

CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1(CRA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/11/15

Referred: Judiciary

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES EDGMON, Tuck, Kito, Kreiss-Tomkins

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the Governor to establish clear and consistent policies across all state agencies**
2 **for increased collaboration and partnership with Alaska tribal governments;**
3 **encouraging the Governor to negotiate intergovernmental agreements with Alaska**
4 **Native tribes that increase their authority, responsibility, and capacity to enforce certain**
5 **state laws and deliver justice at the local level; and urging the Governor to direct the**
6 **attorney general to conduct a complete review of the state's litigation against Alaska**
7 **Native tribes.**

8 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

9 **WHEREAS** the 229 federally recognized tribes in the state represent a vast
10 continuum of cultural legacies enriched by thousands of years of traditions and place-based
11 ways of life; and

12 **WHEREAS** many Alaska tribal communities face severe problems relating to
13 poverty, lack of economic opportunity, alcoholism, drug abuse, domestic violence, and sexual
14 assault; and

1 **WHEREAS** the percentage of Alaska Natives living below the federal poverty
2 guideline is nearly twice the national average; and

3 **WHEREAS** the unemployment rate for Alaska Natives is dramatically higher than the
4 national average; and

5 **WHEREAS** the alcohol-related death rate for Alaska Natives has, in recent years,
6 been more than 16 times higher than the alcohol-related death rate for Caucasians; and

7 **WHEREAS** rural communities in the state have, in recent years, reported alarming
8 opioid, heroin, and methamphetamine abuse; and

9 **WHEREAS** Alaska Native women in rural communities have reported rates of
10 domestic violence multiple times higher than the national average; and

11 **WHEREAS** Alaska Native women suffer the highest rate of sexual assault of any
12 population in the United States, and the rate of sexual assault for Alaska Native children is six
13 times the national average; and

14 **WHEREAS**, while Alaska Natives represent 19 percent of the population of the state,
15 they make up 36 percent of Alaskans in prisons or jails; and

16 **WHEREAS**, in the past 25 years, state, federal, and joint commissions, task forces,
17 and committees established to address those issues have included the Alaska Natives
18 Commission, created in 1990; the Alaska Supreme Court Advisory Committee on Fairness
19 and Access, created in 1995; the Alaska Commission on Rural Governance and
20 Empowerment, created in 1998; the Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission,
21 created in 2004; the Indian Law and Order Commission, created in 2010; and the United
22 States Attorney General's Advisory Committee on American Indian and Alaska Native
23 Children Exposed to Violence, created in 2013; and

24 **WHEREAS** each of those bodies concluded that the current law enforcement and
25 justice systems alone have been unable to address and reduce crime, social ills, and
26 community distress adequately in rural Alaska; and

27 **WHEREAS** each of those bodies identified the need to strengthen the authority,
28 responsibility, and capacity of local tribal governments to administer public safety and justice
29 in their communities; and

30 **WHEREAS** many experts agree that greater control, better defined jurisdiction, and
31 increased accountability at the local level will lead to swifter response to violence and

1 criminal activity in communities, increased crime prevention, and increased rehabilitative,
2 rather than punitive, sentencing models; and

3 **WHEREAS**, in matters of jurisdiction and the delivery of justice at the local level,
4 having the state and Alaska Native tribes work together in an improved relationship will
5 benefit communities throughout Alaska; and

6 **WHEREAS** clarifications in state policy will allow Alaska Native tribes the
7 jurisdictional tools to make their communities safer and healthier;

8 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Governor to establish
9 clear and consistent policies across all state agencies for increased collaboration and
10 partnership with Alaska tribal governments; and be it

11 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the Governor
12 to negotiate intergovernmental agreements, including civil diversion agreements, with Alaska
13 Native tribes that increase their authority, responsibility, and capacity to enforce certain state
14 laws and deliver justice at the local level; and be it

15 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Governor to
16 direct the attorney general to conduct a complete review of the state's litigation against Alaska
17 Native tribes.