

Do not support Indian Affairs committee, Byler

BY SHARON MCCONNELL

William Byler, the keynote speaker at the Tanana Chiefs conference Convention last week, told the 43 delegates and TCC officials attending not to support renewal of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

Byler, executive director of the Association on American In-

dian Affairs, told the group the committee is ending its service period this year. He said the jurisdiction of Indian Affairs will then go from that committee to the Human Resources Committee.

A proposal has been submitted, Byler stated, that would extend the life of the Indian

Affairs Committee for an additional two years. However, the executive director stated that if the serving period is extended, only one member, Senator Mark Hatfield, will continue to serve. That means four positions would have to be filled. In this light, Byler told the delegates and officials of TCC not to support

the committee until they know who the members will be. Byler said there has been talk that Senator Ted Stevens will be asked to serve on the committee.

In other remarks, Byler told the TCC meeting that one out of every four Indian children in the lower 48 is placed in a foster or adoptive home, most

without due process of the law. He also stated ten times more Alaska Native children are placed in such homes than non-Native children.

Byler said there is a bill in the Senate that would correct this situation in the villages and tribes.