

Transcript of Two Interviews with Senator Stevens on APRN Morning News
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PART 1

Reporter Good Morning, I'm Dale Harrison. Senator Ted Stevens is showing no signs of backing off from his rider that would pull federal funding from tribal courts in Alaska villages. Stevens said yesterday that it was a battle to keep the rider in the Commerce, Justice and State Department funding bill which is currently on hold in the Senate. Stevens says the tribal courts are proliferating too fast in Alaska, and that threatens the balance of funding for Native programs nationwide. He blamed the growth of tribal courts on outside-funded Native sovereignty activists. He called Native self-government a threat to Statehood.

Stevens I don't think the State with the population this large can afford two sets of courts. And that's what they're arguing for.

Reporter Stevens said he wants to let the Native corporations decide what to do about tribal courts. Donna Goldsmith of the Alaska Inter-Tribal Council responded that he is neither correct about what we are all saying and doing, nor about who funds us to do it.

PART 2

Reporter Good morning, I'm Dale Harrison.

. . . Senator Ted Stevens isn't backing away from trying to pull federal funding from tribal courts in Alaska villages. Stevens told reporters yesterday that the courts are proliferating too fast in Alaska, and that threatens the balance of funding for Native programs nationwide. Stevens blamed outside interests, trial lawyers and do-gooders for drumming up interest among villagers in establishing the courts and he accused those groups of using the money for litigation over Native sovereignty.

Stevens So this is a battle, but I don't find that Native people *per se* are battling with me. The who are battling with me are the people who have been coached by these trial lawyers – coached by the people who want to take them to court and have another lawsuit and get – they'll – they'll go out and get the money from some environmental group or some do-good group to continue to – to – to – the litigation.

Reporter Stevens wants to regionalize tribal court money. The Alaska Inter-Tribal Council contends that tribal justice systems have always existed and that funding is needed to help them interface with the western legal system and with one another.