

Sen. Stevens Seeks Social Security No. ID System Toward Native Health Care

Senator Ted Stevens has urged the Department of the Interior to conduct a pilot program in Alaska to speed development of a Social Security number identification system enabling Alaska native and Indian people to receive immediate medical attention in Indian Health Service facilities outside of Alaska.

"Alaska health and health problems are more acute than in any other part of this nation," Senator Stevens said.

An Alaska Native may use the same Public Health Service facilities as Indians in the Lower 48 States while not living in Alaska.

If he relocates in a non-Indian or non-Native community, he is entitled to apply for assistance through the resources that are available to all citizens of the community.

The Social Security identification system Stevens wants adopted would not change this. The program will speed up processing when out-of-state Alaska Natives and Indians use these facilities.

The system will also reduce transcription errors and assist in the compiling and maintenance of medical histories.

"I have been assured that the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service are cooperating in developing this system. I feel that the next logical step is to establish a pilot program in Alaska," Stevens said.

The Alaska Republican said that the Department of the Interior was also interested in the

program as a means for census population data and possible adaptation to a record system for school children.

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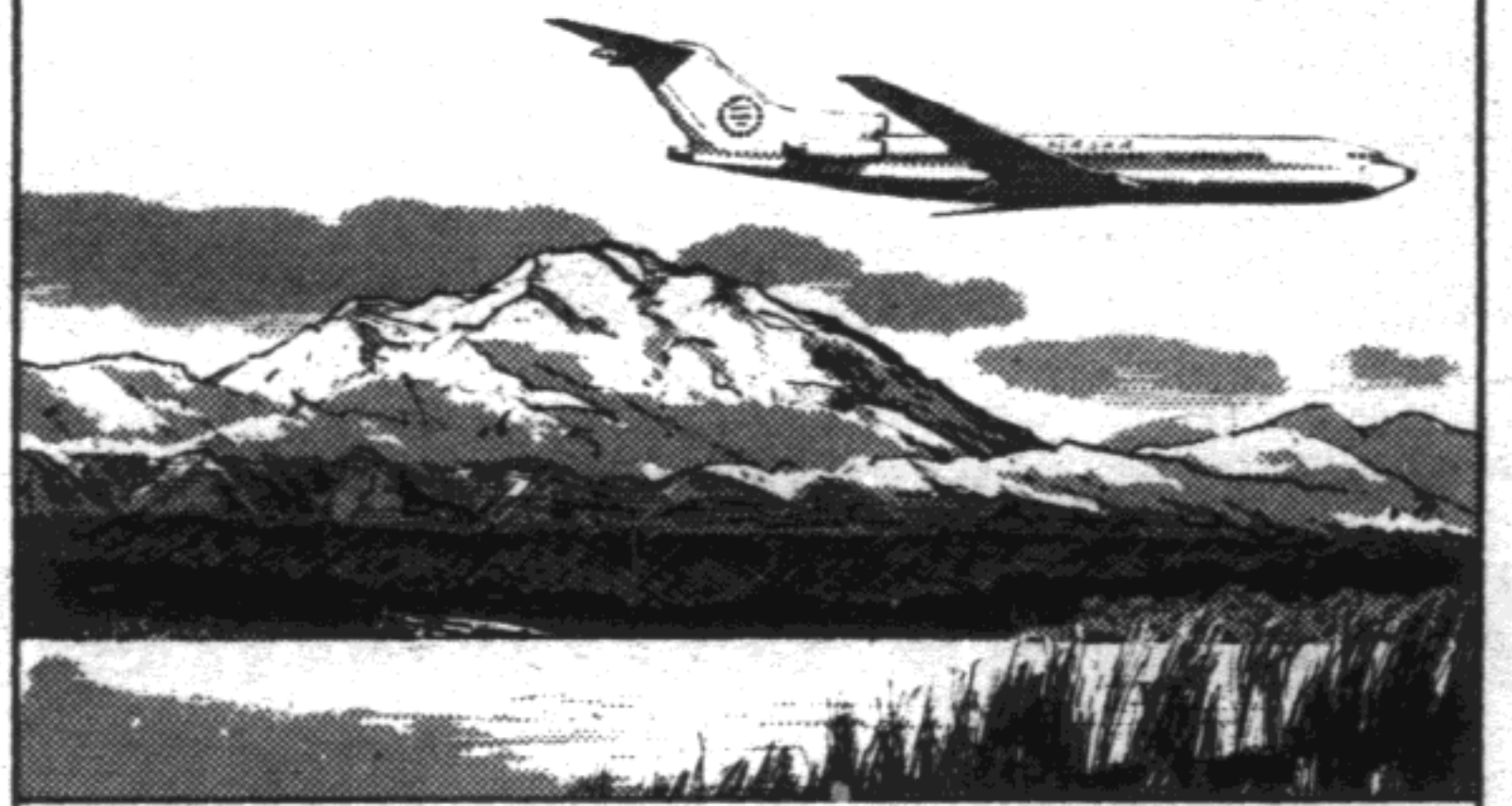
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