TESTIMONY

SUBMITTED

TO

THE ALASKA NATIVES COMMISSION

TASK FORCE ON EDUCATION

IN CONNECTION WITH A HEARING
ON EDUCATION ISSUES
AND
SOLUTIONS

AT

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

OCTOBER 15, 1992

ALASKA NATIVES COMMISSION
JOINT FEDERAL-STATE COMMISSION
ON
POLICIES AND PROGRAMS AFFECTING ALASKA NATIVES
4000 Old Seward Highway, Suite 100
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

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ALASKA NATIVES COMMISSION

EDUCATION TASK FORCE

HEARING ON EDUCATION ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1992

2 O'CLOCK P.M.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:	DR. WALTER SOBOLEFF
	SAM TOWARAK
	BEVERLY MASEK
OTHERS COMMISSIONERS, PUBLIC TASK FORCE MEMBERS, AND STAFF PRESENT:	MARY JANE FATE, CO-CHAIR
	MIKE IRWIN
	RAY BARNHARDT
	MIKE WILLIAMS
	FATHER JAMES SEBESTA
	MARTIN MOORE
	FRANK PAGANO
	NETTIE PERATROVICH

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(On record at 2 p.m.)

(Tape #4)

MR. IRWIN: Okay, a couple of little -- take care of some administrative details. First of all, this is the education section of our hearing process; and hearing you today will be our Education Task Force members from the Commission. To my far left is Mr. Sam Towarak from Unalakleet, Beverly Masek from Willow, and then also coming in will be Dr. Walter Soboleff from Tanakee Springs, and he should be here any minute. Also, our co-chair of the Commission, Mary Jane Fate, may, from time to time, come in and sit as well.

And then this particular task force also has public members who have been invited to serve with the task force; and I see a couple of them here: Mike Williams from Akiak, Ray Barnhardt is with the University of Alaska Fairbanks; and is there anybody else? Nettie Peratrovich has been around -- I've seen her earlier. She may show up; and, by the way, you guys are invited to share the table if you want.

The way we'll be conducting it today is the Commissioners will invite you up, and any of these seats along in here when you're giving your testimony. We ask that you try and keep your testimony to about five to seven minutes oral, and we can take as much for the public record written as you want; and one of the reasons for asking you to be as concise

as possible is it allows our Commissioners to be able to draw more information from you by asking that are particular -- in areas that are of particular concern to them and what they are really looking for to build the public record here.

I would -- and I've asked the Commission members to be sure and remind you also throughout the session that if it looks like we're going to start going long, we have some things that we can do. There are those who have already asked to be heard; and we'll try to get through everyone this afternoon. And others will, no doubt, throughout the afternoon, come in and sign in, and we do have a signup back there for anybody who would wish to testify. But when we start getting close to 5 o'clock, we pretty much have to start shutting down, because we're moving over to the Hilton for an evening session; and although that will be a general Commission session, anybody who isn't heard in this hear -- wanted to be heard in this particular one, can either reschedule for the evening one or for Saturday morning. We're going to have a special session from about 9:00 to 12:00 Saturday morning to accommodate those who couldn't be heard. And if that's a real inconvenience to you, I'll be around, staff will be around, and just go ahead and talk with me; and we'll see if we can't fit you in somewhere.

So, with that, I'd like to turn the floor over to our Commission members; and Beverly has been out traveling around

and -- all over the NANA Region here recently and got a cold and lost her voice. And (laughing) so I guess I'll turn duties, until Dr. Soboleff gets here, over to Sam, and you guys can just go for it. Let me get you the list that we have so far.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thanks, Mike, and welcome to the Education Task Force Commission hearings. This is our first hearing as a -- the Education Commission. We have been meeting as a task force for about three or four times; and I'm hoping that you have a copy of the write-up that was written up on education. I believe there may be copies in the back. If there isn't, we'll try to get some.

The -- I want to recognize a couple of other people. Some Commission members that are here right now, I see Father Sebesta -- Jim Sebesta. Raise your -- right here; Mr. Frank Pagano right here; and Mr. Martin Moore from Emmonak. Also, I'd like to recognize a person that's not here who's really been helping us, Sally Kookesh. She has also been invited to serve on our task force. That was the remaining person.

The -- Beverly, who just lost her voice, reminds me of those debates that are going on (laughing).

COMMISSIONER MASEK: I can still talk though (laughing).

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Also, the baseball announcer who lost his voice not too long ago. This is the fall season.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Well, I'd just like to say good afternoon, to everybody; and I sure appreciate all of you taking the time to come down here and give us your testimony; and it's really important that, you know, you speak to us, and tell us, and give us some concrete answers -- or not answers, but solutions on, you know, the education problem in Alaska; and especially out in the rural villages. I think it's really, really crucial that you come and tell us, you know, what you think need to be changed; and, you know, why it's so important for the younger generation to get a good education. And I can still talk, so (laughing). . .

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: I'm going to ask that the two Commission -- the two task force members come up here and listen with us, too: Mike Williams and Ray Barnhardt. There's a couple of seats here. We'll get started. Dr. Soboleff is here in town; we just don't know where he is right now.

I have a sign-in sheet that was received. There might be another one in the back. Is there one there?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (Indiscernible -- away from microphone).

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, there's another one in the back. I'll start the testimony off; and, basically, what we want you to do is use either one of these two microphones and then we can be able to hear you, and then respond and ask questions. First to speak today would be Harry R. Lang.

(Pause.)

The name sounds familiar. Is there a Herb Lang that's related? No?

MR. LANG: No, Roger -- Roger Lang.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, that's who --

MR. LANG: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: -- okay.

MR. LANG: When Mike spoke just when he opened the meeting, he said would we restrict it to about five or seven minutes. I couldn't do what I want to say in five to seven minutes. This morning they were talking for an hour and a half; so I thought that's what I'd let us do. So I'll simply introduce what I have, and maybe the questions; but I'll have to turn it in as a written statement to your Commission, rather than trying to explain the whole thing now, 'cause it's three pages long.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: We'll be sure to add it to the record.

MR. LANG: Yeah.

(TESTIMONY OF MR. LANG ATTACHED AS EXHIBIT #5)

MR. LANG: So, with that, I have a lot more, too; but I'll run on for another hour if I do that (laughing), so I thought I won't do that. And -- but this is the basic reason I'm here is to put this into the record, and I will enter it into the record as a written statement to the recorder.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, I had one question on the Mt. Edgecumbe-type school. What were your thoughts about a location for it, or if. . .

MR. LANG: Yes, we have talked about this. The -- when the BIA decided to close Mt. Edgecumbe, they didn't decide in a cut-and-dried manner that it was going to close and that was it. They threw that out to see what we would do; and, unfortunately, the state and us didn't fight hard enough for it. They wouldn't have closed it if we would have fought for it, the state. When they clo -- wanted to close Chemewa, Oregon fought. And they actually built them a new school -- a whole new sc -- complete new school. And Oklahoma fought; Kansas fought. The states that fought, got new schools. Instead of closing schools, they built them new ones; and we had thought, in talking -- in just general talk of the elders, say, a school in Kenai, on the Peninsula -- not exactly in Kenai, but on the Peninsula; maybe a school in Southeast, and a school in the Northern District. You know, that type, instead of one major school, maybe have three; that type of thing, and. . .

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thanks, Harry.

MR. LANG: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: I had one question, too. Why is it, do you think, that the Molly Hootch Act is not good; 'cause I've heard many people, you know, crying out to keep the

children, you know, in the villages; and why do you think that system --

MR. LANG: Why --

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: -- is not --

MR. LANG: -- for the very reason I mentioned before. Why -- it -- the unreasonable, to me, reason for wanting to keep the people in the villages. We never did. I'm a product of the Sheldon Jackson. I left home when I was 12, and it didn't hurt us. I still talk my language. I -- it -- we never abandoned our village simply because we went to school somewhere else. We had a better school system. And the villages -- the dropout rate is horrendous, so that's -- that is my basic point is the fact that we can get a better finishing rate -- better school finishing rate than we have now.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: And you think the cause of it is from this Molly Hootch Act is why there's so many kids dropping out in the villages?

MR. LANG: I really do. Metlakatla, which is my own home town, has one of the high school systems in the state. They have a whole bunch of students, and very few of them finish school. They -- because they -- when they want to quit school, their parents just say:

"Okay, it's all right. You're home; it's fine."

It's kind of discouraging when you see how it starts out with 300 in a class, finish with 15. It would -- other type school, we didn't do that. You kind of wanted to finish with your class. You had a school spirit that seemed to work.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: So do you think the current system isn't good enough in standards to bring, you know, the children the right -- or good education to bring them into the mainstream -- or I shouldn't say mainstream, but, you know, like going from a rural village into a big-city type of education, or --

MR. LANG: Yeah, I really do, for the simple reason that you lose touch. Like I say, you get educated up north; but if you have to come down here, you don't really know anybody. But with the other type schools, the communication is there. You know everybody. You know people from Southeast; you know people from the Aleutians; you know people from the Barrow District. You all know each other. There is no separate -- you don't have to be introduced, or somebody has to look up your record to see how you did in school, or anything like -- you already know that. It's communication -- the communication line is better for the whole system. It's worked with us, that's -- and I don't see it working now.

I -- in other words, what we have coming up that's going to replace the CEOs that we have now? Bright people, bright -- I've seen bright students here in the youth

conference -- just exceptionally bright; but you'll never see them again until the next youth conference. They won't see each other again until the next youth conference.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Harry.

MR. LANG: They go their separate way.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Thank you.

MR. LANG: Okay.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: The next person to testify is -- we move from Southeast to Southwest. Oscar Kawagly (ph.)?

(Pause.)

MR. KAWAGLY: My name is Oscar Kawagly (ph.), and I'm Inupiat, and I wanted to comment on a couple of things that I've thought about as far as the state-wide educational system is concerned. And those two items -- two variables are probably two of the things that cause a lot of problems as far as education of the Native person, or Native students is concerned.

One is hegemony -- control; and very often I find that there is a school district with a Native school board; and in some instances, you might have a Yup'ik nation, which has supposedly the control in the hands of the Native people; but when you get right down to it, it becomes an illusion of control; and I think the state has to give more control to the Native people, in order for us to begin to make advances in

teaching our young people to meet the regional needs and also the needs of the Native people in that particular area. And when you give control to the Native people, then they will be able to pick up the business of successful education in their language and their life ways, which they had done for many thousands of years. And they've been very successful. Otherwise, why would we have existed for 40 to 20,000 years? And so that's one of the things that I would really recommend is that the hegemony or the control of the school systems be given to the hands of the Native people.

The other is legitimation or validation of Native knowledge; because, as I take a look at it, I find that down through the millennia, again many thousands of years, that we have been applying scientific principles into our own technology that we have developed. And yet when it comes to going to school, we are handed something that is foreign. It's from the Western world; and they have -- each one of the disciplines has its own language, and it causes a lot of problems; and yet we're already familiar with the things that they know. For instance, meteorology. By gosh, when you go to the University and you begin to take a look at meteorology, and all the vernacular, the words that they use are so confusing, that it's very difficult; and yet our elders can go out there and read the surroundings early in the morning when it's -- before the sun rises and as it rises, and get a good

idea what the weather is going to be like for the next day or so; and very often it's more correct than the meteorologist that has all the technological aids at his hands.

And so I think that we need to speed up the process where our Native knowledge is legitimated, and when we have control, then we'll be able to study our language, study our traditions and our customs; because it's not good just to study the language, you have to have the values, traditions, and customs; because those are intermeshed, and they cannot be done one at a time; so they have to be taught one of the -- at the same time. This way it also would enable the Native people in a particular region, because each of the regions -- the bio-regions are entirely different from one another; and the needs of the particular area is different. And one of the things that bothers me again is that the state always says:

> "Okay, this is the curriculum, or the curricula for the English. This is the curricula for the physical education. This is for social studies, and so on."

And what room does it really leave as far as control is concerned, as far as a Native person out in the village is concerned? We have to try to meet those, because the state and the federal government are giving us moneys; and there are strings attached to 'em; and what kind of control can you really have? And the University system, and we ourselves have to encourage our Native people to go into education, so that

we can have Native administrators and Native teachers; and that's when we'll really begin to make some advances, as far as our own lives are concerned.

Very often, you find that in the schools it becomes a battlefield; and I was appalled one time last summer -- last winter when I went to a village, and I stayed there two weeks; and within that two weeks, I learned that there was three young ninth-grade boys that had dropped out of school. And you begin to see that there is a problem there. And I think, basically, it's because you see a lot of high school students out in the villages that don't have a job and can't really live in their own subsistence lifestyle; nor are they able to successfully step into the modern world. And so we need to bridge, or meld, the two in order for them to work.

Evaluation is another one. By gosh, when we start giving the IOWA tests of basic skills, and the superintendents make -- place such a heavy weight on how the students are doing in the IOWA tests of basic skills. Tests that are not made by us. They are made for somebody in the dominant society, and what it does is merely homogenizes our language and our culture; and roboticizes the Native students. I think it takes a lot away from the Native creativity. And language, to me, is very important; because language contains our world view. It contains our philosophy of life; how we are to live as a person; what our identity is; and how we're to interact with

one another; how we're to interact with our environment; and how we are to interact and interplay with the creatures and the plants of the universe. And ours is to maintain a balance; whereas, the Western world seems to -- in its science and technology especially -- seems to have inherent in it, a destructive creativity, and not something that we have to teach our young people to really look at technology.

And I read somewhere where a scientist said that you keep technology guilty until proven innocent. And that's something that we need our Native people to learn, just so that when we get a new technological gadget, we see what kind of a dam -- what kind of damage it's doing to you as a person; what is it doing to the environment. And those are types of things that we need to address. Technological advances -- who gains? Who loses? Thank you.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Oscar.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: I have a few questions to ask you. One thing is why do you think so many of these ninth graders or other students dropped out, and why don't they have jobs in the villages? Is it all on account of the education system?

MR. KAWAGLY: I think mainly it's an educational system which we -- which carries with it a foreign curriculum; meaning that we're supposed to new -- learn a new language and

the new lifestyle entirely; and I think that's where a lot of the problems come in. And students begin to say to themselves, what use is education, if I can't be able to make a living as a Native person; if I wanted to live as a quasi-subsistence-type of a hunter; and then can't be able to do it; nor be able to successfully step into the other world -- the Western world of education?

And I think that poses a lot of problems. Like I said, very often the school room becomes a battlefield for the Native student.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Well, I think a lot of the, you know, school districts, they -- the school -- the local school boards, they do have a voice, and they do have, you know, some say-so about the education. Why isn't -- why aren't there any more Native people working toward that goal to, you know, put out this curriculum that can be good for the Native children?

MR. KAWAGLY: That's where I think the illusion of control comes in. They think --

COMMISSIONER MASEK: I think they're --

MR. KAWAGLY: -- because --

COMMISSIONER MASEK: -- given the good --

MR. KAWAGLY: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: -- the opportunity to do that. Why aren't they exercising their, you know, rights to sit in

on the board and, you know, implicate the different problems there are with the system?

MR. KAWAGLY: I think, in many instances, we are sitting on the boards; but who are implementing the decisions that are made by the school board? It's not a Native person. Look how many superintendents there are. How many Natives do you see among them? And take a look at the number of principals and the teachers that have been taught from a different world view. And then you begin to see that there definitely is an illusion of control. We think that we have a control because we are board members; we're on an advisory school board; and they can listen to us; and sometimes the principal may be sympathetic, but he doesn't really know how to carry it out.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Well, you as individuals, or as parents, would you like to see your children do better in both worlds, or -- you know, in the Native village and out of the village? Would you like to see the children succeed in both, you know, criterias?

MR. KAWAGLY: Yes, most certainly. I want the educational system to prepare my children to be able to fit in wherever they want to. And, hopefully, they'll make a world that is better, where the two are meshed together; not saying one world and -- the Yup'ik world and the outside world.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Well, it se --

MR. KAWAGLY: When they're meshed together, that'll be a lot better.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Well, it seems like, with a lot of the Native communities, the Native people are fighting and not trying to work together, or what the structure of that is now. Or can you try to maybe put in some system where you can work, you know, problems out, so that it'll balance, and for the children to get the education in both worlds?

MR. KAWAGLY: Yeah, I think we -- there's a certain amount of unifying that has to be done. Until we become of one mind and we're attacking the problems in education, or health, I don't care where --

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Yes.

MR. KAWAGLY: -- if we don't have the unity behind us, then we don't have the strength. At least we have to keep fighting, and AFN, I think, is a good beginning; where they try to unite people, so that we begin to think, not so much homogenize us, but to fight for things that we think are needed to us -- to make us better.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Okay, well, thank you.

MR. WILLIAMS: Oscar, I have several concerns on the governance issue, on the illusion of the school -- regional school boards or policy-making school boards. You know, do we have more control of our educational system than we had ever

before in the history of Alaska Natives? Do you think we have more control over what we have now than ever before?

MR. KAWAGLY: Oh, I think so; but I think we also have a long ways to go; where we really have control in our hands; where we can begin to say:

"This is the curricula that we want, and the structure, or the format for that is going to be based on the way our world of view is structured."

And then we can add what we want from the outside world; and then we truly have strength.

MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Mr. Kawagly. I'd like to introduce one more Education Task F -- a couple more that just came in. First of all, Commissioner Walter Soboleff of Tenakee Springs; and then Nettie Peratrovich. I don't know where (laughing) --

MS. PERATROVICH: I'm really a Haida, but I live here in Anchorage.

(Laughter.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: I don't like to --

MS. PERATROVICH: I always say --

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: -- say where she's from, because she's been all over.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Commissioner Covey (ph.) is here also.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, yeah.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: I'd like to recognize him.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: We'll welcome in here, the Department of Education Commissioner from Juneau. There are copies of the Education Task Force report in the back, if you want to see some of the stuff that we've done so far. And I'm really encouraged by the discussions, because some of that is being reiterated here at the meeting; and while it's in a different vein, it also reinforces some of our thinking as well.

Next on the group would be Michael -- and you signed your name so that I can't read it. Michael -- I can't --

(Pause.)

Is there a Michael here that signed up to testify? Okay, I'll have to --

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Call on him later.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Yeah, call on him later if he's -- Robert?

(Laughter.)

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Robert.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: A. Robert A. I --

(Pause.)

Okay. Alth (ph.) or Ott, something like that. (Laughing.) Something like that. I'm sorry. I'm real poor at reading

handwriting. This one I can read real easy. David Henson? (Pause.)

MR. HENSON: I'm David Henson. I'm a student at UAA, and I'm just giving you some figures right now.

(BACKUP TO DAVID HENSON'S TESTIMONY ATTACHED AS EXHIBIT #6)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Is there one other besides Mary Reeve with you?

MR. HENSON: I've got Marge Revas.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Marge? Okay.

MR. HENSON: (Indiscernible -- away from microphone.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay.

MR. HENSON: (Indiscernible -- away from microphone.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay.

MR. HENSON: (Indiscernible -- away from microphone.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay. Debbie and Vicky, huh? (Inaudible response.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay.

MR. HENSON: What I've come to testify about is the imminent closure of Native Student Services at UAA. In the news lately, this has been an issue, where the University has been saying that this is, in fact, not going to happen. And the way it sounds, they were never intending to do this; but we have documentation to show that they were going to merge the Native Student Services with Minority Student Services. The Native Student Services, as it is set up now, is probably the

biggest component of why Natives from the Bush that come to Anchorage finish their college education. Every day we have to justify ourselves by signing in, to show that we exist, and justify that we need special services; and this program has been going on for 16 years. At stake with the Native Student Center is our cultural identity, heritage, and well-being.

And we brought it up to their attention, you know, they're looking at possibly changing it; but what we need to do is have implemented a program that is set in stone that don't have to be readjusted every time we get a new University President or Chancellor. And I don't know how many more years this program has to work to show that it is justified. After 16 years of signing in, it sounds like it's got a pretty good track record.

As you notice, the head count of Native students at UAA has increased from 1987 to 1991 by 51.9 percent; and it looks like it's going to continue to rise. But if these -- if the Native Student Services doesn't remain intact as is, then you can look for this rate to decline. We probably have the largest Native population on any university in the state. So I'd just like to impose that this Commission recommend to the state and the University itself to keep intact the Native Student Services as it is, and find out why we continue to have to justify ourselves.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, David. I want you to know, I, too, I was -- I helped to set up the one in Fairbanks; and I think the one in here in Anchorage is modeled after the one in Fairbanks, and I was it's first Chair. I'm glad you brought this up. This is very timely with regard to post-secondary education. We rarely hear from students at univ -- from the University, and it's good to know of your concern. It'll be taken seriously.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: I'd like to know, what kind of -- what does -- what service -- what does it do for the Native people?

MR. HENSON: It provides -- we have counselors, tutor programs; it provides a place for the Natives to go to identify with the urban and rural Natives, so that the urban Natives can keep in touch with it -- the Bush -- with the true Bush culture.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: When you were going to school in your village, or wherever you came from, were you able to have this same opportunity, you know, to identify with the city --

MR. HENSON: Okay, I speak at this from an urban standpoint.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Okay.

MR. HENSON: I'm from town; but I deal with Native students from the Bush every day; and at their graduation

potlucks, all the Natives from the Bush that graduated college all said that if it had not been for the Center, then they wouldn't have made it in school. In the first three or four semesters, the most critical time, our dropout rate is 50 percent as it is. And if this service is changed, it will go up even higher.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: And it's a -- is it a real big problem, you think, that if this services was cut that it would affect the --

MR. HENSON: Oh, yes.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: -- Native education --

MR. HENSON: Oh, yes.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: -- in college?

MR. HENSON: Without it, I don't foresee any new Natives from the Bush coming into town to actually make it. You know, if -- there'll probably be 10, 15 percent that will enter the University of Alaska Anchorage and continue; but, you know, that's a big change from 50 percent at the present time.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, David.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Thank you.

MS. PERATROVICH: I would like to ask him, have you presented a resolution to AFN --

MR. HENSON: Yes.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- since this is a state issue? And that you might consider being included on the Affirmative

Action Plan that the University, in order to get any federal dollars, would have to include the Alaska Native Center as one of the qualifying items on their Affirmative Action Plan; therefore, making it an ongoing expenditure that they would have to maintain in order for them to be qualified for any federal dollars to come into the University. And, as you know, Senator Stevens is presently getting several hundred million dollars into the University in Fairbanks for the super computer.

MR. HENSON: That could probably be into direct relation that we have no Native faculty at UAA, so how can they help implement a program if they're not Native and understand the culture. So that's probably where -- UAF has Native faculty, to my understanding, so that would be a direct relation to why things are working out like they are at UAA.

MS. PERATROVICH: You have Alaska Natives working in the program though, don't you?

MR. HENSON: Oh, yes, there's -- they can be cut loose at any time. The one Native language program we have, as it stands right now, may not be here next semester; and Native languages are mandated by federal law to be in the universities. So they tell us -- I've been told before:

> "Well, if you want those kind of services, you can go to Fairbanks."

But I live in Anchorage.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, Ray?

MR. BARNHARDT: If I could ask a question, if maybe, to bring us up to date. I understood that, at some point along the summer or this fall, a proposal for an Institute for Indigenous Studies Center was submitted. Do you know what the status of that is, and if there's any action being taken?

MR. HENSON: The word is is they'll decide on that next two to four years. And the -- an individual drafted a report to support that isn't no longer going to be a consultant on that issue; so I don't -- it sounds like they're going to keep the report alive; but I don't know to what extent.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Wait, if you have a problem of hearing, can you please come up here in the front and. . .

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, thank you, David. Marge Revas?

REPORTER: (Indiscernible -- away from microphone) --

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, sure, sure.

REPORTER: -- in case I can't --

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: David, do you serve --

REPORTER: -- answer (indiscernible -- noise).

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: -- in some capacity at the University then?

MR. HENSON: Yes, I'm President, Native Student Organization, member of the student government as a senator, and work for Native Student Services part time.

MS. REVAS: My name is Marge Revas. Can yo -- and I'm a Raven from the Sun Raven House in Ketchikan, and I am now in my thirteenth semester consecutively at the University of Alaska Anchorage. My first three to four semesters were crucial to my staying in the University system. I will now read to you a prepared presentation on some of the facts as I see them, and then I will give a personal testimony.

The Native student population at UAA represents the fastest-growing portion of the UAA student body; and when combined with the rest of the ethnic racial and minority students, become approximately 19 percent of UAA enrollment. There is but token student support staff to meet the needs of these students and no academic programs, Native faculty, nor culturally-appropriate classes.

The six-year plan of the University of Alaska is committed to fulfill its educational responsibility to Alaska Natives by providing a physical environment and support services relevant to the experience of Alaska Native students. There is a very real threat that the University of Alaska Anchorage's Native Student Service Center will no longer exist as a separate and distinct entity at UAA. The Native students at UAA believe that the Native Students Service Center provides a critical gathering place for support and is instrumental in maintaining their distinct cultural identity throughout their educational experience.

The experience of Alaska Native students in post-secondary educational attainment levels for Natives are alarmingly low. Available statistics confirm that the public education system is failing to meet the needs of Native Americans at all levels. The Alaska Native leadership are acutely aware of the need for highly-trained individuals to run the corporations and the lack of opportunities within the University of Alaska Anchorage to gain this training.

The report of a national advisory committee formed by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, which visited UAA in early 1992 to review and advise the University on matters pertaining to multi-culturalism, specifically recommended that UAA address the issues currently confronting Native students attending UAA.

The history of U -- of Native Students Service at the University of Alaska Anchorage is as following. They address not only the administrative component of support services, but the social and cultural component of the Native experience; thereby enhancing their educational experience. They deal with the rural-to-urban orientation, because when you take a rural student and you place them in Anchorage, that is enough of a culture shock, much less a culture shock with the University system. They deal with students who have English as a second language; they deal with helping the student adapt to other cultures -- other than their own.

We are a communal people. We are not individualistic people. The way that we learn is through positive role modeling at the University. We believe that it is not the fact that we read textbooks and are tested on them; it's the fact that we are kinetic people; we learn through visual symbolic singing, dancing, storytelling, etcetera. We feel that, as Natives, we are being discriminated against, because we are being accused of being segregated and we are taking advantage of a duplication of services. To a degree, this is true. We have to be segregated. However, what does segregation mean? If you mean segregated within our Native Students Services, it is not true, because we have the Center open to all people; it's not just for Natives. If you mean segregation because that's the only place we go, that also is not true. It is a central gathering place, and it is used to the benefit, not just of our education, but, again, to the social and cultural component. It's a place where we have potlucks; we get together -- the upper-level students can role model to the low-level students who b -- who cannot believe that they can succeed, because the statistics are right there in their face all the time, saying that they shouldn't succeed.

We as minority students and as a minority group refuse to be pitted against the other minority students. What they are trying to do is integrate the Native students with the other minority students, because they feel that it is a

duplication of students. However, we as Native students, believe that we are a good investment. It is us -- it is we the Native students who are going home to lead our people into the modern technological world. And we feel that even if it is a duplication of services, it's a justifiable duplication of services. We refuse to be pitted against each other to capture the resources and the crumbs that the administrations wishes us to feast on.

Native Students Services is an established program that has existed at UAA, and it is a program that is a success. What we have done in the last week, since we found out -- and it's been about a week now since we found out that we would be moving -- is we have become pro-active. We are not waiting for the ax to fall; we are not waiting for them to move us; we are demonstrating that we have had an invitational rally across campus, and we delivered invitations to all of the decision makers and asked them to attend the Christopher Columbus Day skit, when we changed Christopher Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day, a day of healing and survival. We performed for them, gave public testimony; and we tried to influence their decision before they make the decision.

The final decision has not been made yet. President Bush has declared 1992 the Year of the American Indian. We have written to President Bush. We have also written to the Governor. The University is not insensitive; in many ways it

is. For instance, I was the first Native at UAA to graduate in full traditional regalia, and I was also the commencement speaker. They are making headway; but we as quiet people need to be more proactive and political. We do not believe that the administrators who are making this decision will listen to us.

They have a parking issue on campus with 24,000 students protesting. We are only 900 students; they don't listen t -- about the parking issue. What makes us think they're going to listen to us? We believe that what we need to do is each and every student needs to be out there, calling the Legislative Information Office, contacting their representative in Juneau and back in their hometown. We need to write to the Governor. We need to write to the Anchorage Mayor and Assembly and say:

"If 900 students do not move here to go to school, how is that going to affect your resource base?"

What we are asking for today is support and ideas. There's -- there are a few of us who can lead. As students -- like I said, a -- the first few semesters are really crucial, so those of us who w -- can fight are here today to ask for your help.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Marge. The message is being heard loud and clear, I think, amongst the members. Next to --

COMMISSIONER MASEK: One question. I just want to congratulate you on your graduating. I have one question. You

mentioned in there they're failing to meet the needs. Can you tell me what kind of needs are you talking about? And you also mentioned that they didn't address something in regards to a Native experience.

MS. REVAS: Failing to meet the needs of Native students. First of all, we were not asked about the merger -- how we felt about it. Failing to meet the needs of Native students, again, as I mentioned, when a Native student comes to UAA, they are usually from a rural area. I, myself, am from an urban areal; I'm from Ketchikan; and when I came, there were no support services for me, other than Native Students Services. When I come to Anchorage from a smaller town, and mo -- and I, myself, was a dropout from high school, because I couldn't even handle high school -- okay? -- I'm set up to fail. Natives usually are, because their curriculum in the rural area is different, they're not set up to graduate and go on to post-secondary education. They are set up in a vocational education curricula. They're set up to be diesel mechanics, beauticians, bakers, etcetera. A professional degree takes us a lot longer to obtain, and when we ha -- need support services, when we have problems with our financial aid, when we have problems with reading and writing, because we as Natives -- I, myself, have a hard time with reading and writing -- reading comprehension comes hard to me; and in order to keep my grade point average up, the only way that I can make

it through the system is to organize study groups and to get the free tutors that are available to me.

Another thing that is not focused on is the positive role modeling. You cannot place another minority in front of me and expect me to believe that I can succeed, too. I need to see Natives succeeding. I need to see how upper-level Natives cope with holidays, the lack of our Native food, you know, the different things that affect us emotionally while we are in school, because we are here committed to our education, and we need some support; and this is where we get our support. Now if you integrate Native Students Services with Minority Student Services, our services will be diluted.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Well, do you think if a lot of this here is addressed in the village when the kids are like in -- still in junior high, and if they're taught that at a younger age, and then -- you know, 'cause I went to school in Anvik. I was born and raised there; I graduated; I became the first student to graduate in the village, and, you know, a lot of things that I have done in my life have been very hard, too; but I think, you know, it has to be implicated somehow when they're still young in the village, and somehow if they're given the opportunity to experience it, so that they're not culture shocked, as you said before.

MS. REVAS: What we are experiencing now is a pivotal point in our history. It is now that we are able to look at

what our needs are and articulate them. Those that came before us had a hard time, because they didn't have the support system that we now have. Our elders didn't have this Commission to come testify and say:

"This is what I see is lacking,"

you know. Now, yes, we are able to look at the different portions of our system and say what is wrong, why Western theories do not apply to Native populations in education, in recovery, in everything, you know. Now is the pivotal time; and I can't speak to the village experience, because I'm not from the village. I -- I'm from Ketchikan which is urban, but I still had a hard time. My -- I -- like I said, I'm in my thirteenth semester now. My first three semesters, I was in there at least once a month in some kind of crisis. Now that Native Students Services has grounded me, has helped me to adapt to the educational system, I am a successful student. I am the Chair of the Board of Global Information and Activities, I have achieved leadership roles, because of the positive role modeling that has done -- that has happened there, and because of the support services.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Thank you.

MS. REVAS: Uh-huh (affirmative).

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Marge. Next is Mary Reeve?

(Pause.)

MS. REEVE: My name is Mary Reeve. I'm Yup'ik from Dillingham. I'm also in support of my efforts of my fellow peers, and I want to thank each and every student that has worked hard, not only studying very hard during mid-terms, but taking the time to protest to keep Native Students Services intact. How many hours have we worked as students, working to saving Native Students Services, when this should be put in place by our administration? Our administration is not listening to our needs.

I'll tell you the -- my background for a minute. My major is secondary ed. I went back to school when I was 34 years old. If it wasn't for Native Students Services, I probably would not be in college now. As an older returning student, I felt out of place. You know, I was with a bunch of younger students; and if it wasn't for the support from the counselor -- the one counselor that we had -- and from the Director of Native Students Services, and for the students that worked there as peer advisors, I probably would not be in college now.

I also have -- I started out as a simple -- not a simple, excuse me, but as a small role as a Secretary in the Native Student Club. I became the President of the Native Student Club. Eventually, through the mentoring and the support I got from Native Students Services, I became the first indigenous woman on the Board of Regents. So I -- as a

testimony, Native Students Services has been very, very valuable to me.

In comparison, Native Students Services has been at the University of Alaska -- it has been alive, first with ACC and then UAA, for 16 years. University of Alaska Fairbanks has a very effective working model. This model is World Student Services. They have a whole fifth floor in this building, dedicated to the success of Native students. And it's worked. As you mentioned, you experience it, and it does work. And if anything, if our University of Alaska Anchorage can listen to this and see the effects that this Rural Student Services Center has had in Fairbanks, they should realize how effective it is, and that it will work for UAA students, too.

Another issue, like I said, I -- it was the help of that one counselor that helped me. In my years attending UAA, we have fought; we have fought. And we have successfully hired a Native counselor -- the first ever Native counselor at UAA. And this was through the organized efforts of, not so much our administration, because this is a problem with us is that we have to reach publicly to forums like this. We have to reach out to AFN; we have to reach out -- Elaine Abraham started the Coalition for Native Higher Education. We have to reach out to our Native community, our leaders, our legislators. This is how things happen.

The University of Alaska Anchorage's proposal for the Indigenous Center, the one -- Mr. Barnhardt, you as -- you had a question about that. That has been denied by the University Chancellor that it is -- has to be rewritten, and this is going to take more time.

We feel that if the Native Students Services Offices do stay intact, that this could become the base area for an Indigenous Study Center at the University of Alaska. We could expand. This could be a place where we have, first of all, Native staff on board, where we have Native studies offered at the University, where we have a Native library, where we can have a research center, and a very good role-model institution for upcoming students.

The Board of Regents has made it a priority in their six-year plan that Natives and minority students are retained and are graduating. This not happening. The Board of Regents gives that directive; it goes to administration; and somehow gets lost in administration; and that's why we are here now appealing your support. We feel that maybe it's just lip service.

We have a Task Force on Native Higher Education appointed by the Chancellor, of which I'm a member; and I have other members here in the audience. The proposal that was worked on for so long for the Indigenous Center -- for the first Indigenous Center at the UAA. When the -- the day for

the draft proposal was supposed to be blessed or not blessed by the Chancellor, the Chancellor was not even at this meeting to give us his opinion. He was not even there to give us -- he didn't even give us a memo. So I'm saying that we're working hard towards these efforts. We need your support.

UAA wants to put Native Students Services into a multi-cultural effort; and I don't see -- to me, it's like putting everybody with a certain color of skin all in one room, in one physical space. I don't think that's the answer to multi-culturalism. By putting us in one room -- and everybody's going to have to divvy it up by putting plants and dividers, and wall dividers -- it is not the answer to multi-culturalism. The answer to multi-culturalism is through our curriculum -- through effective curriculum; and that -- I have an idea that for every teacher that graduates from my university, that they're required to take one class, three credits, in Alaska Native Cultures. I believe this should be a requirement for anybody that wants to teach in Alaska. This type of multi-culturalism, I think, is better use for students on our campus and for, ultimately, our communities.

I -- like I said, I plead to you as a Commission to support us in our efforts. I plead to AFN. We did have an AFN member on our Task Force on Native Higher Education. That member has resigned; so I think it's be -- in our best efforts and interests that we get either someone from this Commission

or from AFN once again on the Task Force on Native Higher Education, working with the Chancellor. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Mike, you volunteered (laughing)?

MR. WILLIAMS: My question is you sound like -- do you see feasibility of a tribally-controlled college in Alaska, or, you know, what's your feelings on that?

MS. REEVE: Oh, I love the idea. You know, I've been a student at UAA for so long now, and it's been a constant struggle for our Native -- the success of our Native students; and -- you know, and I like the idea; and if our administration doesn't want to work with us, that's their choice, I guess. Apparently, you know -- and so, yes, tribally-owned-and-operated colleges and other levels of education are wonderful. Yes, I'm -- I support them (laughing).

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Mary.

MS. REEVE: Yes. Thank you.

MR. BARNHARDT: Sam, Sam?

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Ray?

MR. BARNHARDT: I just wanted to commend you and the rest of the student representatives for putting forward, I think, a very well-thought-out and well-documented case. And I think you're quite right that the Rural Student Services Program in Fairbanks has made a big difference for a lot of students. I would just call attention to Jo Ann Tochargme

(ph.) back there, who is currently the Director of Rural Student Services. You might want to spend a little time with her if you get a chance.

MS. REEVE: Thank you.

MS. PERATROVICH: I have a question --

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Nettie?

MS. PERATROVICH: -- for her.

MS. REEVE: Yes?

MS. PERATROVICH: I would like to know, since you are in secondary education and we seem to be having a lot of problems that people have identified all over the state, not only regarding secondary education, but elementary education as well. Do you feel that the University of Alaska is providing you with the type of secondary education to meet some of the challenges that are out there?

MS. REEVE: (Pause.) I --

MS. PERATROVICH: I ask you because I'm a product of the University of Alaska secondary education program, and I went through it probably when you were in grade school. (Laughter.) And I never felt like, you know, history of education and all of these --

MS. REEVE: I agree.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- baloney courses --

MS. REEVE: I agree (laughing).

MS. PERATROVICH: -- had anything at all to do with that kid that was not speaking English and did not know about Dick and Jane, and --

MS. REEVE: That's right.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- did not know street signs, and --

MS. REEVE: Really.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- had never seen a stoplight in his life, nor an escalator.

MS. REEVE: Right.

MS. PERATROVICH: And I would like to know if the University is more concerned about providing for teacher education for Alaska?

MS. REEVE: No, no. I don't think they are. I've heard other people say, and I totally agree, that the curriculum needs to be changed, not only at the elementary, secondary, but also the post-secondary levels. The -- to me, I would rather study Yup'ik, my Native language, than the history of Western civilization. I think studying by knowing -- I don't know my language; but by knowing my language and making that a -- I think that is more important towards my degree when I become a future teacher in the Bush than the history of Western civilization. I think some priorities need to be changed; and education requirements need to be changed.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: The wo --

MS. PERATROVICH: I've often wondered why we have to take American history and the history of civilization for twelve years in elementary and in high school, and then four years in college; but, for some reason or another, we can never squeeze in one single course --

MS. REEVE: That's right.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- regarding the Native people --

MS. REEVE: That's right.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- of Alaska; regarding any of the languages that we spent a great deal of money --

MS. REEVE: That's right.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- developing; and because there are 5,000 students coming into our school system every single year, non-English speaking -- in other words, they are not fluent in English, and they do not have the baggage to carry them through to learn how to read and write English at the same pace that English-speaking student do. So, you know, I'm very curious as to -- you know, we know all of these things, and we've known them now for more than 20 years; and it's amazing to me the University still has not addressed these issues.

MS. REEVE: I agree, and I think with the development, and I think with the implementation of the Indigenous Center that these languages and these culture classes and everything will be available to not only Native students, but other students who are interested in learning

about our cultures. If you compare University of Alaska Anchorage to any university in the Lower 48, we're way below par. We are the indigenous people of Alaska. We don't even have an Indigenous Studies Department at the UAA. That is sad, very said, so. . . (laughing).

MS. PERATROVICH: Okay.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you. We have two more students that will be testifying; then what we'll do is take a -- about a ten -- I'll say a five-minute break and, hopefully, get back in ten minutes. We will hear from Debbie -- and your last name?

MS. BARRIS (ph.): Barris (ph.).

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Harris?

MS. BARRIS (ph.): Barris (ph.).

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Barris (ph.)? Oh, okay, and then Vicky.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: And Susan.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Susan? Okay, we've got three. Then we'll take a little five-minute break after the -- we hear from the students.

MS. BARRIS (ph.): It seems like everybody's addressed pretty much everything, in terms of --

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Can you state your name and --

MS. BARRIS (ph.): Okay.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: -- who you are --

MS. BARRIS (ph.): Sorry.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: -- for the record, and then we can get started.

MS. BARRIS (ph.): My name is Debbie Barris (ph.). I'm from -- I've been living in Alaska for 12 years, although I'm Navaho Indian from Window Rock, Arizona -- from Arizona. And I've been studying at UAA in the bachelor of social work for a long time (laughing). Like Marge said, it takes us a lot longer to get through than some other folks, so -- but I -- what I haven't heard mentioned here is the -- lately in the newspaper, we've been hearing and reading a lot about racism in our state and in our city; and I'd like to address that just a little bit, because I've sat in so many classes for so many years and watched a Native student sit in the back row and never get spoken to for most of the semester. And that really is bad on a person's self-esteem, you know; and being able to go to NSS, and sit in there, and laugh, and have somebody to talk to, and cry to, and feel to, and be accepted by is really, really important to all of us. And I just wanted to make sure that that was heard.

Also, I just -- what -- like Marge was saying is the role modeling and all of the positive things that we do there is really important.

Free tutoring, you know. We -- I'm a tutor now, and I can also get a tutor; and we don't have to pay for it. We

don't have to pay for it; we don't have to look for it. There's somebody right there for us almost all the time. Frank Barry (ph.) I went in -- Barry -- I went into the office the other day and said:

"I need help with logic."

And Glo (ph.) walked right up there, and she asked, you know, the Director of Minority Students things to just -- to help me, and he said: "Okay." So it's very closeknit there; we're very happy there; and we like to be there.

And there's no place else on campus we can get fry bread. (Laughter.) So it's really important.

So, I guess that part of it is just -- is what we need, and like everybody said, the cultural part of it, the support, and the acceptance that we get by going in there. And it's really hard to have to sign in every day; and, you know, you walk in there, and everybody says, like they said:

"Sign in. Did you forget to sign in? Did you sign in?"

Well, shoot, I'm tired of signing in as well.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: It's institutional racism.

MS. BARRIS (ph.): It is. It's institutional racism; and it's been going on -- I've been signing in for six years, and why? And it's not -- it's just not fair. I don't need to justify my existence, like Marge said. I am there, and I'm a

person, and I belong there; and I worked hard to be there; and we worked hard to have these services available to us.

So I hope that -- I think that also that a forum -- by having an Indigenous Center like that gives us a forum in the University, gives us strength. As we -- as a center like that would grow, the strength that we would have will get only stronger, to be able to look at all the other issues.

You know, we're in a little cramped space. The Study Center for quiet studying is set up in little cubicles, and right behind that is couches for visiting; so there is really no quiet place for us to study. We still have to go someplace else to study in order to do that. So a Center like that really needs to be fought for; and I'm willing to fight for that. So I just appreciate being able to be here today to talk about it.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you. Vicky?

(Pause.)

And you'll state your name and --

MS. HIKESTER: Yeah (indiscernible, away from microphone).

REPORTER: I thought it was Susan.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Susan is after her.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: She'll be after Susan -- I mean, Susan's next.

MS. HIKESTER: Hi, my name is Vicky Hikester. I'm Inupiat and -- from Unalakleet; and I am a second-year student at the University of Law -- I mean, Iowa College of Law. They sent me down here recruiting. And I was informed about what was going on at UAA; and, as a former user of NSS -- I like their popcorn (laughter) -- I was very concerned; because it is a place where we can go and talk. We used to meet before logic and talk about what was going on in logic, and did you read the chapter? And if you read the chapter, did you know what you read? And it's a place where we can do it, and people don't feel dumb; whereas, when we sat in class, although there were eight of us who were various type of Alaska Native, no one would say anything -- even me, and I got an A; but I never said a word. I never volunteered to say anything. And most people in there thought I didn't know anything. But I didn't care what they thought; but other people did.

And we need Native Students Services, because it's a place where we can be who we are; where it doesn't matter that not all of us speak English correctly, and our writing skills may not be the best in the world.

I happen to be fortunate that Unalakleet had a really good school system, so I didn't have the problems that a lot of the other students did; but I was able to help other people. They would ask me to proofread their papers and stuff in NSS, and I would do that; and we did that for each other.

And, you know, if I was going to be -- I hated typing. I was always trying to con people into helping me type something up (laughing); and it's a place where we shared and exchanged things that we were good at doing. And we could help each other out.

And I'm really grateful, because it gave me the chance to take logic, so I knew what I was doing when I took the Elstat (ph.) Exam and could go to law school, and I really think it's needed. I'm not as up on what's happening as they are, because I haven't been here; I've been in Iowa.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Where was it, Antioch, or what school?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Iowa.

MS. HIKESTER: University of Iowa.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay.

MS. HIKESTER: And they're recruiting. That's why I'm here.

(Laughter.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: I knew you'd try to plug 'em.

(Laughter.)

MR. WILLIAMS: Do they have a real good tutor program down there, or Indian or Native American group that --

MS. HIKESTER: We have the best federal Indian law professor in the country; and we also have an Indian law professor.

MR. WILLIAMS: Go with her (laughing).

MS. HIKESTER: (Laughing.) He's -- but he teaches indigenous -- I mean, international law. He's Indian; he's from southwest; but he's into international law.

Iowa -- the University of Iowa has an excellent international law program. In fact, one of my professors right now is the former Prime Minister of New Zealand. I'm taking international environmental problems from him; and we're talking about the Bering Sea Donut Hole right now, so it's pertinent. And we've talked about whaling. So there are things that they're doing that are pertinent to people in Alaska.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Vicky. Debbie? I'm sorry, Susan.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: (Laughing.) Going backwards.

MS. HAWK: My name is Susan Hawk, and I'm Inupiat. My mother's from White Mountain. I've never been there. I lived with my grandfather when I was very young, Mark Abliglok (ph.) in Nome, Alaska. When he died, I was moved to Sitka, where I was adopted by a Tlingit family; and from there, I also went to McGrath, where I graduated from high school. And I was hoping Mike Irwin would be in this room, because he spoke at my high school graduation. I graduated from the University of Washington last year -- this past spring in international economics and math. I'm a graduate student now at the

University of Alaska Anchorage. I'm going to transfer to Fairbanks, because they teach Inupiaq, because I don't think they'll teach it at UAA before I'm an old woman.

(Laughter.)

It was really hard for me to trans -- to graduate from McGrath and go to school at the University of Oregon and then the University of Washington. They have Native Student Services there, and I was really homesick, so they're the only ones that helped me get through.

I served as President my senior year last year as the President of the Native American Student Council there. In 1989, the University of Washington closed their American Indian Office -- their American Indian Services Office, and they combined it into the Office of Minority Affairs. This was a real problem for the -- because the admission rates and the graduation rates declined within one year's time. They had the statistics available to them. They saw what happened at the University of Colorado when they did that; and the University of Colorado did that earlier, in 1986; so here it's like a wave -- just like when Columbus came; and this is maybe the five hundredth wave. (Laughter.) And it's happening right here; and our students have voiced their opinion; and the press and the administration both have this issue confused.

And it's a positive thing that we have at Native Students Services. Our numbers are growing, and so should our

office space, and so should our services. And what the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor stated to the press was that we are gaining from this merger; and that is a lie. It's a bold-face lie; and they're doing it not to test us to see how strong we are; they're doing it to make us, not necessarily intentionally weaker, but they're doing it to save money. And as a student of economics, I know a lot of the effects, and I've seen it at the University of Washington. And a lot of economics does deal with people -- labor economics; and as far as students are -- we're the chief labor force for our Native communities; and our -- we won't be employable as our graduation rates go down. So, it all stands to reason that the UW -- you know, the UAA just cannot do this. And this is the only place I really applaud the chance to say this, because we tried at the UAA.

We're going to be labeled as a minority, and all the places I've lived, McGrath and Sitka, we've -- Alaska Natives, even if they're -- because Sitka's kind of a Alaska Native melting pot. There's lots of people there -- Native people; and we're Alaska Natives as a modern culture. We don't every day dress up in our kuspeks (ph.) or our blankets.

You know, we -- we're a modern culture; and we're the majority here in Alaska; and we cannot be labeled a minority. We wouldn't do that to the Germans or Italians in this -- in Alaska. And at the University of Washington, there's -- I

mean, the University of Alaska, they're supposed to value multi-culturalism and not a melting pot.

And the way the administration has dealt with this is that we need the public apology. It's -- it -- we have to demand that, because they've confused the issue; they've lied; they haven't told about the report that they hired a consultant for the course of a year. They are going against the hired consultant's report. And we challenged -- all of the students challenged the administration to hear what we had to stay, and they're out of town, and their remarks are irrelevant to what we need to have done.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Susan. That concludes the testimony from the UAA students, although we may hear about it again at further testimony. I would like to take about a ten-minute -- five-minute break, and then right off we'll have Michael Jennings, Charles Hubbard, Florie Leckenoff, George Guthridge.

(Off record for break.)

(Tape changed to Tape #5.)

(On record.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you. Charles, you may begin.

MR. HUBBARD: Okay, I'm Charles Hubbard. I'm president of the AHTNA Heritage Foundation. I'm with the AHTNA

Region. I apologize for not having anything written. What I'm doing is on the spur of the moment.

One of the things I would like to address is the Anchorage School District. Maybe before I dire -- address that, it's -- I'd like to say it's really hard for me to visualize someone where -- who has never been to their village, can't speak their language, wearing Jordache pants, going through culture shock. When you're educated by a blue-lipped BIA nun, beating on the back of your hand, telling you not speak your language with parents that can't speak English, then you're going through culture shock.

On the language immersion program, I believe that the Anchorage School District is starting another Spanish-language immersion program. I think the address -- the Native languages of the state should be addressed in the Anchorage area. There are approximately 6,000 Native students in the Anchorage area.

The -- I think an educational committee should not just deal with students and education, but it should also deal with employment in education. The Anchorage School District's EEO Ninth Revision came out yesterday at 3 p.m. Under the definitions of ethnic groups, you have: Black Hispanics -- they can just be Black Hispanics; Western Hispanics -- they can be just Western Hispanics; Blacks can be just Black; but under American Indian and Alaska Native, there's an addendum that says:

"Must be involved in cultural and traditions in tribal -- and tribal traditions."

What that says to me that before the Anchorage School District can recognize you under its hiring policies, you can't be just an American Native -- Indian or Alaska Native. You have to be involved. You can't be just a person. And I think that is wrong. We should be recognized just as a people, as a person being a Native.

Another thing bothers me in the Anchorage area is the tutoring. I know that many of our Native students need tutoring; however, they refuse it, because of the stigma that is placed on them because they are being tutored. Any time you're in any group, whether it be Native, Black, White, if you are pulled out of a group and taken over here and tutored, and then brought back into that group, the stigma of ignorance is yours; and it's your peers that will give it to you. And I think that policy should be looked at.

My wife, who's quite involved with the Anchorage Council of PTAs, wanted me to pass along a resolution, which deals with the safety of students. And this is something she believes can be addressed statewide. Right now, student accountability is mainly addressed on the day that the Foundation Formula which deals with funding of schools. Only two times per school year is the administration really

concerned with any student's attendance; because on those two days, the more students you have, the more money you get.

And this is just a draft resolution; and maybe I could give that to you. I apologize for that also, but -- and those are the only two issues -- two or three issues that I wanted to talk about.

(DRAFT RESOLUTION FROM DEE HUBBARD ATTACHED AS EXHIBIT #7.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Charles, and we'll include that resolution in the record.

MR. HUBBARD: That resolution is just a draft. My wife's name is at the top, and I have your fax and addresses.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, thanks. Now, Michael Jennings.

MS. PERATROVICH: May I ask him a question?

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Sure, I'm sorry. Charles, if you don't mind being asked a question by Nettie, I'm sorry.

MS. PERATROVICH: I'm very concerned about what you said regarding the tutorial services for Native students, and the stigma because they are pulled out of the classroom. Do Native students' parents know that they are eligible for 37½ hours of certified teaching per week; and that if those tutors are not certified, that they are being deprived of an equal education?

MR. HUBBARD: I don't think they do. One of the things that -- one of the vehicles that probably could be used

is the Anchorage PTA Council; and I believe that if you as an organization would be involved in the Anchorage PTA Council, maybe you could request a seat on the Council. But it seems like I come to AFN year after year, and I hear testimony; but I never hear the results. This Commission is working on education -- this Commission. I never hear results say:

"Okay, last year this problem, this problem, this problem was addressed by the Commission."

You know, but involvement on the seats of those organizations that are in place now, Minority Education Concerns Committee of the Anchorage School Board, I think if we became more involved in those areas, then it would also give a voice.

MS. PERATROVICH: What do you think about starting a Native school for Native students?

MR. HUBBARD: If you start a Native school for Native students, one of its top priority must be assimilate those Natives that attend that school into the Western civilization. And I say assimilate. I don't say segregate 'em out and say:

"You are Native, and blah, blah, blah."

I believe that is what's wrong with our young people now. You must achieve your distinction as a person. I went through this, and I did it -- I kind of did it the hard way. I got up every morning, and when I looked in the mirror, I told myself:

"You're an Indian; you're the best."

And so I went out and got aggressive. I was not raised to be aggressive, but I learned to be; and I think I can successfully flop back and forth from the Western society back into the Indian society and vice versa.

MS. PERATROVICH: Do you know the name of the accountability? The twice a year when they want to make sure that they count all of the Native students? Do you know what that's called?

MR. HUBBARD: It's funding of the schools, and it's --

MS. PERATROVICH: It's Public Law --

MR. HUBBARD: It's the Foundation Formula.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- 874. The --

MR. HUBBARD: It has to deal with the Foundation Formula.

MS. PERATROVICH: The Foundation formula that gives the school district several thousand dollars for each Native student that they count on those days, the beginning of the school year; and I don't know whether it's the middle or toward the end now. And they determine what their percentage of P.L. 874 monies --

MR. HUBBARD: Uh-huh (affirmative).

MS. PERATROVICH: -- are, because Alaska Natives are non-taxed. And it also applies for military students as well.

But Alaska Natives have always brought in the most bucks to the school district.

MR. HUBBARD: But accountability in schools, I think, should be for all children. If your child is not going to school, and -- then you should know about it. You shouldn't read about it on a report card, or you shouldn't find out about it two days later. You should know immediately, so -- and it's not just for Native kids, it's for anybody's kids. If your child is not where it's supposed to be -- where they're supposed to be, then the organization should take some kind of steps -- the educational organization should take some kind of steps to notify the parents that that child is not there.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Charles.

MS. PERATROVICH: Thank you.

MR. HUBBARD: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Michael Jennings, fourth time.

MR. JENNINGS: My name is Michael Jennings. I've been a dic -- a guest of the Doyon Region for the last 22 years. I'm originally from Wind River in Wyoming. I'm currently concluding a Ph.D. program through the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, which focuses on the relationship of the University of Alaska to the Native peoples of the state of Alaska.

And I guess I'm also the author of the infamous report that you've heard so much about from the UAA students,

so I'd like to reinforce the points that were raised by the students.

I think they did an eloquent job in terms of arguing for the existence of their space, the creation of curriculum and faculty positions for Native peoples at the University.

And I guess I'm somewhat embarrassed to be sitting here 20 years later, because I was at AFN in 1972, and we were making these same arguments to a slightly different audience. Some people were here.

And I look at the University, and it hasn't changed. It has five percent minority hire; basically no Native faculty, and relatively -- well, not relatively, it has no culturally-sensitive curriculum at all. And we subject another generation of children to these issues.

I assume there's a board that you're charged with thi -- with looking at issues of policies that relates to education; and I guess I would ask that you bear in mind in your deliberations that when you look at elementary and secondary education, that the people who are responsible for training and certifying those people are, in fact, the sacred cow of the University; and that, while we have numerous schools, that it may be better use of our times and energies to focus on the institutions in Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks.

There must -- and I don't have any magic, I guess. I mean, in part, it's our fault; we've let them do these things and get away with it. We've sat quietly. As Sam Kito said a year ago at this meeting, we put $36 million into the University's base budget between 1972 and 1980. I would be hard pressed to find three million of it now.

Well, I'm embarrassed that we have to sit before this panel and beg for what is rightfully the people's -- the people's right in this land. It's a land-grant institution; and it's a humiliating process; and it's the responsibility of the Native leadership and the youth to remind the Native leadership that if they want replacements to run the corporations, if they want people in policy positions in the White bureaucracies who have some understanding of the Native world view, that they should attend to these institutions and try and sensitize them a bit, before we lose another generation.

And I suppose that's all I have to say. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Michael.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: I have a few questions for you. During your testimony -- why hasn't, you know, the system changed since 1972? You said you were at the AFN 20 years ago, and why do you think it hasn't changed? And who do you think should be held responsible? And you kept replying to them. Who do you mean by them?

MR. JENNINGS: Well, I guess, to understand that, you need to look at the history of higher education. The universities are a Western culture; and they're grounded in European tradition. The logic systems come from the Judeo-Christian System. Their languages are German and French, not Inupiaq or Yup'ik. People -- even the best-intentioned people write from that world view, from that understanding of reality, which is not necessarily the understanding that Native people bring to the classroom.

As far as who's to blame, we're all to blame. The University is to blame for failing to address the issues that have been brought before it numerous times. AFN did a report in '72. They commissioned a report in '74. The last one that was commissioned was 1985, just before the restructuring. This has been an ongoing process. They have never implemented the requests. And we have failed, because we have failed to push those requests to completion; so, in part, it is our responsibility as well as theirs.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: There's a lot of organizations, nonprofit, etcetera, that are set up to help deal with this type of problems. Do you think they were not delivering the right information and getting, you know, what you're talking now to 20 years ago, during that 20 period -- 20-year period?

MR. JENNINGS: I don't think there has been a concerted effort to address Native higher education, since

Elaine Abrahams was hired as the first Vice-President for Rural Education in 1974. I don't think that the leadership has come together and made it a priority.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Do you think if some of the organizations, or some of the leaders played a bigger role in maybe helped implicating some of these issues, that --

MR. JENNINGS: I guess the bottom --

COMMISSIONER MASEK: -- probably --

MR. JENNINGS: -- line is that I believe that the ultimate stateme -- that budget's the ultimate statement of policy. And I don't think the University understands how much money comes into its system because of Native students -- educational foundation moneys from the corporations, BIA money, and federal-impact money. I don't think they can tell you how much money comes into their systems; I don't think they -- I don't know that they really want to look at those kinds of issues. But I think that if you could get the people to come together, that you could probably bring some pressure to bear on them.

MS. PERATROVICH: I have a question for him. I find it interesting that Same Kito that sat on the Board of Regents for many years had such a cogent remark to make; since he, of course, you know, pretty much ran the budget.

Do you think that with all the federal monies that is -- that are going into the University of Alaska -- you know,

the reason why we got a Native Studies Office going at the University of Alaska -- and when we first got it going, it was right out of a woman's office who gave out loans to students -- was because we stopped them from taking all the BIA checks when they were kicking students out left and right. And they found out that when the student left and the check went back to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, they were having all these shortfalls. Of course, those were the days when the University of Alaska didn't have a lot of money.

The interesting thing is I'll bet you anything there is somebody at the University of Alaska who knows exactly how much money --

MR. JENNINGS: Well, I was being somewhat --

MS. PERATROVICH: -- we bring into the University, and --

MR. JENNINGS: -- facetious.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- if need be, then they should be reminded about all the oil money from the North Slope that they're living off of. I mean, anybody in a Ph.D. program should be able to point that out to them.

But what I would like to know is what do you see on the horizon for us, at least getting a history of Alaska? Do you know that out of 50 states in the Union, we are the only state without a state history? Do you know that our kids can

go all the way through school without even learning about Alaska Natives.

And you know, you can go out to a military school and ask those kids in the third and fourth grade to write about where they came from or where they were born, and they can write you pages? And you can go out to a rural village, and they can't tell you what the main revenue is for the state; they can't tell you how many Native people there are in the state; they can't tell you about our Alaska Legislature, because we don't have a history for our state. We are the only state out of 50, and we're the wealthiest.

And you know why? Because I'm sure they want to keep us the best-kept secret in the nation. But do you see anything on the horizon that could change the University of Alaska? They are a land-grant college.

MR. JENNINGS: Well, I think that you have pointed out some things. I think that there is -- there has always been the ability of the Legislature to intervene in the University. There is the ability of the regional corporations to deny -- or to discourage the enrollment of their students. There is the possibility that has come earlier about the creation of a tribal college. There are other avenues, mechanisms.

We can -- trying to be positive and working together with the University, if the new System President was so

inclined, they could once again address the needs of Native people on a statewide level. Because it isn't a UAA issue; it is a statewide issue. This just happens to have the largest enrollment at UAA. I don't see them being proactive.

From '85, I see them restructuring and restructuring; and the cost of that restructuring is in rural services -- it's in the rural colleges that were established by the Bush caucus in Bethel, and Kotzebue, and Nome; rural delivery systems that are being manipulated and budgets being used to fund other things.

But it's not until you have people in policy positions who can fight for -- and presidents who are willing to sit down and listen to the people that you're going to have any real change in the system.

And it's not just that level. It's a bureaucracy. You have people who have been there 10 and 15 years, and they're ingrained in the way they do business; and they think if we stall this long enough, it'll go away. We can placate them for a few months; and then they'll be preoccupied by land claims, or subsistence, or some other life-threatening issue, so that it diverts our interest from this issue.

(Pause.)

I'm not real optimistic myself, so. . .

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Michael.

MR. JENNINGS: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Florie Leckenoff, Sr.

(Pause.)

Last week we had a discussion about the last senior, and we were actually discussing the word -- why Junior? My brother's thinking about dropping his name from Clarence Towarak, Jr., to just Clarence Towarak (laughing). Very rarely do I still see (laughing) somebody say Senior. (Laughing.) That must mean that there is a Florie Leckenoff, Jr.?

MR. LECKENOFF: There is a Florie Leckenoff, II.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Oh, okay. (Laughing.)

MR. LECKENOFF: I had to call myself something besides that.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Okay, okay (laughing).

MR. LECKENOFF: Well, Mr. Towarak, Ms. Masek, and I know Nettie doesn't have a name in front of her, but I know here, I'm glad she's here --

MS. PERATROVICH: So does he.

MR. LECKENOFF: -- the rest of you. I won't take too much of your time. I just wanted to let you know that I'm a product of a village school system, St. George Island out in the Pribilofs, up to the point of the Second World War; then I went on boarding school at Wrangell Institute. Didn't finish there. I got sick with tuberculosis and was sent down to Tacoma, where I took some correspondence courses and eventually graduated from Lincoln High School in Tacoma, Washington; and

on to Whitworth College in Spokane, fortunately; and then on to University of Washington to get my Master's Degree in education; and then I have spent over a year now at the University of Alaska in Anchorage, taking courses -- I'm still taking courses there.

With that background, I would like to make a strong suggestion to the task force here, on behalf of the students at the University of Alaska in Anchorage. Time is of the essence. A decision is going to be made by the administration out there pretty quick, maybe even tomorrow. I think there ought to be a statement sent to the Board of Regents, or the President out there, with the signature of the Aleut -- Alaska Federation of Natives, asking them to cease and decease on their Umbrella Plan for Bilingual Education on the campus, until the Commission has completed its study on Native education in Alaska. That's my recommendation personally.

I don't think you're going to get much of an action in a hurry besides doing that; but it -- with the signature of the AFN, and with the great big convention going on here in Anchorage, I think it will make an impact for our Native students.

(Applause.)

That's action.

UNIDENTIFIED VOICE: That is.

MR. LECKENOFF: Now that's one of our themes, you know: A Call for Action. And that's exactly what this is.

My second one is on survival. Now how can education contribute to our survival? I think it can. And it's about time that we took action again in a futuristic plan here. Fifty, sixty years ago, high school education was equivalent, compared to today, to a college education. For instance, I was the first one to graduate from high school from my village. That's saying a lot, just to graduate from high school -- first one from my village, at that time, about 225 people. I was the first one to graduate from college with a Baccalaureate Degree. Not to say too much about that, I was the first also to get my Master's Degree from the village.

But, you know, today you have to have college education in order to survive in this world -- in the business world, and in the society in which we are caught. To further that cause of getting our Native people to pursue higher education, I recommend that this task force look into the possibility -- serious -- seriously look into the possibility of recommending to the feds and to the state to which the Commission will recommend, that there be studied very seriously the possibility of a Native college or university in Alaska.

Let me tell you why I believe this way. The -- certainly, the Afro-Americans have shown us that they can do it; and recently the Native Americans in the Lower 48 have

shown us that they can do it. In fact, the -- 14 of the colleges that are in existence, according to the newspaper a few days ago, are in the reservations of South Dakota and Montana. And the students there are doing very well. And there is also a university in the state of Washington run by the Indian people in the Puget Sound country.

And I think we ought to look at those, and then take those ideas up here and look in -- seriously into the possibility of an existence and a room and a funding for a Native-run college and/or university. If Alaska Methodist University, which was started by an Aleut years ago, can start out, I think the Native people in Alaska can start their own university.

Now, the reason I think this way is I have read recently that only nine percent of our Native American population graduate from institutions of higher learning, as opposed to 20 percent of all others who succeed at getting their young people through higher education at 20 percent. Now that's more than 50 percent less for us.

I think if we succeeded in producing Native leadership from Sheldon Jackson School, which was a boarding school, and from Mt. Edgecumbe School, which was a boarding school; and other private high schools in Alaska, which no longer exist, then our leaders of our Native people today, I

think we ought to look at the possibility of starting a university.

Because back then, high school education was good. I mean, you know, you could get a lot of things done with that kind of education then. But today it requires a college education to compete in our society, as we know, today.

If we do that, two things can happen. One, we can compete academically with everybody else, with our own university. Plus, we can put a lot of emphasis in our own indigenous cultures in Alaska in the school curriculum, in the courses that are taught, and our languages, the whole history that we're worried about. That's survival. To me, that spells survival. And let me say it, and I can't think of any stronger words in which to put it, let's seriously look at establishing a Native college or university in Alaska, so that our cultures will survive. We need it.

And without having to spend too much time, I'll stop there. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thanks. I might mention to you, in our draft statement, that we did have a Native operation of a tribally-controlled college; and that would be something close to what that would be, I guess, in -- is that what you're --

MR. LECKENOFF: Yeah, I'm putting a lot of emphasis on higher education; but I'm also a believer in industrial arts

and vocational education; because, you know, if you look at nine percent, how about the other 91 percent of our people? They need to be given livelihood in life also; and we ought to look at that seriously as well.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: And to the UAA students, we had, during the break, discussed some sort of an action like he was discussing. So, it -- we are talking about it. But he says it's time for a call to action. Yeah.

MS. PERATROVICH: And I would like to suggest that he -- because I know how well Florie can do this -- that he write up a resolution, or whatever; and that we'll vote on it. And, Florie, I want to know, is this the $20 million of bilingual money that Senator Murkowski promised Alaska last year, that went to the University of Alaska? I thought it was supposed to go out to rural Alaska.

MR. LECKENOFF: Well, there's two million. It's -- the money isn't available yet.

MS. PERATROVICH: Two million? I --

MR. LECKENOFF: Yeah.

MS. PERATROVICH: -- thought it was 20.

MR. LECKENOFF: No, it's $2 million.

MS. PERATROVICH: Two million?

MR. LECKENOFF: Yeah, for all the ethnic groups in Alaska that are indigenous to Alaska to preserve the languages and the culture. No, there's only two million in it, so when

you're looking at a discussion on it, previously they're looking at 20 different languages, perhaps. You're only talking about a hundred thousand towards each of the distinct la -- dialects or languages.

MS. MORRISON: Florie, that's for all tribes.

MR. LECKENOFF: That's for all tribes.

MS. MORRISON: All 50 (indiscernible -- speaking simultaneously) --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All 50 --

MS. MORRISON: -- states.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- states.

MR. LECKENOFF: No, no, no. This is Murkowski's bill. Excuse me.

MS. MORRISON: Murkowski --

MR. LECKENOFF: Murkowski's bill is only strictly for Alaska. There is another bill that was introduced by Inouye and joined by other senators, such as Murkowski and Stevens, that speaks to a program across the Lower 48 and Alaska as well. But it's a separate bill.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Florie. Next to testify --

MR. BARNHARDT: Sam? Sam?

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Yeah?

MR. BARNHARDT: Just for a point of information, and this may or may not be adequate for what you're suggesting, but

at the education workshops yesterday and day before, there were at least two resolutions on the UAA situation, and one on tribal colleges, that went forward to AFN; and you might want to take a look at those and see if they address the issue at a level that you are calling for.

MR. LECKENOFF: Yeah, the resolutions are supposedly being passed out, so --

MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, right --

MR. LECKENOFF: -- I'll go up and check that out.

MR. WILLIAMS: -- I got 'em right here.

MR. LECKENOFF: You have them there? Is it --

MR. WILLIAMS: The -- it's in there.

MR. LECKENOFF: -- it's in there?

MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah.

MR. LECKENOFF: Well, I'm glad it's in there. I think we'll certainly act favorably on those resolutions. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, Florie.

COMMISSIONER MASEK: Thank you.

(WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MARY SHAWBACK ATTACHED AS EXHIBIT #8)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: George Guthridge?

(Pause.)

Again, now I'm going to apologize for not making the 5 o'clock deadline; but we are going to be cut off at 5:00. We are having a Commission -- full Commission meeting at 5:30

in the Dillingham Room of the Anchorage Hilton, that'll run 'til 9 o'clock tonight. George?

MR. GUTHRIDGE: I really had no intention of being here. I was here as an observer; but in the last couple of days, a number of people have asked me if I would speak in front of this group.

(TESTIMONY OF GEORGE GUTHRIDGE ATTACHED AS EXHIBIT #9)

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Questions?

(Pause.)

Next to testify is Chuck Degnan.

(Pause.)

MR. DEGNAN: Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you. My name is Chuck Degnan, from Unalakleet, Alaska. My father's Frank Degnan, and our family's been very active at all levels of government all of my life. I served in the Alaska Legislature for two terms, and we addressed many of the same educational issues that are being discussed today.

There had been some progress in the attempts to involve Natives and hire Natives to do jobs that are in the villages. One of the most insulting things to an Alaska Native is to be told that they are not qualified when they actually are. The -- there are very many Natives that are fully qualified to teach and do other jobs that are -- they are not hired to do. And it's because somebody knows them. That means

even though they are qualified, they're not qualified good enough to satisfy the door keepers that are in the organization; and they know who they are; they know how to satisfy affirmative action requirements; they know how to avoid discrimination charges; and they sanction discrimination against Alaska Natives so badly that discrimination has become institutionalized, and it's accepted by the senior public officials in the state of Alaska.

The power is taken away from the people, by what I call the administrative procedure in the state of Alaska. And we are an administrative procedures state. You are given an opportunity to compete for positions on a worldwide basis. That means, for a school district, they'll advertise nationwide and worldwide to get you the very best teacher in your local community that money can buy. And they're always finding somebody who is marginally better qualified than the person living in that community.

The other thing that they use against Alaska Natives in the villages is a law called nepotism. It was used on me. Apparently, I've got too many relatives in my own hometown; so, therefore, I can't be a teacher in my own hometown. And it's done deliberately, and it's done with malice, and with enthusiasm. Now, I can say that because I've experienced it. I'm telling you about it so you can do something about it.

We all have the opportunity to do something about it at every level. But the end result is Alaska Natives that are very well educated aren't hired; they're deprived of an opportunity to be role models in their own community. The children seen that, and they wonder why should they go to college.

I've listened to what the University of Alaska students have been saying. I did not send my children back to the University of Alaska where I graduated from. I graduated from the University of Alaska in Fairbanks in 1966. I've known about discrimination all my life. It makes you feel bad; it -- but the way I approach it is that we have to do something about it positively; we need to correct people that are hateful and vicious and to change their behavior.

I'm not telling you anything new. We live in the human race. I'm proud of my family; I'm proud of my accomplishments; I have high self-esteem of my family, my community, and I've done my public service duties as a citizen. I've done -- I'm a veteran; I've served in the United States Army as a Military Police supervisor.

So I'm telling you these things, because it's really bad to be doing this to adults, children, students, mothers, fathers, uncles, and for it to be ignored by the United States government, the state of Alaska, I think is such a tough thing that we need to do a new approach for hiring Alaska Natives to

teach in school, to do -- the normal affirmative action is not working, so I would suggest that whenever a school district, or a state agency, or a federal agency hires an Alaska Native from the state of Alaska -- I'm just talk -- talking only about Alaska Natives; I'm not talking about any other human race category.

If you look at our history, everybody has in-migrated to Alaska and have taken advantage of people that have historically lived here, under the guise of freedom, under the guise of religion. And both the federal and state government are always talking about local freedoms. We value freedoms; but if you prohibit your original owner group from being gainfully employed in the system that the United States government has designed, and the state of Alaska has designed, then there must be a special category to address that particular problem.

Now, we take the issue of subsistence. It's just an indicator of trouble; and it's an indicator that when you're messing with somebody's bread basket and food on the table, you're messing with their life. You take subsistence away from cultures that have traditionally and customarily practiced their lifestyles, you're getting to be worse than -- oh, what's that group of people that we were fighting for so long -- to Soviet Union that we heard all through our life that they were no good, because they did something differently than we did.

Now -- so, what I would recommend is that -- give your state agencies -- challenge all the state agencies. If a federal government does a good job for hiring an Alaska Native in Alaska, have the state pay the federal government an extra 10,000 bucks for doing a good deed. I think everybody understands that nowadays -- what's the expression? -- money talks and the other thing walks.

(Laughter.)

I know I've left some things out that are important and related to education. You must understand that there are very many well-educated Alaska Natives, and there are very many of 'em that are maybe technically disqualified by not renewing their original teaching certificate, because they would never be hired anyway. That can be corrected from the University of Alaska very easily, and there are many other Alaska Natives that have higher-education degrees that would tutor the lapsed certificate per -- the person that owns the lapsed certificate to get them qualified. And it's -- and it should be easy to do for the -- our university within our own state of Alaska.

Thank you for the opportunity of talking to you.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: James Sebring.

(Pause.)

MR. SEBRING: My heart is (indiscernible) pounding, and what I did was -- Mr. Chairman, and distinguished guests,

I'm James Sebring from Tutka Bay, and I came on my own; and I had to comb every pennies that I had in order to pay for my fare; and just to try and address what concerns me the most. Not only the people that I am from, but the hoping to speak for my fellow Alaska Natives.

And my biggest concern is the education; and I have worked for the schools for the past 22 years; and I finally get to the point where I am very concerned about young people's education. First seven years, I worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which were the elementary; and past 17 years, I work for the Lower Kuskokwim School District in high school level, where these young peoples are preparing for the adult life and higher education.

As parents, leaders, and elders, we must get deeply involved within our children's education, both at the elementary and the high school level. We must get involved in villages' educational system, visiting our schools, and participating in programs of the schools, to insure that they are given the good education.

By our involvements, the students will begin to understand why the education is very important. Be a counselor for higher education, encourage high school graduates to go higher education, colleges, so that they may be able to take care of themself and be able to face the challenges of tomorrow worth of living.

And we must help our children and be very involved in their education. And one of the things I also have in mind is because it's part of the education, too, is the job that will open education for our young people that are graduated from high school; and here they have no future and -- I mean, they don't know where to go, and here they stay out in the villages without jobs, because they are not qualified for -- they don't have the qualifications.

Job development education. While there is still money available for job training, job development training, tomorrow there may be no money available, because the revenues are declining. Work to get our young people to get involved in job development programs, which are offered by Alaska Vocational Training Center, which is located in Seward, Kotzebue Training Center, and apprenticeship career program. This is just to name a few. So that our young people may have the required qualifications for the jobs.

In our rural areas, we just cannot ignore the jobless people of our young people. We must help them and encourage them to apply for the training to meet the challenges of tomorrow, that they will be able to participate in the industries.

And one of the things that I have voluntarily work is to try and get these young people to go to the job training; and I get a chance to get some of our young people to go to the

job training and get certificated for the job training. And we must also help those people -- our young people to get involved within job training for the qualification purposes, because without a piece of paper today, we cannot be a laborer or work for a construction firm, because we don't have a piece of paper showing that we can cut the board with a skilsaw, or piece of paper showing that we can dr -- pound a nail through the wall all the way with a hammer; or have a piece of paper that we can put the wires together and make the lights work; or have a piece of paper that we can do the flooring, or ceiling, or painting, or put up a building, those things.

And one of the things that I am also concerned about is the local development -- local economic developments. We just study our resources that we have. We must start looking at what we can develop to make the local revenues for the good of our people's revenue. Example: processing of fish to generate income to our people in our villages, so that we may be able to leave some inheritance when we are gone, because we the people, parents, leaders, and elders are not planted here on earth to live forever. We must start planning the local economic developments; start studying our local resources that can bring economic and revenue to our communities, jobs to -- jobs for our communities. Things that can bring income to our people. If we really care about the future of our children and their children, we must -- we should be working our heads off,

planning the long-term plannings in a very careful studies, because the carelessness in a long-term planning can bring a disaster for the future.

And I usually -- one of the things of St. Mary's -- when I went to school in St. Mary's back in 1957, St. Mary's was a -- just like a small village; and it only had one school -- boarding school, and maybe about 15 houses, and there was one store. And I attended the school there for three years; and then I went home.

Thirty years later I went back to St. Mary's, and I couldn't believe what I see. There was a big airport, big terminus, restaurants, hotels, roads, sand pits, everything. And I couldn't imagine what I see, because these changes could happen and they could be big; and it -- maybe they could also hurt our cultural and traditional way of life. And, therefore, the careful study -- when we're planning -- when we do plan, careful study is very important, so that we make the wise decisions for the future of our young people, their children, and their children, so that they may have a better living in their future.

Today, we the people of Nelson Island are puzzled, because our own -- because of our own people coming and informing us of the super powers they have. We seem to get to the point where we stand not knowing what to do. A planning for the better living rests upon us all, for we the Native of

Alaska must not expect AFN to solve all our problems. We have major problem, that should be addressed at the AFN conferences. Example: ANCSA 1971 to December 1992 which is 20 years, which have been extended to 18 months that has a deadline of June 1993. Are we all planning for the takeover? Is the future protected? Do we know what we are going to do? Does each of us, our shareholders, given instructions of their responsibilities, and so on? Planning and studying for a better living and education. Our professionalism as Native people is very important.

These are the -- where I come from, I -- we have a -- federal and state government gave us the pro -- fish processing plant and big walk-in freezer way bigger than this building; and we have people with the limited-entry permits out there; and our resources are right next door. And those are the things that I keep asking the people of Nelson Island to start looking into, because if we ever make it happen and make it work, it would create jobs to the local people, and for the people that might be interested in working.

And back in 1970 when I went to Saskatchewan Cooperative College through CDC, we had an offer there of herring roe from Japan that they would also -- they give me an example of the sample of the herring roes which were already processed, and asked me to take them to Nelson Island and show them to the United Villages meetings. And, at that time, I

showed them, but the people there didn't know what I was talking about; and Japan also told us that if we ever go -- decide to go into the processing business, they would send us their technical assistance, and they would also be in the market for it. And it was a very good price at that time. And I guess today it's -- they are still open.

And the last thing is -- which also concerns me very much is the education of our cultural and traditional way of life and language. We, the young parents, leaders, and elders, are professional educators, and our elders are also declining. We must educate our children how to be Native on the roles and laws of our traditional and cultural ways, so that they will know what is right from wrong. We must preserve our language and tradition, and cultural way of life. We must not let it die.

To my understanding, the Native language is gone in some villages. If we are to be the Native people today, we must look back to our past history and look at what we -- what has already happened.

We the people are changing, following today's changing modern world of living and technologies of today's world. If we look back 20 to 30 years of history, we can easily see the tremendous changes. Look ahead to 20 to 30 years, and look at the children and what are -- that are

heading -- these little children that are heading to the pre-schools, they will be adults in those years. Then what?

If we are to be calling ourselves Natives, our childrens must be well-informed and well-educated, both in White man's way and in that -- and in the Native way. We must insure that they are left with good food preparation, for we are not planted here on earth to live forever. So that they will be able to take care of themselves when we are gone, for they are the future of this world.

If we can only listen to the hearts and souls of our children, as well as adults, addressing their needs to help -- for help, I bet we would be working full blast.

And lastly, we cannot expect the school to keep our culture alive. They teach courses; culture is a way of life. It needs to be practiced and thought as a way of life outside of the school by the parents and elders. It must be practiced. If we lose our language, we will lose our culture. It is not impossible or difficult for young people to learn English, which is necessary for economic and social reason, and Yup'ik, which is our language and keeps our culture alive. Parents must speak their Native language to their children of our people. And that's the end of it, and I thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Thank you, James.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER MASEK: I'd like to say I really appreciate you coming here and telling us; your testimony was really helpful. It bring a lot of positive ideas, and thank you for coming all the way from Hooper Bay here. It's really great of you.

MR. SEBRING: Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER TOWARAK: Yeah, I had thought about cutting him off at the seven-minute hour (laughing), but I think he was a good one to conclude our testimony today. We will be meeting again at 5:30 at the Hilton Dillingham Room; and then we can hear the nine others that are signed up here there.

MR. WILLIAMS: Anyway, who said Native people weren't talkative?

(Laughter.)

(Off record at 5:05 p.m.)

END OF PROCEEDINGS

C E R T I F I C A T E

STATE OF ALASKA)

) ss.

I, _____ court reporter for the Third Judicial District, State of Alaska, hereby certify:

That the foregoing pages numbered 1 through 86 contain a full, true and correct transcript of proceedings of Alaska Natives Commission hearing of October 15, 1992, transcribed by me to the best of my knowledge and ability from tape identified as follows: Tape Nos. 4 and 5.

DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 4th day of November, 1992.

SIGNED AND CERTIFIED TO BY:

_____

Court Reporter

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