

True Native courses needed

President John F. Kennedy once said:

Before we can set out on the road to success, we have to know where we are going, and before we can know that we must determine where we have been in the past. It seems a basic requirement to study the history of our Indian people. America has much to learn about the heritage of our American Indians. Only through this study can we as a nation do what must be done if our treatment of the American Indian is not to be marked down for all time as a national disgrace.

American Native people have been dispossessed of their lands as a direct consequence of the harsh American Indian policy of the U.S. Government. This is an unfortunate state of affairs for a country that has traditionally placed so much emphasis on democratic processes.

Since this is a bitter reality, however, there is a need for Native Americans to understand it as such. And because of the peculiar circumstances in Alaska, it is even more imperative that Alaska Native people become aware of what U.S. Indian policy has been in the past and what it continues to be today.

With passage of the ANCSA, Alaska Natives are receiving title to vast acreages of land, more land than Lower 48 Indians presently own or control. In order

to keep this land, Alaska Natives must be wary of the intentions of both the federal government and private multinational corporations for which Uncle Sam has been too often the handmaiden. For this guarded attitude to exist, Alaska Natives must truly understand the sad history of the dealings between American Natives in the Lower 48 (and in Canada) with the federal government.

It would, of course, be delightful if Alaska Natives could trust our national (and state) government and the large transnational corporations. But they cannot afford to since it appears that the ANCSA is but a stepchild of the same Indian policy that has been in effect since the formation of the U.S. as a nation.

That is, it is nothing less and nothing more, that a part of a continuum of American Indian policy, albeit disguised in the garb of American myth and corporate-capitalist legalese.

With this as a backdrop, I feel it is of impelling necessity that Alaska Native high school students receive exposure to a course which delineates American Native peoples in poignant truthful detail, both the way they were in the past before European contact, and the way they are today.

It is essential, I feel, to point

out the vibrantly healthy cultural systems that Native Americans had during their pre-contact history in order to indicate what it was they have lost as a consequence of their dealings with the federal government and large corporate enterprises through time. Since this negative history is not at an end in Alaska, and since, through the ANCSA, the federal government still seems determined to alienate lands and a way of life from Native peoples here in Alaska, I believe a course such as this is important to offer in all high schools which are located in predominantly Native Alaskan settings.

The general objective of such a course would be to make students aware of the above-mentioned historically confirmable information so that they may be mentally prepared to stave off any future attempts to deprive them of their lands and cultural heritage.

Specifically, the course would present students with a view of American history that is thoroughly Native American. At the same time, it would provide necessary foundations for the next class in their high school social science sequence which should be a detailed, more analytical study of the ANCSA itself.

Frank J. Keim
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Mandatory jail of rapists

To the Editor:

On Dec. 22, Judge Carlson attacked the Legislature for raising penalties for rape so that he was required to sentence a man to eight years in jail for the forcible rape of a seven-year-old girl. The judge suggested the Legislature did not know what it was doing and recommended that the man appeal to the governor for clemency.

I was a sponsor of the bill requiring mandatory sentencing

and it did exactly what I wanted it to do — I wanted such people off the streets and in prison. Anyone who rapes a woman, let alone a little child, is a vicious criminal and a threat to society.

My only regret is that an increase to eight years in prison is the most we could get for such scum.

Sincerely yours,
John Lindauer
State Representative