 118
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative LeDoux:

I am writing to request a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee for House Bill 200, Adoption of a Child in State Custody, at your earliest convenience.

Attached, please find:

- The current version of the bill
- A fiscal note
- Governor's sponsor statement/transmittal letter
- Sectional analysis
- Summary of changes to the bill since introduction
- Letters of Support

Our Legislative Liaison (Tony Newman, 465-1611) and staff from the Office of Children's Services will work with you to answer your questions, provide testimony, and facilitate the bill's passage.

Sincerely,

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

Valerie Davidson
Commissioner

Cc: Darwin Peterson, Legislative Director, Governor's Office

Fiscal Note

State of Alaska
2016 Legislative Session

Bill Version:	CSHB 200(HSS)
Fiscal Note Number:	2
(H) Publish Date:	4/1/2016

Identifier: HB200-DHSS-FLSW-3-25-16
 Title: ADOPTION OF CHILD IN STATE CUSTODY
 Sponsor: RLS BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR
 Requester: House HSS

Department: Department of Health and Social Services
 Appropriation: Children's Services
 Allocation: Front Line Social Workers
 OMB Component Number: 2305

Expenditures/Revenues

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

	FY2017 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY2017 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY 2018	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
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

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							
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Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY2016) cost: 0.0 *(separate supplemental appropriation required)*
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY2017) 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? yes
 If yes, by what date are the regulations to be adopted, amended or repealed? 01/01/17

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Updated to current SLA2016 form.

Prepared By:	Christy Lawton, Director	Phone:	(907)465-3170
Division:	Office of Children's Services	Date:	03/25/2016 08:20 AM
Approved By:	Sana Efird, Asst. Commissioner, Finance and Management Services	Date:	03/25/16
Agency:	Health and Social Services		

FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

STATE OF ALASKA
2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Analysis

Under current law, a person seeking to adopt any child in the custody of the department must file a formal petition for adoption. The adoption hearing would then be heard in a probate proceeding, which is separate from Child in Need of Aid proceedings. This creates challenges to the adoption process because a child in need of aid is a unique case. This bill would align adoption of a child in need of aid under AS 47.10 and allow for the department to develop alternatives to the formal adoption petitions that are currently required under AS 25.23.080. This bill will improve department compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act and support tribal partnerships and efforts. No fiscal impacts are anticipated.

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Governor Bill Walker
STATE OF ALASKA

April 15, 2015

The Honorable Mike Chenault
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 208
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Speaker Chenault:

Under the authority of Article III, Section 18 of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill that would allow adoption of a child in State custody as a child in need of aid to be filed and heard as a child-in-need-of-aid proceeding. Additionally, the bill would allow for more flexibility in the form of the petition for adoption.

Under current law, a person seeking to adopt a child who is in the custody of the Department of Health and Social Services (Department) must file a formal petition for adoption under AS 25.23.080 and have the adoption hearing heard in a probate proceeding separate from the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding under AS 47.10, despite the unique nature of child-in-need-of-aid cases. The bill would ensure that proceedings for the adoption of a child adjudicated to be in need of aid to be filed and heard in the existing child-in-need-of-aid proceeding. This would more fully protect the child, and those wishing to adopt the child and would save resources by keeping the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding and the adoption as one court matter. Second, the bill would allow filing of a proxy for a formal petition to better address the needs of Native and non-Native families by setting out in statute alternatives to formal petitions to adopt currently required by State law.

The bill would allow use of a proxy for a formal petition to adopt; the proxy could be filed by a child's relative, tribal member, or other Indian family. A tribal member or relative also could make the request to the Department by telephone, mail, facsimile, electronic mail, or in person. Last, a proxy for a formal petition could be made by the child's tribe or by a tribe in which the child would be eligible to be enrolled. The Department also would have authority to develop regulations to address other instances where a proxy for a formal petition to adopt should be allowed.

These changes would benefit our most vulnerable children by assuring that adoption proceedings for children in need of aid are conducted in the manner most beneficial to Alaska's children and their families.

HOUSE BILL NO. 200

The Honorable Mike Chenault
Child in Need of Aid Bill Transmittal
April 15, 2015
Page 2

I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Walker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bill Walker
Governor

Enclosure



CS HB 200(HSS) Version H Sectional Analysis

Prepared by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

April 4th, 2016

CS HB200(HSS) version H, "An Act establishing procedures related to a petition for adoption of a child in state custody; adding a definition of 'proxy for a formal petition;' amending Rule 6(a), Alaska Adoption Rules; and providing for an effective date."

DETAILED SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

Sectional Analysis:

Section 1:

Adds a new section outlining Legislative findings and the intent, and explains that the purpose of the bill is to assist in preserving placement preferences outlined in 25 U.S.C. 1901 – 1963, and adds much-needed flexibility in the initiation of adoption, guardianship, or civil custody proceedings for a child in state custody. Clarifies the need for more appropriate adoption and legal guardianship processes for an Indian child in state custody under the Indian Child Welfare Act and allows for adoption, guardianship and civil custody matters in child-in-need-of-aid cases to be conjoined. The new section clarifies that this Act does not apply to: tribal adoptions performed under a Tribe's authority; tribal adoption proceeding transferred to the jurisdiction of the Tribe; tribal customary adoptions; or adoptions or guardianships not a part of child-in-need of aid proceedings.

Difference from Version A: adds to the legislative intent "guardianship and civil custody matters" in addition to adoptions.

Section 2:

Adds a new subsection to AS 13.26.050, which states a petition filed for adoption must comply with AS 47.10.111 and designates the venue shall be superior court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding is pending, or the judicial district in which the petitioner resides so long as the petitioner provides notice to all parties in the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding and no party objects.

Difference from Version A: adds language to allow petitioners in adoption matters to have the matter finalized in the judicial district in which they reside if no party in child in need-of-a-aid case objects.

Section 3:

A new subsection is added (e) which requires that a petitioner for guardianship or adoption “shall” file the petition in the court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings are pending under AS 47.10.111 and AS 13.20.050(b).

Difference from Version A: adds reference to AS 13.20.050(b).

Section 4:

Adds a new subsection (d) to AS 25.23.030 which requires that the venue for adoption proceeding for a child in state custody is superior court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding is pending as provided under AS 47.10.111; or in the judicial district in which the petitioner reside if the petitioner provides notice to all parties in the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding and no party objects.

Difference from Version A: adds language to allow petitioners in adoption matters to have the matter finalized in the judicial district in which they reside if no party in child in need-of-a-aid case objects.

Section 5:

Amends AS 25.23.080 by adding a new subsection (d) requiring that a petition to adopt a child in state custody under AS 47.10 “shall” be filed in the court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings are pending under AS 47.10.111 and AS 25.23.030(d).

Difference from Version A: changed “must” to “shall” and adds reference to AS 25.23.030(d).

Section 6:

Amends AS 25.23.100(a) to include language that allows for a petition for adoption to be held in abeyance under AS 47.10.111, when the petition is filed before the permanency goal has been changed to adoption.

Difference from Version A: no change

Section 7:

This section amends AS 25.24.150(a) to add language so that when a child is a child-in-need-of-aid under AS. 47.10 and there is an action which involves divorce or legal separation proceedings where the child’s custody is a subject of the proceeding, the court shall hear all custody proceedings under the AS 47.10 child-in-need-of-aid proceedings, as provided in AS 47.10. 113. This provision may be heard separately if notice is provided to all parties in the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings and no party objects to hearing the custody proceedings in separate forums.

Difference from Version A: This section now includes that in addition to guardianship and adoption cases needed to be heard within the child-in-need-of-aid matter, so too, shall civil custody matters where there is action which involves divorce or legal separation proceeds regarding a child in state’s custody.

Section 8:

This section requires that within 12 months after a child enters foster care, the court shall hold a hearing to determine a permanent plan for the child. As part of this proceeding, the court shall determine if the parent or guardian has made sufficient progress and if or when the child should return to the parent. If progress has not been made, the court will determine if the goal should

be changed to adoption or legal guardianship, and if parental rights should be terminated among other things. As part of this process, the court will determine whether the department has made reasonable efforts to offer appropriate family support services to remedy the parents' or guardians' conduct or condition that made this a child-in-need-of-aid case and whether the department has made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanent plan for the child. This latest version of the bill amends AS 47.10.080(l) by adding a new subsection (6) that requires the court to make written findings in a permanency review hearing, related to whether any person who may have filed a petition or proxy is entitled to placement preference under AS 47.14.100(e) or 25 U.S.C. 1915(a), whichever is applicable.

Difference from Version A: previous version of this section contained only an effective date for the implementation of section seven.

Section 9:

Amends AS 47.10 by adding three new sections AS 47.10.111, AS 47.10.112 and AS 47.10.113. AS 47.10.111 will allow a person who is seeking adoption or appointment as legal guardian of a child in state custody to submit a petition, and under this new chapter the adoption or guardianship case would be heard as part of the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings. If the petition is filed under this section, prior to the establishment of the permanent plan with the court, the petition will be held in abeyance until the court has approved the permanent plan of adoption or guardianship. The language also establishes timeframes for the department to consider the petitioner as an out of home placement for the child, if the child is not currently residing in the petitioner's care. Additionally, the petitioner will not be considered a party in the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings, and may only be a parent for matters that concern the petitioner. The language further clarifies that a parent who has either consented to the adoption or relinquished parental rights, or who has had parental rights terminated by the courts, is not a party to the adoption or legal guardianship proceedings under this section.

Section 47.10.112 creates the proxy for a formal petition for adoption or legal guardianship in cases in which the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) applies. The proxy will preserve the placement preferences that are outlined in ICWA for the person that is filing the proxy. The filing of the proxy does not initiate the adoption or guardianship proceedings in the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings, this will only occur when the petition for adoption or legal guardianship is filed. The provisions outline timeframes for the department and the courts for considering the out of home placement with the person filing the proxy, if the child is not currently residing with the person filing the proxy.

Subsection (g) of this section further defines extended family member within the meaning of ICWA, and proxy for formal petition as a request from the Indian child's biological parent, individually or through counsel, made to the department on behalf of an extended family member, a member of the Indian child's Tribe extended family member, a member of the Indian child's Tribe or other Indian family member interested in immediate permanent placement and adoption or legal guardianship of an Indian child. The proxy for formal petition may be conveyed to the department via mail, facsimile, electronic mail, or in person. This new section will give the department the ability to create regulations related to the proxy for formal petition process.

Section 47.10.113, relates to the civil custody proceedings, requiring the court to make, modify or vacate an order for the custody of, or visitation with, a minor child in state custody under this chapter as a part of the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings.

Difference from Version A: Newly added section, adds reference to three newly created sections AS 47.10.111/112/113.

AS 47.10.111 provides further clarity about what happens when a petition is filed, how it will be held in abeyance until the permanent plan is reviewed by the court. It further establishes timeframes the department must meet. It further adds clarity about party status and who would be considered a party or not.

AS 47.10.112 provides the clarity and language about the use of a “proxy” and describes how the “proxy” seeks to preserve the placement preferences outlined under the Indian Child Welfare Act for those children where the Act applies. It also further defines extended family member within the meaning of ICWA, and that a biological parent individually or through counsel may also request a “proxy” made to the department on behalf of an extended family member, member of the Indian child’s Tribe, or other Indian family member.

AS 47.10.113 relates to the addition of the civil custody matters and the courts review of those matters when there is a child who is subject to a child-in-need-of-aid proceeding.

Section 10:

Amends AS 47.10.990(1) and clarifies the definition of the term “adult family member” in statute, and adding the ICWA language for extended family member.

Difference from Version A: This section is newly added in version H, and clarifies that the definition of “adult family member” is in statute, and adds the ICWA language for extended family member.

Section 11:

Amends AS 47.10.990(10) and clarifies the definition of “family member” in statute and adding the ICWA language for extended family member.

Difference from Version A: This section is newly added in version H. It clarifies that the definition of “adult family member” is in statute, and adds the ICWA language for extended family member.

Section 12:

Amends AS 47.10.990 by adding new paragraphs (33) and (34) to define “Indian child” and “Indian child’s Tribe” to have the meaning outlined in ICWA under 25 U.S.C. 1903

Difference from Version A: This section is newly added in version H, it added new paragraphs to more clearly define “Indian child” and “Indian child’s Tribe”.

Section 13:

Amends AS 47.14.100(t), adding a new paragraph which defines “family friend” to include, in the case of an Indian child, a member of Indian child’s Tribe, a member of the Tribe in which the child biological parent is a member, and another Indian family member.

Difference from Version A: This section is newly added in version H, it adds further detail to the definition of “family friend” that now includes members of Indian child’s Tribe, a member of the Tribe in which the child’s biological parent is a member or another Indian family member.

Section 14:

Adds to the Direct Court Rule 5. Alaska Adoption Rules, is amended by adding a new subsection requiring that a petition to adopt a child in state custody under AS 47.10 must be brought in the

superior court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding is pending or in which the petitioner resides as provided under AS 47.10111 and AS 25.23.030(d).

Difference from Version A: This section is newly added in version H, it adds language indicating the petition to adoption can also be brought in the district where the petitioner resides.

Section 15:

Adds to the Direct Court Rule 6(a)(1) subsection (1) that an adoption petition must include information required by AS 25.23.080, except as provided under (a)(4) of this rule.

Difference from Version A: This section is newly added, but the Change to Direct Court Rule 6(a)(1) existed in Version a in another section.

Section 16:

Adds a new section to the Direct Court Rule 6(a) Alaska Adoption Rules to read in subsection (4), adding that a proceeding must comply with AS 47.10.111 and shall be heard in either as a part of the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings or in the judicial district in which the petitioner resides if notice is provided to all parties and no one objects.

Difference from Version A: This section is newly added in version H, it amends Alaska Adoption Rules to now indicate that an adoption proceeding shall be heard as a part of the child-in-need-of-aid matter or in the judicial district in which the petitioner resides if notice is provide to the parties and no one objects.

Section 17:

Amends the Alaska Child-in-need-of-aid Rules of Procedure by adding rule 17.3, which allows a petitioner to file a petition for adoption or legal guardianship, or in the case of an Indian child, a proxy for adoption or legal guardianship of a child who is the subject of a child-in-need-of-aid proceeding. This rule also allows that if a petition or proxy is filed before the court approves adoption or legal guardianship as the permanency plan, then the petition or proxy is held in abeyance until such a time as the court does approve adoption or guardianship as the permanency goal. This rule places on the department a limit of 60 days after a petition or proxy is filed to submit a permanent plan and requires the court to hold a hearing within 90 days to review the permanent plan. Also, the court shall make findings related to whether the petitioner is entitled to placement preferences under state statute or the ICWA, whichever is applicable. This new section further outlines that a person may file a proxy for formal petition for adoption or legal guardianship of an Indian child in the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding, if the child is a subject to the CINA proceedings, and the court shall make a finding related to the placement preference compliance related to placement with the proxy for formal petition; as well as determining if there is good cause to deviate from the placement preferences as outlined in 25 U.S.C 1915(a).

Difference from Version A: This section was newly added to version H, it clarifies that the court rules now include petitions for adoption or legal guardianship. Also, details about the findings the court must make about whether the petitioner is entitled to placement preferences under ICWA or state statute, whichever apply as well as well as the compliance of placement preferences in relation to a proxy or if there is good cause to deviate from those preferences.

Section 18:

Adds uncodified law is amended to add a new section related to applicability to AS 13.26, AS 25.23 and AS 47.10.

Difference from Version A: This section was newly added to version H and adds reference to new subsections related applicability.

Section 19:

Adds a new section, allowing the Department of Health and Social Services authority to adopt regulations to implement this Act, and establishes that those regulations will take effect not before the effective date of this regulation.

Difference from Version A: This section is newly added to version H, however the provision allowing the department to adopt regulations existed in the original version in a different section.

Section 20:

Adds uncodified law by adding a new section which describes a conditional effect, which means that this law only takes effect if sections 14 -17 of this Act receive a two-thirds majority vote of each house required by article IV section 15, Constitution of the State of Alaska.

Difference from Version A: The section is newly added in version H to clarify that regulations can be adopted upon the signing of the bill but all the other provisions are not effective until January 1, 2017 to give time for implementation.

Section 21:

Establishes that section 19 of this act would take effect immediately under As 01.10.070(c).

Difference from Version A: This section was newly added to version H to clarify that regulations can be adopted upon the signing of the bill but all the other provisions are not effective until January 1, 2017 to give time for implementation.

Section 22:

Establishes effective date of January 1, 2017 for all other components of this act.

Difference from Version A: This section was newly added to version H, to clarify the date all provisions except for section 19 would go into effect.



CS HB200 (HSS) Version H Summary of Changes

Prepared by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services

April 4th, 2016

HB 200, "An Act establishing procedures related to a petition for adoption of a child in state custody; adding a definition of 'proxy for a formal petition'; amending Rule 6(a), Alaska Adoption Rules; and providing for an effective date."

Summary of Changes between version (A) and current version (H):

Section 1:

This section's original version outlined Legislative findings and the intent, and explained the need for preserving placement preferences outlined in 25 U.S.C. 1901 – 1963, it sought to add much-needed flexibility in the initiation of adoption proceedings. It clarified the need for more appropriate adoption processes for an Indian child in state custody under the Indian Child Welfare Act and allowed for adoption and child-in-need-of-aid cases to be conjoined. It also clarified that this Act does not apply to: tribal adoptions performed under a Tribe's authority; tribal adoption proceeding transferred to the jurisdiction of the Tribe; tribal customary adoptions; or adoptions or guardianships not a part of child-in-need of aid proceedings. The most recent version added to the legislative intent and broadened this section to also include "guardianship and civil custody matters in addition to adoption.

Section 2:

Section two initially required that any adoption petition filed for a child in states custody subject to a child-in-need-of-aid case must comply with AS 47.10.111 and must be filed in superior court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding is pending. The current version added language allowing petitioners in adoption matters to have the matter finalized in the judicial district in which the petitioner resides so long as the petitioner provides notice to all parties in the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding and no party objects.

Section 3:

This section again references the requirement that a petitioner for guardianship or adoption "shall" file the petition in the court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings are pending under AS 47.10.111 and the only change from the earlier version is that a reference to AS 13.20.050(b) is added.

Section 4:

This section originally added a new subsection (d) to AS 25.23.030 which requires that the venue for adoption proceeding for a child in state custody is superior court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding is pending as provided under AS 47.10.111; The latest version allows petitioners in the adoption to have the matter finalized in the judicial district in which they reside if petitioner provides notice to all parties in the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding and not party objects.

Section 5:

Minor changes were made in this section including changing “must” to “shall” providing a more rigid legal meaning, and adding a reference to AS25.23.030(d). This section still requires that a petition to adopt a child in state custody under AS 47.10 “shall” be filed in the court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings are pending under AS 47.10.111 and AS 25.23.030(d).

Section 6:

No changes were made to this section. This section still amends AS 25.23.100(a) to include language that allows for a petition for adoption to be held in abeyance under AS 47.10.111, when the petition is filed before the permanency goal has been changed to adoption.

Section 7:

The earlier version of the bill sought only to join the adoption and child-in-need-of-aid proceedings, the latest version now includes that in addition to guardianship and adoption cases needing to be heard within the child-in-need-of-aid matter, so too, shall civil custody matters where there is action which involves divorce or legal separation proceeds regarding a child in state’s custody.

Section 8:

This section originally indicated an immediate effective date. The effective date has been changed, and can now be found in section twenty through twenty two. The current version now contains a requirement for the court to hold a permanency hearing within twelve months of the child entering foster care. This section now requires the court to make appropriate written findings regarding whether the parents of the child have made adequate progress and if the child shall be returned or whether a petition shall be filed for termination of parental rights. The court is also assess whether the department has made reasonable efforts to assist the parents in rectifying the problems that led to their intervention and assess their efforts to establish a plan for permanency if the need exists for the child to remain in out-of-home-care.

Section 9:

This is a new section and was added to this version for the purpose of creating three new subsections to AS 47.10. The newly created subsections are; AS 47.10.111, AS 47.10.112, and AS 47.10.113.

AS 47.10.111 provides further clarity about what happens when a petition is filed, how it will be held in abeyance until the permanent plan is reviewed by the court. It furthers establishes timeframes the department must meet. It further adds clarity about party status and who would be considered a party or not.

AS 47.10.112 provides the clarity and language about the use of a “proxy” and describes how the “proxy” seeks to preserve the placement preferences outlined under the Indian Child Welfare Act for those children where the Act applies. It also further defines extended family member within the meaning of ICWA, and that a biological parent individually or through

counsel may also request a “proxy” made to the department on behalf of an extended family member, member of the Indian child’s Tribe, or other Indian family member.

AS 47.10.113 relates to the addition of the civil custody matters and the courts review of those matters when there is a child who is subject to a child-in-need-of-aid proceeding.

Section 10:

This section is new and was added to this version because it clarifies that the definition of “adult family member” is in statute, and adds the ICWA language for extended family member.

Section 11:

This section is new, and was added to version in order to clarify that the definition of “adult family member” is in statute, and adds the ICWA language for extended family member.

Section 12:

This section is new and was added to this version in order to add new paragraphs to more clearly define “Indian child” and “Indian child’s Tribe”.

Section 13:

This section is new and was added to this version to add further detail to the definition of “family friend” that now includes members of Indian child’s Tribe, a member of the Tribe in which the child’s biological parent is a member or another Indian family member.

Section 14:

This section is new and was added to this version in order to amend the Direct Court Rule 5 of the Alaska Adoption Rules. It added a new subsection requiring that a petition to adopt a child in state custody under AS 47.10 must be brought in the superior court where the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding is pending. The most recent version adds language indicating the petition to adoption can also be brought in the district where the petitioner resides.

Section 15:

This section is new and was added to this version to amend Rule 6(a)(1) of the Alaska Adoption rules in order to include exclusionary language referenced in subsection (a)(4) of this rule.

Section 16:

This section is new and was added to this version in order to amend Direct Court Rule 6(a) Alaska Adoption Rules to read in subsection (4), to require that an adoption proceeding must comply with AS 47.10.111 and shall be heard in either as a part of the child-in-need-of-aid proceedings. It adds language to the Alaska Adoption Rules to now indicate that a proceed shall be heard as a part of the child-in-need-of-aid matter or in the judicial district in which the petitioner resides if notice is provide to the parties and no one objects.

Section 17:

This section is new and was added to this version in order to amended the Alaska Child-in-need-of-aid Rules of Procedure by adding rule 17.3, which allows a petitioner to file a petition for adoption or legal guardianship, or in the case of an Indian child, a proxy for adoption or legal guardianship of a child who is the subject of a child-in-need-of-aid proceeding. The most recent version adds clarity and specifies that this rule also allows that if a petition or proxy is filed before the court approves adoption or legal guardianship as the permanency plan, then the petition or proxy is held in abeyance until such a time as the court does approve adoption or guardianship as the permanency goal. This rule places on the department a limit of 60 days after a petition or proxy is filed to submit a permanent plan and requires the court to hold a

hearing within 90 days to review the permanent plan. Also, the court shall make findings related to whether the petitioner is entitled to placement preferences under state statute or the ICWA, whichever is applicable. This new section further outlines that a person may file a proxy for formal petition for adoption or legal guardianship of an Indian child in the child-in-need-of-aid proceeding, if the child is a subject to the CINA proceedings, and the court shall make a finding related to the placement preference compliance related to placement with the proxy for formal petition; as well as determining if there is good cause to deviate from the placement preferences as outlined in 25 U.S.C 1915(a).

Section 18:

This section is new and was added to this version for the purpose of amending uncodified law pertaining to all adoption or legal guardianship proceedings on or after the effective date. In this version AS 13.26, AS 25.23 and AS 47.10 are all referenced for applicability.

Section 19:

This section is new and was added to this version to establish the authority for the Department of Health and Social Services authority to adopt regulations to implement this Act, and establishes that those regulations will take effect not before the effective date of this regulation.

Section 20:

This section is new and was added to this version in order to clarify that regulations can be adopted upon the signing of the bill but all the other provisions are not affective until January 1, 2017 to give time for implementation.

Section 21:

This section is new and was added to this version in order to clarify that regulations can be adopted upon the signing of the bill but all the other provisions are not effective until January 1, 2017 to give time for implementation.

Section 22:

This section is new and was added in this version to establish that all provisions of this act go into effect On January 1, 2017 except as provided in Section 21, which goes into effect upon the bills signing.

Alaska Children's Trust

Alaska Federation of Natives

Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association

Arctic Slope Native Association

Association of Village Council Presidents

Atmautluak Tribal Council

Beacon Hill

Beverly Cano

Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska

Cheryl Offt

Chevak Traditional Council

Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments

Doyon Limited

Facing Foster Care in Alaska & Associates

First Alaskans Institute

Holly Handler & Leigh Dikey

Hoonah Native Village

Illiamna Native Council

Karluk Ira Tribal Council

Kasigluk Traditional Council

Kawerak, Inc.

Kenaitze Indian Tribe

Kokhanok Village Council

Louden Tribal Council

Maniilaq Association

Mentasta Traditional Council

Napaskiak Tribal Council

Native Village of Afognak

Native Village of Bill Moore's Slough

Native Village of Kwinhagak

Native Village of Napakiak

Native Village of Noatak

Native Village of Nunapitchuk

Newtok Village Council

Nondalton Tribal Council

Ohogamiut Traditional Council

Organized Village of Kwethluk

Oscarville Traditional Council

Pedro Bay Village Council

Pitka's Point Traditional Council

Raymond J. Oney

Scammon Bay Traditional Council

Stony River

Tanana Chiefs Conference

Teresa Simeon Hunter

47.



LEADER in All We Do

February 5, 2016

Sent Via Electronic Mail

The Honorable Bert Stedman
Chairman of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: SB 112, Adoption of Child in State Custody

Dear Chairman Stedman:

This letter is a written statement of support for HB 200/SB 112 on behalf of Doyon, Limited. Doyon's mission is to enhance our position as a financially strong Native Corporation in order to promote the social and economic well-being of our shareholders, strengthen our native way of life, and enhance our land and resources.

Doyon, Limited is the state-chartered Alaska Native Corporation established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for Interior Alaska. Currently we have over 19,300 shareholders, most of whom live here in Alaska.

Doyon believes that HB 200/SB112 will have positive impacts for Alaska. State and federal statutes mandate family placements of foster children when placements are possible. Federal law, known as the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), takes the preference mandate for Alaska Native children further by ensuring preference to a child's tribe and other Native families when an immediate family placement is not available.

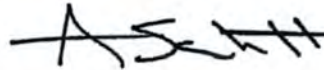
Congress enacted ICWA in 1978 to combat to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, cultures, or communities.

Today, upwards of 40% of the Alaska Native children in state custody are adopted annually by non-Native families and individuals. Doyon supports HB 200/SB112, in

the hopes that it will increase the number of Alaska Native children who achieve permanency in line with the goals of ICWA.

Thank you for your commitment to returning Alaska Native children in state custody to their families, communities, and home regions.

Sincerely,



Aaron M. Schutt
President and CEO
Doyon, Limited

Cc: Governor Walker
Commissioner Davidson
Senator Cathy Giessel, Committee Vice-Chair
Senator Pete Kelly, Committee Member
Senator Bill Stoltze, Committee Member
Senator Johnny Ellis, Committee Member

To: Senate Health and Social Services Committee Members,

From: Newtok Village Council
100 Armory Road
PO Box 5596
Newtok, AK. 99559

RE: Support Letter

Dear Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

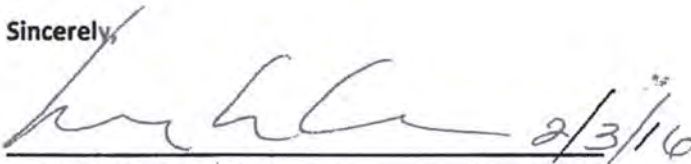
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian Children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. The bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child in Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's Children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Charles", followed by the date "2/3/16".

President: Paul Charles

Lawton, Christy (HSS)

From: Liz Medicine Crow [LizMedicineCrow@firstalaskans.org]
Sent: Monday, February 22, 2016 10:35 AM
To: Stedman, Bert K (LAA); Giessel, Cathy (LAA); Kelly, Pete (LAA); Stoltze, Bill (LAA); Ellis, Johnny (LAA)
Cc: Davidson, Valerie J (HSS); Forrest, Karen L (HSS); Lawton, Christy (HSS); Andrea Sanders; Liz Medicine Crow
Subject: Support for Senate Bill 112/House Bill 200

First Alask

February 20, 2016

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee

Re: Senate Bill 112/House Bill 200

Dear Committee Members,

As a statewide Alaska Native nonprofit organization, we would like to express our support for House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. These bills will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska's children and families in

two important ways: strengthening Alaska by growing healthier children; and eliminating complicated and costly procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody. Of critical importance to our communities, these bills pave the way for more Alaska Native children within the OCS system to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

When state intervention occurs and children are removed from their parents, numerous tribal, state, and national policies already dictate familial placements, in recognition that a child's family is the best placement option. While this reflects every family's wish to keep their children with them, in the case of Alaska Native and American Indian children specifically, Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 in urgent response to the alarming and extreme occurrences of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes - never to be returned to their families, cultures, or communities.

This federal law mandates placement preferences to a child's Tribe and other Native families when an immediate family placement is not available because of the cultural and familial devastation that occurs when children are removed from the strength of their cultural birthrights and communities. Like all children are to their families and cultures, our children are our lifeblood - and their connection to family and culture is theirs. Growing up connected to and knowing who they are is every child's right, and family preference laws allow that value and the spirit of the law to be equitably implemented.

At nearly 60%, Alaska Native children are disproportionately represented in the overall foster care system today, while well over 40% of Alaska Native children adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. Clearly, this is a crisis that was intended to be addressed with the passage of the Act, and can be addressed today through these bills by integrating the spirit of ICWA more equitably for Alaska families, so that no matter where they live they can more readily assert their desire to adopt their family's and communities' children. As you can imagine, this issue is of paramount concern to Alaska Native people across the state.

At First Alaskans Institute, over the past 12 years, we have had the great honor and responsibility of helping develop our communities' leadership with over 8,000 children, youth, and young leaders from across Alaska. Throughout this time, we have seen time and time again that our young people who seek to strengthen or already have strong connection to cultural knowledge, values and relationships have the inherent ability and capacity to lead our peoples, inspire change, promote healing, and support the growth of healthy, thriving communities throughout Alaska and the nation. Culturally connected, confident and healthy young Native leaders are Alaska's greatest treasure and in the promise of their well being lies the key to Alaska's future.

The practical efficiencies of the placement framework offered within the House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112 will reduce government inefficiencies around child placement. These bills also make the process more realistic, accessible, and understandable for those who want to adopt family children or those connected via Tribal membership, thereby increasing the ability of all children in the system - Native or not - to be placed with their families and communities. This is a great example of *what's good for Alaska Native children is good for all children* - a win-win situation for all of Alaska's children, families and state government.

Thank you for all of your hard work to keep Alaska's children with their families and communities. This bill is a sound investment in the future of our state.

Sincerely,

Liz Medicine Crow (*Haida/Tlingit*)

Andrea Sanders (*Yup'ik*)

President/CEO

ANPC Director

Cc:

House Health & Social Service Committee:

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair

Representative Liz Vazquez, Vice Chair

Representative Neal Foster, Member

Representative Louise Stutes, Member

Representative Dave Talerico, Member

Representative Geran Tarr, Member

Representative Adam Wool, Member

Department of Health & Social Services

Valerie Davidson, Commissioner

Karen Forrest, Deputy Commissioner

Christy Lawton, Office of Children's Services Director

David Scott

From: Trevor Storrs <tstorrs@alaskachildrenstrust.org>
Sent: Sunday, January 24, 2016 4:02 PM
To: Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Pete Kelly; Sen. Bill Stoltze; Sen. Johnny Ellis
Cc: Christy Lawton (christy.lawton@alaska.gov)
Subject: HB200 - Support

Dear Senate HSS Committee,

Alaska Children's Trust (ACT) is the statewide lead organization focused on the prevention of child abuse and neglect. We applaud the Office of Children Services, DHSS and the Walker Administration for addressing the high number of Alaska Native children in state custody and the need for a strong preference that those children be adopted into Native homes. The success of these children overcoming the trauma they experienced and build the resilience they will need to manage the effects of the trauma are influenced by the environment around them. A key component to managing trauma is cultural/social resilience. Native Children who are adopted by native families have a strong linkage to their cultural heritage which builds resilience. Because of this, ACT supports the goal and purpose of HB 200.

Trevor Storrs

Executive Director

Alaska Children's Trust



January 26, 2016

Sent Via Electronic Mail

**The Honorable Bert Stedman
Chairman of the Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801**

Re: SB 112, Adoption of Child in State Custody

Dear Chairman Stedman:

As the president of the largest Native organization in the state, and on behalf of our members – including 185 federally recognized tribes, 153 village corporations, 12 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit associations and tribal consortiums that contract and run federal and state programs – I write to convey the Alaska Federation of Natives' (AFN) strong support of SB 112, Adoption of a Child in State Custody.

As you may know, AFN worked closely with Governor Bill Walker, Commissioner of Health and Social Services Valerie Davidson, and many others during the previous legislative session to remove the barriers that effectively prevent Alaska Native families and individuals from exercising their right to be considered a 'preferred' adoptive placement for Native children in state custody under the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA). SB 112 effectively and efficiently accomplishes this task by making two minor administrative changes to state law.

First, the bill proposes to link adoption proceedings to existing child-in-need of aid (CINA) proceedings by ensuring any petition to adopt a child in state custody – who is adjudicated a child in need of aid – is filed and heard within corresponding CINA proceeding. This simple change will better protect Native children, as well as Alaska Native families and individuals who wish to adopt them, and will save the state considerable resources by making certain related adoption and CINA proceedings evolve as one court matter. Under current law, the proceedings are filed and heard separately, which makes it difficult if not impossible for many Alaska Native families and individuals to assert their desire to adopt a Native child in state custody. This is particularly true when the state changes the permanency goal for a Native child from reunification to adoption during the course of an open CINA case, but fails to adequately communicate notice of the change. Once an

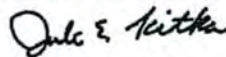
interested relative finds out about the change, it is not enough for them to become involved in the CINA case; they must then also know to initiate a case of their own. SB 112 would streamline the process.

The bill also proposes to allow the use of a 'proxy' in lieu of a formal petition to adopt a child in state custody, and clarifies that the document may be filed by a Native child's relative, tribe (or tribe that the child is eligible to be enrolled in), or another Native family. The filer of the proxy may also communicate his or her request to adopt the child by telephone, mail, facsimile, electronic mail or in person under the bill. The proxy clarification is especially important to the Alaska Native community as many Native peoples may not speak English fluently or may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel.

Congress enacted ICWA in 1978 to combat to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities. Today, upwards of 40% of the Alaska Native children in state custody are adopted annually by non-Native families and individuals. It is the hope of AFN that SB 112 will increase the number of Alaska Native children who achieve permanency in line with the goals of ICWA.

Thank you for your commitment to returning Alaska Native children in state custody to their families, communities, and home regions.

Sincerely,
ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES



Julie Kitka
President

Cc: Governor Walker
Commissioner Davidson
Senator Cathy Giessel, Committee Vice-Chair
Senator Pete Kelly, Committee Member
Senator Bill Stoltze, Committee Member
Senator Johnny Ellis, Committee Member



2050 VENIA MINOR ROAD
P.O. BOX 86
ST. PAUL ISLAND, ALASKA 99660

February 3, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child in Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Amos T. Philemonoff, Sr.
President, Aleut Community of St. Paul Island

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

St. Paul

St. George

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc.

1131 E. International Airport Rd.
Anchorage, Alaska 99518-1408
Phone (907) 276-2700
Fax (907) 279-4351



January 26, 2016

Subject: House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112—Keeping Alaska’s Native Children with Family

Dear Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Inc., and its thirteen (13) board members strongly believe this bill will have a positive and lasting impact for Alaska Native children and their families. The Bill efficiently removes barriers for Alaska Native families who strongly desire to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and culturally relevant.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is the APIA’s hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions. As you know, The U.S. Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the disturbing numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities. This had a devastating effect on Native families and ICWA has been key to reverse the traumatic effects of removal.

In addition, Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. Bill 112 seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different and convoluted proceeding held in Probate Court. With bill 112 in place, Alaska Native families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption. The Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (APIA) strongly supports this action.

Committee members, on behalf of the 13 board members and 13 Tribes APIA represents, I urge you to support Senate Bill 112 by keeping Alaska Native children with their families and in their own home communities connected to their culture. Our future depends on it.

Sincerely,

Dimitri Philemonof
President & CEO

ASNA

ARCTIC SLOPE NATIVE ASSOCIATION

January 26, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members:

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The Arctic Slope Native Association (ASNA) believes this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska Native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities. By tribal resolution, ASNA is the ICWA representative for the Arctic Slope communities of Atkasuk, Kaktovik, Nuiqsut and Wainwright. The services we provide include representing Tribal children in court cases, handling customary adoptions and working with families, courts, and the state to place children with relatives. This bill will strengthen the services we provide and allow maximum benefit for the people of the North Slope.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceedings and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Angela Cox
Vice President of Administration
Arctic Slope Native Association

Raymond Watson, Chairperson
Myron P. Naneng Sr., President
Phone: (907) 643-7300
Fax: (907) 643-3389

AVCP
Association of Village Council Presidents
Administration
Pouch 219, Bethel, AK 99559



January 26, 2016

Akiachak
Akuk
Alaknuk
Andreafsky
Aniak
Atnauthuk
Bethel
Bill Moore's St.
Cheforak
Chevak
Chuathbaluk
Chulionawick
Crooked Creek
Fak
Emmonak
Georgetown
Goodnews Bay
Hamilton
Hooper Bay
Lower Kalskag
Upper Kalskag
Kasigluk
Kipruk
Kongiganak
Kotlik
Kwethluk
Kwigillingok
Lime Village
Marshall
Mekoryuk
Mtn. Village
Napaimut
Napakiak
Napaskiak
Newtok
Nighthute
Nunakauyak
Nunam Iqua
Nunapitchuk
Ohogamiut
Oscarville
Paimiut
Pilot Station
Pitka's Point
Platinum
Quinhagak
Red Devil
Russian Mission
Scammon Bay
Sleetmute
St. Mary's
Stony River
Tuluksak
Tuntuluk
Tununak
Umkumiut

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monique Vondall-Rieke".

Monique Vondall-Rieke, JD
Tribal Justice Center Director

Atmautluak Traditional Council
P.O. Box 6568
Atmautluak, Alaska 99559
Phone: (907) 553-5610 Fax: (907) 553-5612/5150
Email: atmautluaktc@gmail.com

Re: Letter of Support

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

The Native Village of Atmautluak and the Atmautluak Traditional Council supports House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The Atmautluak Traditional Council believes this bill will have a positive and lasting impacts for Alaska Native Children and Families.

This bill removes barriers for Alaska Native Families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or Tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

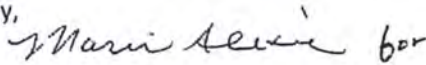
Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian Children being removed from their homes by State and Private Welfare Agencies and placed in Non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Well over forty percent (40%) of Alaska Native Children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Natives, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Alaska Native Families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child in Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for your support in keeping Alaskan children(s) with their relatives and families and keeping the children in their own communities.

Sincerely,

 600 1/28/16

Melvin Egoak- Atmautluak Traditional Council President

From: [Charity Carmody](#)
To: [Stedman, Bert K \(LAA\)](#); [Giessel, Cathy \(LAA\)](#); [Kelly, Pete \(LAA\)](#); [Stoltze, Bill \(LAA\)](#); [Ellis, Johnny \(LAA\)](#)
Subject: Governor's Adoption Bill HB 200/SB 112
Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 10:30:01 AM
Importance: High

Dear Senators –

I am writing you in support of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. I believe this to be a very important piece of legislation at this time. As you know, our child welfare system is in crisis. There are more children in the custody of the state than ever. Roughly 60% of these children are Alaska native. The reality of the situation is that we do not have enough foster and adoptive homes to adequately place these children.

I am the President and Founder of Beacon Hill. We are a foster care and adoption community resource center based in Anchorage. We provide many services to families involved in foster care and work hard to promote adoption for legally free children in our state. Without a doubt, one of the most grievous situations we come across is when an Alaska native child has a family or tribal member that wants to adopt them and yet they are subjected to bureaucracy and further trauma.

As a state and community, we are continuing to suffer from the consequences of our actions prior to ICWA. We must work diligently to remove barriers for Alaska Native families to be able to adopt. I believe that this bill is a good start in promoting permanency, preserving culture, and honoring the traditions of our land and Native people.

I urge you to pass this bill. If you would like to talk with me, I would be honored. Thank you for your taking the time to read this, for your service to our state and for caring about our children.

Charity Carmody, President

Beacon Hill

Serving Alaska's foster children and those at risk of going into foster care through the love of Christ.

PO Box 241764 Anchorage, AK 99524

907-222-0925 Resource Center Office

907-632-4862 Personal Cell

Letter of Support

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

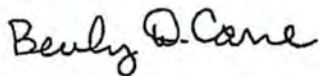
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities. The children that were adopted to non-native families were displaced and were alienated by both cultures of natives and non-natives.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child in Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Beverly D. Cano

JAN 28 2016



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
Edward K. Thomas Building
9097 Glacier Highway • Juneau, Alaska 99801

January 26, 2016

Senate Health and Social Services Committee Members
Capitol Building Room 205

RE: House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112

Dear Senate Health and Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200 and Senate Bill 112. Central Council believes this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska Native children and families.

The proposed legislation removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt children connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. This is a concern because our children are our greatest resource, and the long lasting effects of loss of tradition and culture can be measured well into adulthood. It is our hope this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

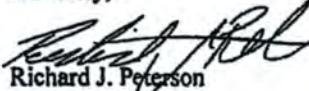
Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska families who live in rural areas do not have fair access to the courts as do urban residents. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Please take into consideration, that while this bill will help Alaska Native foster children, it will also help the 40% of the non-Native children in the system who also deserve to be placed with a family.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,


Richard J. Peterson
President

1-26-16

Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members:

This is a letter in support of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112.

I believe this bill will have important and positive impacts on the outcomes of Alaska Native children and the Alaska Native families who want to adopt them because this bill removes bureaucratic barriers making the process more accessible, understandable, and natural for families.

Alaska Native culture has kept children and families in Alaska safe, happy, and healthy in their communities for thousands of years and all Alaska Native children have the right to be connected to and grow up in their Alaska Native culture and heritage and with their Alaska Native family. I have heard and seen in my nine years of work as an Indian Child Welfare Act department director that over 40% of Alaska Native children adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members, non-ICWA. ICWA came into being to help prevent this 40% loss of Alaska Native children outside of their families and culture. This bill has the potential to decrease that 40% and increase the number of healthy and happy Alaska Native children who can grow up within their family, culture and traditions.

Passing this bill will help eliminate complicated procedural barriers inherent in probate court proceedings in the adoption process for children in custody-time, access to legal counsel, language, etc. Alaska Native families instead would be considered for adoption through regular Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings, and would have natural opportunities to state their wish to adopt. They would also have the option to make their request through several avenues natural to them, by phone, mail, fax, email, or in person to the Office of Children's Services, and/or through a request made for them by the child's tribe. Providing these options would increase the number of Alaska native families willing and wanting to adopt to be able to be considered for adoption.

Thank you for your work to keep Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities and culture.

Sincerely,
Cheryl Offt


Yup'ik, mother, sister and aunt, lifelong Alaskan, and voter



Chevak Traditional Council

P.O. Box 140

Chevak, Alaska 99563

(907) 858-7428 fax (907) 858-7812
chevaktc@gmail.com

January 26, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. Chevak Native Village believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions and true identity.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

On behalf of Chevak Native Village Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samson Matchian".

Samson Matchian
Interm Administrator



January 26, 2016

The Honorable Bert Stedman, Chair
Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

ph. 907 793.3600
fx. 907 793.3602
web. CITCI.org

Dear Chairman Stedman:

Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) writes in strong support of Senate Bill 112 because of the significant positive impact it will have on reducing the long term negative effects of placing Native children outside of their own communities and families. As the Senate Health and Social Services Committee is well aware, Native children make up over 60% of the children in out of home care, and Native adoptive families are often difficult to identify and place. CITC offers a wide spectrum of services that assist families both before and after their involvement with the Office of Children's Services. From supervised visitation to intensive in-home services, CITC has a tremendous impact on the families with whom we work. Last year CITC realized the following results in our Child and Family services division:

- 86 percent of program participants referred in the family preservation program maintained their children in their own care
- an average of 90 percent of families maintained care for their own children through the Intensive Family Preservation program
- 638 individuals participated in family support/preservation programs, of whom 100 percent avoided Office of Children's Services (OCS) involvement or placement

In addition, CITC's holistic, wrap-around services, including TANF, Recovery Services and education programs, support families to overcome their barriers and remain intact. Because of the nature of our work, CITC has an inside view of the opportunities to improve outcomes for Native families, and how important it is to make it as efficient as possible for family adoption to occur through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) process.

SB 112 removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable and by removing obstacles that have resulted in children unnecessarily being disconnected from their families.

COOK INLET TRIBAL COUNCIL
3600 SAN JERONIMO DRIVE
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99508


The Honorable Bert Stedman
January 26, 2016
Page Two

Unfortunately, currently well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. This bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions, and will reduce litigation based on lack of compliance with the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which Congress enacted in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities. Sadly, after almost forty years, Alaska Native families still experience disproportionate rates of children placed out of their homes and culture.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the CINA proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceeding held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption. As a result, children in out-of-home placement would reach permanency more quickly, lessening the burden on Alaska's Office of Children's Services.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaska's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



for G. O'Neill

Gloria O'Neill
President/CEO



COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

P.O. Box 33

Fort Yukon, AK 99740

Ph: 907-662-2587 Fax: 907-662-3333

www.catg.org

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members

Subject: Supporting House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112

Dear Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. This bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska's children and families.

House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112 removes barriers for families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more closely aligned to the realities rural families face.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. This bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their own family, culture and traditions. It will also help the 40% of non-Native children in the system who also deserve to be placed with family.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 because of the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes, never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Respectfully submitted for your consideration,

Rhonda Pitka
CATG Chairwoman

Patricia J. Stanley
CATG Executive Director

January 26th, 2016

The Honorable Members of the Senate HSS Committee,

Please join us in making Alaska's children a priority. We are writing in support of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112 "An Act establishing procedures related to a petition for adoption of a child in state custody; adding a definition of 'proxy for a formal petition'; amending Rule 6(a), Alaska Adoption Rules; and providing for an effective date." We believe this bill will have positive impacts for Alaskan children and families involved in child welfare.

Of the more than 2,800 children in state foster care, Alaska Native children are overrepresented, making up more than 60%. This Bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic, understandable, and conducive to Alaskan communities.

This Bill would allow for the child-in-need and adoption proceeding to be kept as one court matter, ultimately protecting children and families wishing to adopt, and saving state time and resources.

Alaskan children are twice as likely to experience abuse and neglect as children in any other state. Once children enter our foster care system, their hardships are not over. They are shuffled between "placements," waiting to see if they will be reunited with their families or begin the journey to finding some sense of permanency. This Bill could help children move more quickly toward permanency, ideally with relatives or tribal members.

As advocates, constituents, and caring Alaskan's we hope you will join us in making Alaska's children a priority.

Regards,

Amanda Metivier
Executive Director
Facing Foster Care in Alaska, Joined by;

Alaska Child & Family
Alaska Youth and Family Network
Covenant House Alaska
My House Inc.
Alaska Children's Trust
Beacon Hill
Volunteers of America, Alaska

January 26, 2015

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

We are parents, school volunteers, and professionals who work with Alaska Native children and families. We are writing as constituents to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. This bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.


Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

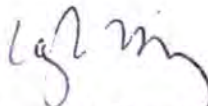
Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,


Holly Handlor
9831 Nine Mile Creek Rd
Juneau AK 99801


Leigh Dickey
313 St. Ann's
Douglas, AK 99824



Hoonah Indian Association

P.O. Box 602

Hoonah, AK 99829-0602

Phone (907) 945-3545 Fax (907) 945-3703



To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaska's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Robert Starbard
Tribal Administrator



P.O. BOX 286 ILIAMNA AK 99606
| 907-571-1246 TEL | 907-571-3539 FAX
Email: ivc@illamnavc.org

January 25, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,
ILIAMNA VILLAGE COUNCIL

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas Hedlund", is written over the printed name.

Thomas Hedlund, President

KARLUK IRA TRIBAL COUNCIL
P.O. BOX 22
KARLUK, ALASKA 99608
(907)241-2218 FAX(907)241-2208
EMAIL: karlukiracouncil@aol.com

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

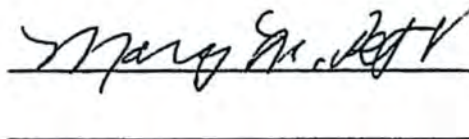
Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child In Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,
Karluk IRA Tribal Council



Sarah J. Wasilich



Mary M. [unclear]



KTC

Kasigluk Traditional Council
Post Office Box 19
Kasigluk, Alaska 99609
Ph: (907) 477-6405 / 6406 Fx: (907) 477-6212
kasigluk.admin@gmail.com
kasigluk.bookkeeper@gmail.com

January 26, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native Families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native Children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child in Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Mauts
KTC President

SERVING THE
VILLAGES OF:
BREVIK MISSION
COUNCIL
DIONEDE
ELIM
GAMBELL
GOLOVIN
KING ISLAND
KOYUK
MARYS IGLOO
NOME
SAVOONGA
SHAKTOOLIK
SHISHIAREF
SOLOMON
STEBBINS
ST MICHAEL
TELLER
UNALAKLEET
WALES
WHITE MOUNTAIN

1/26/16

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members.

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska Native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable. Family and tribal members who live in villages have little direct access to the documents required to make a formal request to adopt. Allowing family and tribal members to make their request known to an ICWA worker, OCS worker, or in court instead of with formal documentation, would increase the amount of children returning home.

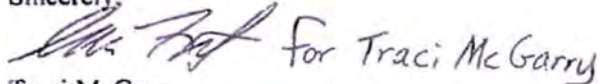
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



Traci McGarry
Kawerak, Inc. Program Director
Children & Family Services/ Child Advocacy Center



KENAITZE
INDIAN
TRIBE

January 26, 2016

The Honorable Bert Stedman
Chairperson, Senate Health and Social Services Committee
State Capitol Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chairperson Stedman:

I am writing on behalf of the Kenaitze Indian Tribe to express support for House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The tribe believes this bill will positively affect Alaska Native children and families now and into the future.

The bill simplifies the process for Alaska Native families who wish to adopt children connected to them by family or tribal membership. It also eliminates barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA). Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

We have seen these challenges firsthand at the tribe and believe that if this bill passes, it will benefit many Alaska Native children and families across the state.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Jaylene Peterson-Nyren
Executive Director
Kenaitze Indian Tribe

WWW.KENAITZE.ORG

PHONE: (907) 335-7200 • FAX: (907) 335-7239

P.O. BOX 988 • KENAI, AK 99611



ICWA Office

January 27, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. I believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. I hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child in Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Andrew".

Mary Andrew
ICWA Caseworker II

Kokhanok ICWA Office P.O. Box 1007 Kokhanok, AK 99606
♦ (O) 907.282.2224 ♦ (F) 907.282.2221 ♦ (E) kokhanokicwa@bbna.com



Louden Tribal Council

P.O. Box 244
Galena, Alaska 99741
Phone (907) 656-1711
Fax (907) 656-2491

Letter of Support

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jenny Pelkola".

Jenny Pelkola, First Chief
Louden Tribal Council



MANIILAQ
ASSOCIATION

January 27, 2016

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee
Re: House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112

Dear Members,

Please join us in making Alaska's children a priority. We are writing in support of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112 "An Act establishing procedures related to a petition for adoption of a child in state custody; adding a definition of 'proxy for a formal petition'; amending Rule 6(a), Alaska Adoption Rules; and providing for an effective date." We believe this bill will have positive impacts for Alaskan children and families.

Of the more than 2,800 children in state foster care, Alaska Native children are overrepresented, making up more than 60%. This bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic, understandable, and conducive to Alaskan communities. This bill would allow for the child-in-need and adoption proceeding to be kept as one court matter, ultimately protecting children and families wishing to adopt, and saving state time and resources.

Alaskan children are twice as likely to experience abuse and neglect as children in any other state. Once children enter our foster care system, their hardships are not over. They are shuffled between "placements," waiting to see if they will be reunited with their families or begin the journey to finding some sense of permanency. This bill could help children move more quickly toward permanency, ideally with relatives or tribal members.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. This is a concern because our children are our greatest resource, and too often Native children suffer into adulthood when they lose connection to their Native culture. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaska's children with their families and in their home communities.

Sincerely,

Timothy Schuerch
President/CEO

MANIILAQ ASSOCIATION | P O BOX 256 | KOTZEBUE AK 99752 | 1 800 478 3312

Kotzebue Qikiqtagruk, Ambler Ivisaappaat, Buckland Nunatchiaq, Deering Ipnatchiaq, Kiana Katyaak, Kivalina Kivaliniq, Kobuk Laugviik, Neatak Nautaaq, Noorvik Nuorvik, Point Hope Tikigaaq, Selawik Akuligaaq, Shungnak Isinnaq



Mentasta Traditional Council
P.O. Box 6019
Mentasta Lake, AK 99780
Phone # (907) 291-2319
Fax # (907) 291-2305
mentastatraditionalcouncil@yahoo.com

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

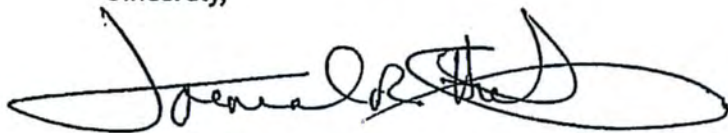
Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joeneal Hicks", written over a horizontal line.

Joeneal Hicks
Tribal Administrator
Mentasta Traditional Council



From: [Elizabeth Steven](#)
To: [Lawton, Christy \(HSS\)](#)
Cc: [Jenkins, Sarah L. \(HSS Sponsored\)](#)
Subject: Letter of Support
Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 10:34:52 AM

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceeding instead of through an entirely different proceeding held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth J. Steven, ICWA Worker, Napaskiak Tribal Council



Native Village of Afognak To embrace, protect, develop, and enhance Alutiq culture, protect our traditional use areas and encourage unity among the Alutiq of the Kodiak Archipelago

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska Native families who live in rural Alaska may not speak English fluently or they may have difficulties obtaining legal counsel. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska Native families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Denise Malutin, Cultural Programs Coordinator
denise@afognak.org

Native Village of Bill Moore's Slough
P.O Box 20288
Kotlik, Alaska 99620
Phone (907)899-4232 Fax (907)899-4232

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Stella Fancyboy

Native Village of Bill Moore's Slough President

**Native Village of Kwinhagak
PO Box 149
Quinhagak, AK 99655
Phone 907-556-8165, FAX 907-556-8166**

January 26, 2015

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

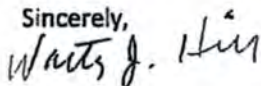
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,


Walter J. Hill
President

Native Village of Napakiak
P.O. BOX 34069
Napakiak, AK 99634
PH (907) 589-2135 FAX (907) 589-2136
nativevillageof napakiak@yahoo.com

January 26, 2016

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. The Native Village of Napakiak believes this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

The bill removes barriers for Alaska Native families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

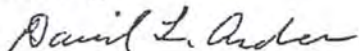
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,



David L. Andrew, Tribal Administrator

Lawton, Christy (HSS)

From: nunap.admin@gmail.com on behalf of NUP Tribal Administrator [tribaladmin@yupik.org]
Sent: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 11:12 AM
To: Lawton, Christy (HSS)
Subject: Support

The Nunapitchuk Tribe respectfully support SB 200 making it possible to perform adoptions for our tribe. We have pending adoptions that we work on following due process. Thank -you for this opportunity.

--

Eli Wassillie
Tribal Administrator
Native Village of Nunapitchuk
Nunapitchuk IRA Council
Box 130
Nunapitchuk, AK 99641
(907)527-5705; fax 527-5711

My new eMail address is tribaladmin@yupik.org

Nondalton Tribal Council
P.O. Box 49
Nondalton, A.K. 99640
Ph. (907) 294-2257
Fax (907) 294-2271
nondaltontribe@yahoo.com
ntcfsilas@yahoo.com

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

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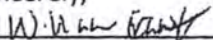
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,


William Evanoff, President



OHOAMIUT TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

P.O. Box 49

Marshall, Alaska 99585

Phone: (907) 679-6517/6598 Fax (907) 679-6516

**"Let us put our Minds Together and see what kind of Life we can build
For our Children" – Sitting Bull**

January 26, 2016

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members:

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,
OHOAMIUT TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

Darlene Isaac

Darlene Isaac,
President

Cc: file



Organized Village of Kwethluk
Kwethluk Indian Reorganization Act Council
P. O. Box 130
Kwethluk, Alaska 99621

January 27, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

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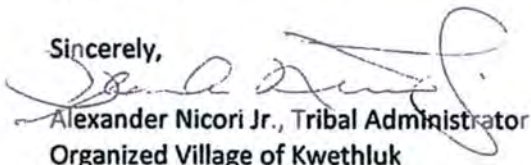
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,


Alexander Nicori Jr., Tribal Administrator
Organized Village of Kwethluk

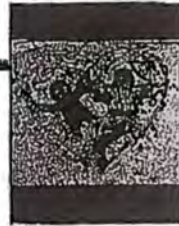
Cc: OVK ICWA Program File
Kwethluk IRA Council



Oscarville Traditional Council

P. O. Box 6129
 Napaskiak, Alaska
 99559

Phone: (907) 737-7100
 Tribal Fax: (907) 737-7428
 ICWA Fax: (907) 737-7101
 E-mail: alarson@avcp.com



MEMO LETTER

CFSS/ICWA Program

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members

From: Andrew Jimmy Larson, Jr.-OTC ICWA/CFSS Worker

Date: 1/27/16

Re: Support Letter of House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112.

I want to present my support on the House Bill 200 and the Senate Bill 112. I believe this bill will have a lasting impact for Alaska Native Children and will secure placement of adoption to what is rightfully given to immediate family members that is less harmful to a child or children.

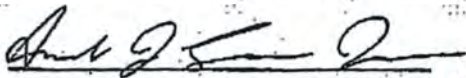
The bill will avert impending barriers for Alaska Native families to adopt that are closely related by family or are tribal members by making this process most effective for successful transition.

As you know 40% of Alaska Native children are adopted out to non-Native or non-family members. The House Bill 200 and the Senate Bill 112 will increase the number of Alaska Native children go to their communities, be cultural relevant, and maintain ties to their traditions.

In 1978 the US Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) because of the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies. It placed them to non-Indian foster and/or adoptive homes both in and out of State. A child remained in the home was not close to family in the village, had no sense of cultural identify only to feel left out, and were not with other close relative's kin to the child or children and their families.

This bill will eliminate complicated procedures striped in legal counsel while adoptive process take place in State custody. The Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceeds need to be uphold in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their needs with the help of ICWA workers/advocates and a desired outcome can be done through (CINA) and would be required for consideration for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adopt.

On behalf of the OTC-Council and ICWA advocate is in support of keeping Alaskan's children with immediate family or family that meet the requirement and in their own home communities.



Andrew Jimmy Larson, Jr.-OTC ICWA/CFSS Worker

OSCARVILLE TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

CC: OTC-ICWA FILE

Date: 26 January 2016
To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members
From: Verna Kolyaha, Pedro Bay Village Council Program Services
Re: HB 200/SB 112

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska native children and families.

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Verna Kolyaha
PROGRAM SERVICES

Pitkas Point Traditional Council
PO Box 127, #22 Pitkas Point
St. Marys, Alaska 99658
907-438-2833 – 907-438-2569 (fax)
pitkaspoint@yahoo.com

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Ruth Riley, President
Native Village of Pitkas Point

Cc: files

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Mey
RJM



Scammon Bay Traditional Council

103 Askinuk Street/P.O. Box 110 Scammon Bay, AK 99662-0110

Phone (907) 558-5425 Fax (907) 558-5134 E-mail scammonbay@starband.net

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sebastian Kasayuli.
Sebastian Kasayuli, President



VILLAGE of STONY RIVER dba Stony River Traditional



Village of Stony
River Box SRV
Stony River AK,

Phone: 907-537-3258
Fax: 907-537-3254
E-mail: stony.river@yahoo.com

President-Mary Willis

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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,
Mary Willis
Village of Stony River

Tanana Chiefs Conference

Chief Peter John Tribal Building
122 First Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-4897
(907) 452-8251 Fax: (907) 459-3850

SUBREGIONS

UPPER
KUSKOKWIM
McGrath
Medfra
Nikolai
Takatna
Telida

January 26, 2016

To: Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members
Re: House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112

LOWER YUKON
Anvik
Grayling
Holy Cross
Shageluk

Dear Members,

This letter is to support House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112. We believe this bill will have positive and lasting impacts for Alaska.

UPPER TANANA
Dot Lake
Eagle
Healy Lake
Northway
Tanacross
Tellin
Tok

Numerous state and national policy already dictate familial placements. This is based on research that proves time and again a child's family is the best placement option. State and federal statute mandate family placements of foster children when possible. For Native children, federal law takes this preference mandate further by ensuring preference to a child's tribe and other Native families when an immediate family placement is not available.

YUKON FLATS
Arctic Village
Beaver
Birch Creek
Canyon Village
Chalkyitsik
Circle
Fort Yukon
Venette

House Bill 200/Senate Bill 112 removes barriers for families who want to adopt those connected to them by family or tribal membership by making the process more realistic and understandable.

YUKON
KOYUKUK
Galena
Huslia
Kallag
Koyukuk
Nulato
Ruby

Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. This is a concern because our children are our greatest resource, and too often Native children suffer in adulthood when they lose connection to their Native culture. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions.

YUKON TANANA
Alatna
Allakaket
Evansville
Fairbanks
Hughes
Lake
Minchumina
Manley Hot
Springs
Minto
Nenana
Rampart
Stevens Village
Tanana

Congress enacted the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) in 1978 due to the alarming numbers of Indian children being removed from their homes by state and private welfare agencies and placed in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes never to be returned to their families, culture, or communities.

Alaska families who live in rural Alaska do not have fair access to the courts as do urban Alaskans. This bill seeks to eliminate complicated procedural barriers in the adoption process for children in custody so that Alaska families can be considered for adoption through the Child in Need of Aid (CINA) proceedings instead of through an entirely different proceedings held in Probate Court. Families will be able to assert their desire to adopt a child through the Child In Need of Aid proceeding and would be considered for adoption after the permanency goal changes to adoption.

Please take into consideration, that while this bill will help Alaska Native foster children, it will also help the 40% of the non-Native children in the system who also deserve to be placed with family.

Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Victor Joseph".

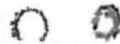
Victor Joseph
TCC President and CEO



Inupiat Ilitqusiatic Values

Knowledge of Language
Knowledge of Family Tree
Sharing
Humility
Respect for Others
Love for Children
Cooperation
Hard Work
Respect for Elders
Respect for Nature
Avoid Conflict
Domestic Skills
Hunter Success
Responsibility to Tribe

Every Inupiaq is responsible to all other Inupiaq for the survival of our culture spirit, and the values and traditions through which it survives. Through our extended family, we retain, teach and live our Inupiaq way.



Native Village of Noatak

ICWA Coordinator

P.O. Box 89

Noatak, AK 99761

PHONE: (907) 485-2137/2172 Ext. 22

FAX: (907) 485-2137

www.noatak.ak.us

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members.

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Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children to reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions. Our native traditions are highly important to us in our native village of Noatak, our love for children and responsibility to tribe are part of our Inupiaq Iitqusiat Values. Iitqusiat meaning, "Our way of life."

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I have attached a copy of our Inupiaq Iitqusiat Values. Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's children with their families and in their own home communities.

Sincerely,

Nanna Patterson
ICWA Coordinator

From: Teresa Simeon-Hunter
To: Lawton, Christy (HSS)
Cc: Cheryl O'Fl
Subject: support letter
Date: Tuesday, January 26, 2016 1:08:45 PM

January 26, 2016

To Senate Health & Social Services Committee Members,

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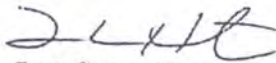
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Thank you for supporting keeping Alaskan's Children with their families and in their own home communities.

Quyana,



Teresa Simeon-Hunter

Family Community Services Specialist –ICWA
Chuathbaluk, Alaska



Buckland IRA Council
P.O. Box 67
Buckland, AK 99727
Ph: (907) 494-2171
Fax: (907) 494-2192

April 6, 2016

Dear House Judiciary Members:

Representative LeDoux, Chair

Representative Keller, Vice-Chair

Representative Foster

Representative Lynn

Representative Millett

Representative Claman

Representative Kreiss-Tomkins

Representative Olson

This letter is to articulate *our* strong support of House Bill 200. We believe this bill will create significant cost and time saving efficiencies for the various legal entities and courts that are now hearing cases involving dependent foster children. Currently, proceeding for child in need of aid, adoption, guardianship and civil custody matters can be heard in different courts, with different judges, without the full scope of available information. By creating the efficiencies gained by this bill it time and money saved, as well as the changes to expedite custody cases so that children are leaving foster care through reunification, adoption or guardianship.

The Office of Children's Service, Public Defender's Agency, Department of Law, Alaska Court System, Office of Public Advocacy and Tribal Representatives (whom all participant in a number of legal proceedings that involve children when they are subject to foster care through a Child in Need of Aid (CINA) court case) often have to go to multiple different courts at different times for different purposes, but all related to the same child. This bill creates a model of a **"one judge, one family"** concept that will allow for more timely and just judicial determination overall which is good for all Alaskans. With this bill adoption, guardianship, and civil proceedings involving a foster child will all be heard under one roof.

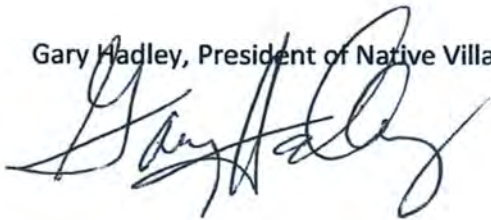
This bill also reduces barriers for family members and extended family members to a child covered under ICWA who want to adopt or become legal guardians of the child, by making the process more realistic and understandable. Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members.

It is our hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children who reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions. The "proxy in lieu of a petition" procedure provides a less formal mechanism for individuals entitled to placement preference under ICWA that preserves and applies the request for placement preference. A proxy is not necessary for children not subject to ICWA because there is no similar formal requirement in state law that an individual entitled to preference must take in order to preserve their preference.

Thank you for supporting efforts to keep all Alaska's children with their families and in their own home communities whenever possible.

Sincerely,

Gary Hadley, President of Native Village of Buckland

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Hadley", written in a cursive style.

**Native Village of Kiana
Kiana Traditional Council
P.O. Box: 69
Kiana, Alaska 99749
Phone: (907) 475-2109 / (907) 475-2180**

April 7, 2016

Dear House Judiciary Members:

Sent via email: House.Judiciary@akleg.gov

Representative LeDoux, Chair
Representative Keller, Vice-Chair
Representative Foster
Representative Lynn
Representative Millett
Representative Claman
Representative Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Olson

Re: House bill 200

This letter is to articulate *my/our* strong support of House Bill 200. *I/We* believe this bill will create significant cost and time saving efficiencies for the various legal entities and courts that are now hearing cases involving dependent foster children. Currently, proceeding for child in need of aid, adoption, guardianship and civil custody matters can be heard in different courts, with different judges, without the full scope of available information. By creating the efficiencies gained by this bill it time and money saved, as well as the changes to expedite custody cases so that children are leaving foster care through reunification, adoption or guardianship.

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preference. A proxy is not necessary for children not subject to ICWA because there is no similar formal requirement in state law that an individual entitled to preference must take in order to preserve their preference.

Thank you for supporting efforts to keep all Alaska's children with their families and in their own home communities whenever possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gloria Shellabarger", written in a cursive style.

Gloria Shellabarger
Tribe Director

C.c: Kiana Traditional Council Members



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES
Director's Office

P.O. Box 110630
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0630
Main: 907.465.3170
Fax: 907.465.3397

April 5, 2016

HB 200/SB 112

In Summary this bill does the following:

- For all Alaskan families with a child subject to a Child in Need of Aid (CINA) case, this bill will reduce barriers to their participation and expedite the achievement of permanency for the child(ren) by conjoining multiple legal proceedings under one roof.
- A "one judge, one family" concept will save the legal parties, including state agencies such as the Public Defender's Agency, Office of Public Advocacy and Office of Children's Services, time and money by reducing redundancies. Conjoining adoption, guardianship, civil custody and CINA proceedings will streamline the system for families.
- In light of the *Baby Girl* and *Tununak II* decisions, an individual entitled to preference under ICWA's adoptive placement preferences must file a formal petition to adopt the child in order to preserve their placement preference. The proxy procedure provides a less formal mechanism for individuals entitled to preference under ICWA to preserve and apply their placement preference. A proxy is not necessary for children not subject to ICWA because there is no similar formal requirement in state law that an individual entitled to preference must take in order to preserve their preference.

April 12, 2016

Dear House Judiciary Members:
Representative LeDoux, Chair
Representative Keller, Vice-Chair
Representative Foster
Representative Lynn
Representative Millett
Representative Claman
Representative Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Olson

This letter is to articulate my strong support of House Bill 200. I believe this bill will create significant cost and time saving efficiencies for the various legal entities and courts that are now hearing cases involving dependent foster children. Currently, proceedings for child in need of aid, adoption, guardianship and civil custody matters can be heard in different courts, with different judges, without the full scope of available information. Creating the efficiencies gained by this bill will save time and money as will the changes to expedite custody cases so that children are leaving foster care through reunification, adoption or guardianship.

The Office of Children's Service, Public Defender's Agency, Department of Law, Alaska Court System, Office of Public Advocacy and Tribal Representatives – such as myself (whom all participate in a number of legal proceedings that involve children when they are subject to foster care through a Child in Need of Aid (CINA) court case) often have to go to different courts at different times for different purposes, but all related to the same child. This bill creates a model of a **“one judge, one family”** concept that will allow for more timely and just judicial determination overall which is good for all Alaskans. With this bill adoption, guardianship, and civil proceedings involving a foster child will be heard under one roof.

This bill also reduces barriers for family members and extended family members to a child covered under ICWA who want to adopt or become legal guardians of the child, by making the process more realistic and understandable. Well over 40% of Alaska Native children who are adopted annually are adopted by non-Native, non-family members. It is my hope that this bill will increase the number of Alaska Native children reach permanency with their family, culture and traditions. The “proxy in lieu of a petition” procedure provides a less formal mechanism for individuals entitled to placement preference under ICWA that preserves and applies the request for placement preference. A proxy is not necessary for children not subject to ICWA because there is no similar formal requirement in state law that an individual entitled to preference must take in order to preserve their preference.

Thank you for your time and efforts toward keeping all of Alaska's children with their families and in their communities whenever possible.

Sincerely,



Melanie Fredericks

7129 Shooresin Circle
Anchorage, AK 99504

March 20, 2016

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
716 W. 4th Avenue Ste. 611
Anchorage, AK 99501

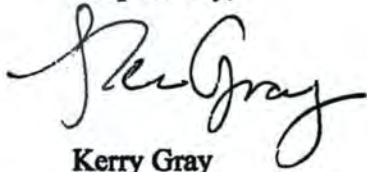
Dear Representative Gabrielle LeDoux:

My name is Kerry Gray and I am a Social Work undergraduate student at the University of Alaska Anchorage. I am writing in support of House Bill No. 200, Adoption of a Child in State Custody. I would like you to vote in favor of House Bill No. 200.

House Bill No. 200 was written by Governor Bill Walker in an effort to streamline the adoption process of Child in Need of Aid (CINA) cases. This process would benefit Children in Need of Aid and the court system in Alaska. Currently, according to the Office of Children Services Policy manual and the CINA Court Procedures, adoption hearings are heard separately from CINA court. Allowing adoption hearings to be heard during CINA court proceedings would positively impact the timely permanency of Alaska's children and youth.

I thank you for your time and consideration of supporting House Bill No. 200. I would like to see this bill passed and children in foster care obtain permanency in the most effective manner. Please feel free to contact me at kacochran@alaska.edu if you have any questions or would like to discuss this matter further.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kerry Gray". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Kerry Gray

From: Cheryl Offt
Sent: Tuesday, April 12, 2016 12:53 PM
To: House Judiciary <lhsjud@akleg.gov>
Subject: Support for HB 200
Importance: High

The most unequal treatment is the equal treatment of those who have never been treated equal ~ quote from a People's Institute for Survival and Beyond Undoing Racism workshop.

Madam Chairman and committee members,

My name is Cheryl Offt, I live in Bethel, Alaska and I fully support HB 200.

In both my work and my personal life here in Alaska as an Alaska Native resident and tribal member, I have seen and heard about far too many of our tribal children adopted out of their families, out of their communities, out of their tribes, even when they had relatives and tribal members willing and ready to take them in. The passing of HB 200 will help the state accomplish equity and fair access for Alaska Native families, efficiency and cost saving measures for the state, support of OCS in their endeavor to achieve increased/improved ICWA compliance. This bill makes sense by allowing equitable access for families/relatives who often reside in rural communities with limited access to formal petition processes, it will save state court and child welfare dollars by supporting a more efficient process within the court system, helps the state improve and become ICWA compliant, and will prevent a lot of heartbreak and loss for our children and our families.

Please show your leadership and support of *Equity, Efficiency and Cost Savings*, and *ICWA Compliance* for our state, for our Alaskan Children and Families. Please pass HB 200.

With respect,

Cheryl Offt, ICWA Dept. Director
Association of Village Council Presidents
PO Box 219
Bethel, AK 99559
(907) 543-7461
cofft@avcp.org



KAWERAK , INC. • P.O. Box 948 • Nome, AK 99762



TEL: (907) 443-5231 • FAX: (907) 443-4452



SERVING THE
VILLAGES OF:
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NOME
SAVOONGA
SHAKTOOLIK
SHISHMAREF
SOLOMON
STEBBINS
ST. MICHAEL
TELLER
UNALAKLEET
WALES
WHITE MOUNTAIN

April 12, 2016

Dear Madam Chairman and committee members,

I fully support HB200. I have seen, and continue to see, tribal members adopted out of their families and our communities even when they had family that were willing to take them. By making it easier for a family member to let the court know they are willing to raise their relative and combining the hearings to include one judge for the family, money will be saved and most importantly, children will be kept closer to their family, community, and culture.

Please understand how important it is to our families that the state doesn't make it so complicated for a family to take care of its own relatives in situations when they are good family members ready to adopt.

Thank you for reading this letter of testimony. Please pass this bill.

Sincerely,

Traci McGarry
Kawerak, Inc. Program Director
Children and Family Services/Child Advocacy Center
PO Box 948
Nome, AK 99762