



# AVCP

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

Raymond Watson, Chairperson  
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February 8, 2013

Senator Mark Begich  
111 Russell Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Lisa Murkowski  
709 Hart Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Don Young  
2111 Rayburn Bldg.  
Washington DC 20515

Representative Bob Heron  
State Capitol  
Room 411  
Juneau, AK 99801

**RE: Violence Against Woman Re-authorization**

Dear Senator Murkowski, Senator Begich, Congressman Young, and Representative Heron:

This letter addresses the new amendment to the Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) bill introduced by Senator Murkowski on February 7; in particular, the section that carves out Alaska Tribes. The Association of Village Council Presidents vehemently opposes this particular exclusion.

Section 905(e) grants full Tribal civil jurisdiction over the issuance and enforcement of protection orders, including the right to exclude violators from "Tribal land," very clearly excluding most of Alaska Tribes. Then, Section 910(a) re-states this exclusion by declaring a "special rule" for Alaska, making it redundantly clear that this grant of authority applies to the Metlakatla Indian Community only. To ask that only Tribes within Indian Country may exercise authority over violence committed against their members, regardless of affiliation, but exclude the rest of Alaska Tribes is a serious injustice. This is categorically unfair, but, more importantly, creates safe havens and a free ticket for non-member perpetrators to commit further violence. Alaska Tribes are no different than those in the lower 48 who have little to no access to state protections. We are not only separated geographically from adequate resources, but access is completely foreclosed depending upon the season. Further, one of our Tribes is separated by the Bering Sea, with no way for a victim to seek adequate protection outside the Tribe. Allowing for all Tribes to exercise this expanded jurisdiction as proposed under S.47 will not automatically create "Indian Country," within Alaska. What it will do is seriously acknowledge the unique problems facing Alaska tribes.

AVCP has gone to the National Congress of American Indians, and visited with your staff on this issue during the first round of amendment drafting. We were met with either apathy or told this is the best we can get. Our requests for oversight hearings within our region on this issue were ignored. We expect more for our people. The State of Alaska contains nearly half of the federally-recognized Tribes in the United States. Although Alaska's Tribal members comprise only 15.2% of the state's population, they comprise 47% of the victims of domestic violence, and 61% of the victims of sexual assault. Of the 56 Tribes within the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, 53 have some form of dispute resolution process, and 15 have fully functioning Tribal Courts.

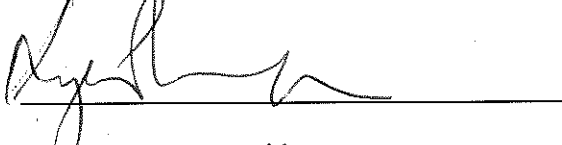
Akiachak  
Akiak  
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Aniak  
Atmautluak  
Bethel  
Bill Moore's Sl.  
Chefornak  
Chevak  
Chuathbaluk  
Chuloonawick  
Crooked Creek  
Eek  
Emmonak  
Georgetown  
Goodnews Bay  
Hamilton  
Hooper Bay  
Lower Kalskag  
Upper Kalskag  
Kasigluk  
Kipnuk  
Kongiganak  
Kotlik  
Kwethluk  
Kwigillingok  
Lime Village  
Marshall  
Mekoryuk  
Mtn. Village  
Napaimiut  
Napakiak  
Napaskiak  
Newtok  
Nightmute  
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  
Tuntutuliak  
Tununak  
Umkumiut

Section 910 singles out Alaska Native women, (with the exception of those from the Metlakatla area) treating them less important than women from any other part of the United States. With the additional challenges we face in rural Alaska (lack of adequate access to law enforcement and health services), we need more, not less, available tools for our Tribes. A matter of minutes delay can mean the difference between life and death. Our Native victims need to be able to access the courts of their choosing, without obstacle.

Section 910 impacts the people with the highest challenges than anywhere in the United States; especially just to survive. All of it should be stricken. Moreover, Section 905(e)'s application to only "Indian country" forecloses our Tribes from seeking solutions to an escalating problem, and that reference should also be removed. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

**ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENT**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Myron Naneng", is written over a solid horizontal line.

Myron Naneng, President

Cc: Jefferson Keel, President  
National Congress of American Indians  
Embassy of Tribal Nations  
1516 P Street NW  
Washington, DC 20005