



ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES, INC.  
2013 ANNUAL CONVENTION  
RESOLUTION 13-14

TITLE: PROTECT ALASKA NATIVE WOMEN

WHEREAS: The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska and its membership includes 118 federally-recognized tribes, 133 village corporations, 13 regional corporations, and 11 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and run federal and state programs; and

WHEREAS: The mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community; and

WHEREAS: All nations, including tribal sovereign nations honor, respect, and hold sacred our Native women; retain our inherent right to live according to our life-affirming customs and traditions which regulates respectful boundaries for relationships among villagers; and

WHEREAS: Alaska is home to 229 or 40% of federally recognized tribes; one Native village-based off road women's shelter (the Emmonak Women's Shelter, operating since 1979); and one tribal nonprofit domestic violence and sexual assault coalition (the Yup'ik Women's Coalition operating since 2006); and

WHEREAS: less than 100 of Alaska's 200 plus rural villages are served by local, trained State law enforcement officers, many of whom are in need of culturally appropriate training on how to work with tribes and Native people within the villages; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Native villages suffer disproportionately from crimes rooted in a disruption of Alaska Native customs and traditions, which is evident with some of the highest rates of domestic and sexual violence, alcohol/substance abuse, suicide, teen pregnancy, removal and separation of children from their families, and diseases such as diabetes; and

WHEREAS: the rates of missing or murdered Alaska Native women, and women and girls who are victims of sex trafficking have been largely ignored by the current justice systems and law enforcement; and

WHEREAS: according to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium’s Epidemiology Center, Alaska Native women are disproportionately affected by both domestic and sexual violence, and by the time Alaska Native women reach adulthood, women are 51% likely to have been a victim, or more specifically 1 out of 2 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence; and

WHEREAS: the Federal government has a trust responsibility to Alaska Native tribes; and

WHEREAS: the Federal government and the State of Alaska have not allocated sufficient resources to Alaska Native tribes, especially those in rural, remote off-road communities to address these issues. In fact, both governments have supported laws, policies, and practices that have limited Alaska Tribal governments’ authority to protect and ensure the health and well-being of our citizens, and thus created an environment where Alaska Native women are perceived and treated as little more than property; and

WHEREAS: given the high rates of crimes and other issues, an equitable set aside is required of Federal and state resources for Alaska Native tribes to develop, implement and sustain local, culturally relevant solutions to effectively, immediately and comprehensively address the health, safety and welfare of community members, and hold offenders and predators accountable to put an end to the serial nature of their crimes and injustices; and

WHEREAS: the State of Alaska has not complied with Sec. 2265 of the Violence Against Women Act, which requires the State to give full faith and credit to tribal protection orders; and

WHEREAS: the final version of the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act of 2013 contained a “Special Rule for the State of Alaska” in Section 910, which thereby excluded Alaska’s Tribes (with the exception of Metlakatla Indian Community, Annette Island Reserve from sections 904 of VAWA; and

WHEREAS: AFN urged Congress to include protections for Alaska Native women in VAWA 2013, yet these requests were ignored; and

WHEREAS: because these crimes are geographically far removed from the rest of the country, they continue to rise and offenders and predators continue to commit their serial crimes with impunity; and

WHEREAS: two of the United Nations Special Rapporteurs on Violence against Women and on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples called on the United States to reauthorize the Violence against Women Act with provisions that would enhance protections for all Native women.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the delegates to the 2013 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., that

1. the Federal agencies with responsibility for responding to violence against women, including but not limited to, the U.S. Department of Justice, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Indian Health Service, honor the federal trust responsibility to Alaska Natives by conducting annual, coordinated consultations with Alaska's tribes; and
2. the Federal government take a more active role in ending the unconscionable epidemic of violence against Alaska Native women and children, by
  - a. opening an Alaska District Office on Violence Against Women and ensuring meaningful access to Alaska Natives who are Limited English Proficient (LEP) and challenged by inconsistent Internet access, in order to ensure equitable access of critical resources to Alaska tribes, Native designed and operated shelters, and the Yup'ik Women's Coalition; and
  - b. repeal Section 910 of VAWA 2013 which excludes Alaska Native women from the safety, justice and services all other women in the United States are now eligible to receive; and
  - c. Through the U.S. Department of Justice, assist Alaska Native tribes with accessing and entering tribal protection orders into national protection order registries; and
  - d. provide separate annual, non-competitive funding resources to Alaska Native tribes, for life-saving services, including but not limited to law enforcement, advocacy, shelter and victim services, sexual assault forensic examinations in rural villages and Native designed and operated batterers re-education services; and
  - e. through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration on Children, Youth and Families work closely with the Yup'ik Women's Coalition and other long time Native women's coalitions and advocates to support the creation of an Alaska Native Resource Center to Increase the Safety of Native Women, as identified in the Reauthorization of 2010; and
3. The Alaska Federation of Natives establishes a Task Force to Increase the Safety of Native Women, co-chaired by an Alaska Native woman's village-based advocate and a tribal leader.

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

Submitted by: VILLAGE OF TETLIN, KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE, VILLAGE OF DOT LAKE, VILLAGE OF ANVIK

COMMITTEE ACTION: DO PASS

CONVENTION ACTION: AMENDED AND PASSED

