



2050 VENIA MINOR ROAD
P.O. Box 86
ST. PAUL ISLAND, ALASKA 99660

Contact: Marissa J. (Mercurieff) Chaudhuri
480-274-3813; mjchaudhuri@tgspi.com

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**THE ALEUT COMMUNITY OF ST. PAUL ISLAND OPPOSES THE “SPECIAL”
RULES FOR ALASKA IN THE VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT
REAUTHORIZATION OF 2013**

The Aleut Community of St. Paul Island (ACSPI) is a federally recognized tribe of Alaska Natives located in St. Paul Island in the Bering Sea, about 800 miles west of Anchorage, Alaska. St. Paul is the home to the largest population of Aleut people and approximately ninety percent (90%) of residents of St. Paul are enrolled tribal citizens of the ACSPI.

The ACSPI strongly opposes the language isolating Alaska in the proposed Violence Against Women Act Reauthorization of 2013, as amended by Senator Lisa Murkowski and passed by the Senate yesterday. Senator Murkowski’s amendment seeks to limit Alaska Native tribal jurisdiction over domestic violence protective orders, at a time when 229 federally recognized tribes [nearly half of all tribes in the United States] are advancing their tribal justice systems as a remedy for the plague of family violence in their communities.

“As a remote and isolated tribe, the ACSPI is incredibly disappointed with the Alaska delegation’s pointed effort to segregate Alaska Natives from the protections otherwise available to Native Americans generally,” said Amos Philemonoff, President of the ACSPI. “In the one hand Senator Murkowski is holding a poster as an advocate of Alaska Native women and children, decrying the fact that they are the most vulnerable people in all of the Nation; and in the other hand is her pen which is trying to erode if not terminate our inherent sovereignty to protect these very same people from harm.”

Philemonoff continued, “I just don’t understand. The Alaska Native people have been studied over and over again by all manner of governmental agencies; Senator Murkowski has these studies in her hand. We are over-represented in every statistic involving domestic violence, sexual violence, child welfare, and all the ills that follow. Every study recognizes that the State systems are failing our people; every study recommends local solutions and self-determination. How can it be that our elected leadership is still forwarding the well-worn argument against Alaska Native tribal sovereignty, in the most essential aspect of a tribe – our family?”

Senator Murkowski's amendments to the VAWA segregate Alaska Native tribes (with the exception of the Metlakatla Indian Community) in Sections 905 and 910 of the bill. Murkowski's "special rules" for Alaska promote the ambiguity that Alaska Native tribes are "different" legally than Natives in the Lower 48 States, and create confusion regarding the full extent of tribal authority to issue civil protective orders over offenders who commit violent acts against Alaska Native women and children.

"It was the Native people who helped put Senator Murkowski in office during her 'write-in' campaign. We find this discrimination unacceptable. With so many of our people suffering from lack of adequate and appropriate law enforcement and state judicial presence in our communities, this maneuver runs the risk of closing the tribal court house door to our women, and leaving them and our children exposed to the violence that is tearing at the very fabric of our communities," Philemonoff asserts. "Alaska Native tribes, tribal entities, and our Native American relatives in the Lower 48 states must join us now by opposing the Alaska 'special' rules at every turn, so that an improved VAWA is passed that recognizes and affirms Alaska Native sovereignty over family relations, on equal footing with all other tribal governments in the Nation."