

# Senate panel OKs alcohol project, center for gifted

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Senate Indian Affairs Committee recently approved a community and family based alcohol abuse recovery project for Alaska Natives and an Alaska Native Gifted and Talented Center at the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, according to Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska.

Murkowski, a sponsor of both of the measures, said each of the projects would be funded at \$1 million annually for four years.

The committee also approved an American Indian Forest and Woodlands bill, incorporating Murkowski proposals ensuring that Alaska Natives are eligible for forestry internships, scholarships and technical training and providing for a \$2 million technical assistance program for village corporations with forested lands.

The Alaska Native Gifted and Talented Center, which would operate in cooperation with similar centers in Hawaii and the Lower 48, would develop criteria to identify gifted and talented Alaska Native youth and address their special education needs.

"The mental gifts of Native Americans and Alaska Natives are like those of other Americans, but the number of Alaska Natives benefiting from gifted and talented programs is but a small fraction of what it should be," Murkowski said.

The alcohol abuse recovery project adopted by the committee is modeled after a proposal made by the Alaska Federation of Natives on behalf of the Alaska Native Health Board and the Village of St. Mary's. The funds would be apportioned between ANHB's community development approach and the family-based alcohol rehabilitation program in St. Mary's.

The bills approved by the Indian Affairs Committee must now go to the full Senate for consideration.