

BIA in Alaska Still Controls Self-Determination Policy

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A long debated resolution asking the removal of BIA Area Director, Clarence Antioquia, unanimously passed the AFN Human Resources Committee last week.

The resolution, originally brought up for consideration by the Committee in January, will be forwarded to Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus along with a letter from the Human Resources Committee.

Commenting on the action taken by the Committee Chairman Cliff Black said, "Public Law 93-638 (the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act) was conceived and written into legislation to allow us more opportunity to par-

ticipate in the development of programs for our people and to afford us our right to self direction."

"The Area Director has interpreted the regulations in a manner that allows him to maintain unrestricted control. Many hours

of taped testimony and reams of written reports, reflect the frustration and the adversity felt by those attempting to deliver programs and services to their constituents. All denounce the lack of sensitivity shown by the

(Continued on page 8)

BIA Still Controls . . .

(Continued from page 1)

Area Office," Black continued.

Black went on to say although the resolution was presented before the Committee in January, it was tabled to allow the Area Director time to respond to the request for action and cooperation.

"No meaningful response was forthcoming and no change in direction was indicated or made," Black said.

"We felt that we had to give the Area Director time reassess the Bureau's position regarding self-determination for our people. There was no reversal of philosophy, or alteration of attitude, so the resolution was our only available action," he said.

The resolution was brought up again for action at the July 27 meeting of the Committee and passed unanimously with eight of the regional non-profit associations present.

Many hours of deliberations went into this decision; it was not arrived at easily or quickly," said Black.

According to Black, the action taken by the Human Resources Committee in no way represents a personal attack on Antioquia.

"It is an action taken to change the philosophy and direction of the BIA in Alaska," Black said.

The Committee found there were irreconcilable philosophical differences between Alaska Natives and the Area Director. We

hope our action will be a first step toward future cooperation between our agencies.

"The Bureau of Indian Affairs was established to provide services to and advocate behalf of our people. We should not have to take action against them to protect themselves."