

SB

159

<TARGET><BILL>SB 159</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
159</SUBJECT><COMM>SSTA29</COMM></TARGET>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON



ALASKA
STATE CAPITOL
ROOM 504
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1182

(907) 465-3707
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MEMO

To: Senator Stoltze
Co-Chair, Senate State Affairs

To: Senator Coghill
Co-Chair, Senate State Affairs

From: Senator Donny Olson
SB 159 Prime Sponsor

Subject: Hearing Request for SB 159
"An Act establishing the second Monday of October of each year as Indigenous Peoples; and providing for an effective date."

Date: January 28, 2016

I am respectfully requesting a hearing in the Senate State Affairs on Senate Bill 159, an Act establishing the second Monday of October of each year as Indigenous Peoples; and providing for an effective date. I also ask that off-site testimony be made available.

In the packet, I have included—

- Bill Version A
- Sponsor Statement
- Press Release
- Letter of Support, Maria Williams, University of Alaska, Anchorage
- State of Alaska Proclamation of Indigenous Peoples Day, October 12, 2015
- Municipality of Anchorage Proclamation of Indigenous Peoples Day, October 12, 2015

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Senator Donny Olson.

Senator Donny Olson

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SB 159 SPONSOR STATEMENT: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY

“An Act establishing the second Monday of October of each year as Indigenous Peoples Day; and providing for an effective date.”

SB 159 is designed to honor the indigenous peoples of the state as the first to inhabit the land. This legislation recognizes how indigenous people have shaped both the creation and continuing existence of the state by sharing wisdom, labor, knowledge and many personal and cultural achievements.

Last October, Governor Walker issued a proclamation designating October 12, 2015 as a Indigenous Peoples Day. This legislation would create Indigenous Peoples Day as a designated day of honor to be celebrated annually.

Several other communities nationwide have also declared the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day to honor the pre-existing and continued history inherent to these lands and the people and perspectives of the indigenous who were not discovered, but have always been.

This legislation also follows an official recommendation to create an Indigenous Peoples Day issued by the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council in their January 2016 Biennial Report. SB 159 a significant step in showing appreciation of the immeasurable contributions indigenous people have made to Alaska, as well as formal support for the numerous cultural and language revitalization efforts active in all parts of the state.

SB 159 is an official recognition of the struggles that many Alaska Natives continue to overcome as a result of past policies. This legislation is a commitment to continue to work together for solutions that will continue to improve the livelihoods and quality of life for our communities statewide.

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PRESS RELEASE

1/25/16

SENATOR DONNY OLSON INTRODUCES INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY LEGISLATION

(Juneau) – Senator Donny Olson (D- Golovin) has introduced legislation that would establish the second Monday of October of each year as Indigenous Peoples Day.

“I’m pleased to create legislation that would create a day that honors and celebrates all indigenous peoples, past, present and future,” said Senator Olson.

The bill is designed to honor the indigenous peoples of the state as the first to inhabit the land, and it recognizes the wisdom, labor, knowledge and many personal and cultural achievements indigenous people have contributed to both the creation and the continuing existence of the state.

Governor Walker proclaimed October 12, 2015 as Indigenous Peoples Day, but this legislation goes one step further by ensuring the second Monday in October is annually celebrated as a designated day of honor.

Senator Gardner (D- Anchorage) is also currently a co-sponsor of the bill.

Senator Olson is the Senator for District T, representing the North Slope, Northwest Arctic and Bering Straits regions. For more information, contact Cordelia Kellie in Senator Olson’s office at (907) 465-3707.

STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by *Governor Bill Walker*

WHEREAS, the Indigenous Peoples of the lands that would later become known as Alaska have occupied these lands since time immemorial, and Alaska is built upon the homelands and communities of the Indigenous Peoples of this region, without whom the building of the state would not be possible; and

WHEREAS, we value the many contributions made to our communities through Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, labor, technology, science, philosophy, arts, and the deep cultural contribution that has substantially shaped the character of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the State recognizes the fact that Alaska is one "big village," with over 16 percent of the State population having indigenous heritage – the highest percentage among all the United States; and

WHEREAS, the State opposes systematic racism toward Indigenous Peoples of Alaska or any Alaskans of any origin and promotes policies and practices that reflect the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, ensure greater access and opportunity, and honor our nation's indigenous roots, history, and contributions; and

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples' Day was first proposed in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the United Nations sponsored International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas; and

WHEREAS, in 2011 the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, representing 59 Tribes from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Northern California, Western Montana, and some Alaskan Tribes, passed resolution #11-57 to "Support to Change Columbus Day (2nd Monday of October) to Indigenous Peoples' Day;" and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska joins a growing number of cities that have recognized the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day, creating an opportunity to promote appreciation, tolerance, understanding, friendship, and partnerships among Indigenous Peoples and all Alaskans.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Bill Walker, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA, do hereby proclaim October 12, 2015 as:

Indigenous Peoples Day

in Alaska, and encourage all Alaskans to celebrate the thriving cultures and values of the Indigenous Peoples of our region and to continue efforts to promote the well-being and growth of Alaska's Indigenous community.

Dated: October 9, 2015



Bill Walker

Bill Walker, Governor
who has also authorized the
seal of the State of Alaska to
be affixed to this proclamation.

Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Indigenous Peoples' Day was first proposed in 1977 by a delegation of Native Nations to the International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas; and

WHEREAS, a growing number of American cities have recognized the second Monday of October as "Indigenous Peoples Day" reimagining Columbus Day as an opportunity to celebrate indigenous resiliency; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) recognizes the historical importance of the Indigenous Peoples of lands that later became known as the Americas, including the lands which became known as Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the MOA recognizes the fact that Anchorage is built upon lands first inhabited by the Indigenous Peoples of this region; and

WHEREAS, the MOA values the many contributions made to our community through Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, stewardship of these lands, labor, technology, science, philosophy, arts and the deep cultural contribution that has substantially shaped the character of the MOA; and

WHEREAS, the MOA recognizes that Anchorage is Alaska's "biggest village," with more than 23,000 Alaska Natives calling Anchorage their home.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor of Anchorage, Alaska, do hereby proclaim the second Monday of October to be

Indigenous Peoples Day

AND strongly encourage public institutions, businesses, and organizations to recognize and support Indigenous Peoples' Day; reaffirming the Municipality's commitment to demonstrate appreciation of Alaska's first peoples.




MAYOR



Alaska Native Studies

UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE

January 27, 2016

Senator Donny Olson and Senator Gardner:

Please regard this as a letter of highest support for Senate Bill No 159, to establish the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day.

This is a wonderful way to recognize the Indigenous peoples of Alaska, and also to highlight Alaska's great history. Alaska is a unique state in so many ways, but certainly the Indigenous and Alaska Native peoples are one of the highlights. For example, the United States recognizes 566 tribes, and 229 of those are in Alaska. Alaska Native people also make up close to 20% of the state's overall population and make contributions to the state's economy, especially through the twelve Alaska Native regional corporations. Alaska also has the highest percentage of Indigenous K-12 students at close to 27%. This means that one in four K-12 students is Indigenous/Alaska Native.

Alaska also is unique with the historic 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and the fact that the Alaska Native corporations now are the state's number one employer.

There are some more amazing reasons to justify this bill and I support this endeavor.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Williams', is written over the text of the letter.

Maria Williams, Director
Alaska Native Studies



March 3, 2016

Sent Via Electronic Mail
Senator Stoltze, Co-Chair
Senator Coghill, Co-Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99811

Re: Doyon Support for SB 159/ HB 275 Indigenous Peoples Day

Dear Senator Stoltze and Senator Coghill:

This letter is a written statement of support for SB 159/HB 275, a bill to establish the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples Day. 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 welcomed Governor Walker's proclamation designated October 12, 2015 as Indigenous Peoples Day, and we further would welcome an annual celebration which recognizes not only the history of Alaska Native people and Alaska's history, but also current contributions by Indigenous people to art, culture, policy, knowledge, traditions, and achievement.

Thank you for the work you do in the interest of Alaskans, and if you have any questions concerning this recommendation, please contact our office at (907) 459-2092.

Sincerely,

Aaron M. Schutt
President and CEO
Doyon, Limited

Cc: Senate State Affairs Committee
Representative Bob Lynn, Chair of House State Affairs Committee