

Political extremes in the community

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Many communities have undergone severe changes, impacted by the explosion of political and western influences. From simple methods of natural dependence, to sophisticated arts of technology and social management. Some which have served for the better, while others destroy the fabric of the rural household.

In this trying environment to identify ourselves, we search to leave intact the desperate wish to hold cultural and traditional values. While others create for us incompatible compromises to convey political and sociological indifference without consideration of consequences to the fragility of the rural community.

The 26th annual convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives addressed the need for self-determina-

tion and interdependence, and resolve the overall negative impact our Native communities face. AFN's theme "Alaska Native Survival - A Call for Action" and distinguished speakers described it well.

In the interest of local discussion, we have seen two distinct philosophical sides on self-determination in my small community. One wishes to create a harmonious self-approach to better our infrastructure and socioeconomic status. The other wishes to create an extremist approach to do away with anyone dealing with state and federal governments at the community and regional levels, while hoping to provide public and economic opportunities.

One of these approaches has come close to the heart of some Elders in my community, and confuses everyone the most. This extremist approach has been

expressed well by one party upon our Elders. One who wishes to make reality the "Compact of Free Association", and informing our Elders of "political genocide" by the federal and state governments. Some Elders have fallen victim to this advice, and using the Elders to convince the young and Elders alike. This "Compact of Free Association" is not related to the Yupiit Nation and regional tribal movements in the Yukon-Kuskokwim (Y-K) Delta. It is perceived as disappointing by the Yupiit Nation and regional tribal leaders.

Everyone in the Native community is already uncomfortable with the way the state and federal governments have dealt with issues that affect us. The situation is being addressed in the best manner possible, by regional and/or groups involved in resolving the governmental relationship,

without the extremist avenue that these "compactors: purport to be the answer.

This "Compact of Free Association" has been interpreted as the means to fall free from the grips of the federal and state interests in a small fraction of the Bush in Y-K Delta. It has misconstrued the facts and the full intent of the Elder's wish for self-determination. Our ancestor's history; our lifestyle; land; subsistence; cultural and traditional values have been used as fear tactics by proponents of this "Compact of Free Association."

Since the inception to adopt the philosophy of the "Compact of Free Association", communities choosing to consider this as means to dismantle corporate, municipal and/or IRA governments and reorganize under non-chartered, unincorporated forms of govern-

ment have only experienced costly divisions.

Everyone supports tribal sovereignty in one way or another, but not at the extremity communities have to pay. In our community, a total loss of services or diminished public services have been the cost and outcome of the politics of the "Compact of Free Association". Negative impacts to public safety, social, health, economic and traditional values have only led to the deterioration of the spiritual well-being and moral aesthetics of our Native community.

Native communities who have chosen this extremist alternative experience social unrest, disrespect, civil disobedience and an overall breakdown of community values. Some suspect this philosophy to adopt the "Compact of Free

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Association" may have been purposely injected to divide the Native communities who took that avenue.

One village from the Y-K Delta recently reported, they finally took hold of the "Compact of Free Association" by the horns, voted on it, and laid it to rest once and for all. Only one disciple wanted the reported to consider this extremist approach, but found too many discrepancies against the well-being of their members and chose not to adopt its disruptive consequences.

It is in the best interest of everyone to make informed decisions in the atmosphere of cooperation, respect and integrity to provide effective services in the best interest of a community as a whole. But not in the extremities to promote ineffective goals of the "Compact of Free Association".

To survive, we must "call for action" to put an end to this needless tragedy of political impropriety and misrepresentation. The end result only leads to social and political suicide and disassembles our efforts to address the real issues we face today in a united voice.