

Union Calendar No. 457

104TH CONGRESS
2^D Session

H. R. 3973

[Report No. 104-838]

A BILL

To provide for a study of the recommendations of the Joint Federal-State Commission on Policies and Programs Affecting Alaska Natives.

SEPTEMBER 25, 1996

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

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To provide for a study of the recommendations of the Joint Federal-State Commission on Policies and Programs Affecting Alaska Natives.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 2, 1996

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

September 25, 1996

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on August 2, 1996]

A BILL

To provide for a study of the recommendations of the Joint Federal-State Commission on Policies and Programs Affecting Alaska Natives.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS AND DECLARATION**
2 **OF POLICY.**

3 *The Congress finds and declares the following:*

4 *(1) The Joint Federal-State Commission on Poli-*
5 *cies and Programs Affecting Alaska Natives (hereafter*
6 *in this Act referred to as the “Alaska Natives Com-*
7 *mission”) was established by Public Law 101–379 (42*
8 *U.S.C. 2991a note) following the publication in 1989*
9 *of the “Report on the Status of Alaska Natives: A Call*
10 *for Action” by the Alaska Federation of Natives and*
11 *after extensive congressional hearings which focused*
12 *on the need for the first comprehensive assessment of*
13 *the social, cultural, and economic condition of Alas-*
14 *ka’s 86,000 Natives since the enactment of the Alaska*
15 *Native Claims Settlement Act, Public Law 92–203.*

16 *(2) The 14 member Alaska Natives Commission*
17 *held 15 regional hearings throughout Alaska between*
18 *July 1992 and October 1993, and 2 statewide hear-*
19 *ings in Anchorage coinciding with the Conventions of*
20 *1992 and 1993 of the Alaska Federation of Natives.*
21 *In May 1994, the Alaska Natives Commission issued*
22 *its 3 volume, 440 page report. As required by Public*
23 *Law 101–379, the report was formally conveyed to the*
24 *Congress, the President of the United States, and the*
25 *Governor of Alaska.*

1 (3) *The Alaska Natives Commission found that*
2 *many Alaska Native individuals, families, and com-*
3 *munities were experiencing a social, cultural, and*
4 *economic crisis marked by rampant unemployment,*
5 *lack of economic opportunity, alcohol abuse, depres-*
6 *sion, and morbidity and mortality rates that have*
7 *been described by health care professionals as “stag-*
8 *gering”.*

9 (4) *The Alaska Natives Commission found that*
10 *due to the high rate of unemployment and lack of eco-*
11 *nomie opportunities for Alaska Natives, government*
12 *programs for the poor have become the foundation of*
13 *many village economies. Displacing traditional Alas-*
14 *ka Native social safety nets, these well-meaning pro-*
15 *grams have undermined the healthy interdependence*
16 *and self-sufficiency of Native tribes and families and*
17 *have put Native tribes and families at risk of becom-*
18 *ing permanent dependencies of Government.*

19 (5) *Despite these seemingly insurmountable prob-*
20 *lems, the Alaska Natives Commission found that Alas-*
21 *ka Natives, building on the Alaska Native Claims Set-*
22 *tlement Act, had begun a unique process of critical*
23 *self-examination which, if supported by the United*
24 *States Congress through innovative legislation, and*
25 *effective public administration at all levels including*

1 *traditional Native governance, could provide the basis*
2 *for an Alaska Native social, cultural, economic, and*
3 *spiritual renewal.*

4 (6) *The Alaska Natives Commission recognized*
5 *that the key to the future well-being of Alaska Natives*
6 *lay in—*

7 (A) *the systematic resumption of respon-*
8 *sibility by Alaska Natives for the well-being of*
9 *their members,*

10 (B) *the strengthening of their economies,*

11 (C) *the strengthening, operation, and con-*
12 *trol of their systems of governance, social serv-*
13 *ices, education, health care, and law enforcement,*
14 *and*

15 (D) *exercising rights they have from their*
16 *special relationship with the Federal Government*
17 *and as citizens of the United States and Alaska.*

18 (7) *The Alaska Natives Commission recognized*
19 *that the following 3 basic principles must be respected*
20 *in addressing the myriad of problems facing Alaska*
21 *Natives:*

22 (A) *Self-reliance.*

23 (B) *Self-determination.*

24 (C) *Integrity of Native cultures.*

1 (8) *There is a need to address the problems con-*
2 *fronting Alaska Natives. This should be done rapidly,*
3 *with certainty, and in conformity with the real eco-*
4 *nomi, social, and cultural needs of Alaska Natives.*

5 (9) *Congress retains and has exercised its con-*
6 *stitutional authority over Native affairs in Alaska*
7 *subsequent to the Treaty of Cession and does so now*
8 *through this Act.*

9 **SEC. 2. ALASKA NATIVE IMPLEMENTATION STUDY.**

10 (a) *FINDINGS.—The Congress finds and declares*
11 *that—*

12 (1) *the Alaska Natives Commission adopted cer-*
13 *tain recommendations raising important policy ques-*
14 *tions which are unresolved in Alaska and which re-*
15 *quire further study and review before Congress consid-*
16 *ers legislation to implement solutions to address these*
17 *recommendations; and*

18 (2) *the Alaska Federation of Natives is the rep-*
19 *resentative body of statewide Alaska Native interests*
20 *best suited to further investigate and report to Con-*
21 *gress with proposals to implement the recommenda-*
22 *tions of the Alaska Natives Commission.*

23 (b) *GRANT.—The Secretary of Health and Human*
24 *Services shall make a grant to the Alaska Federation of Na-*
25 *tives to conduct the study and submit the report required*

1 *by this section. Such grant may only be made if the Alaska*
2 *Federation of Natives agrees to abide by the requirements*
3 *of this section.*

4 *(c) STUDY.—Pursuant to subsection (b), the Alaska*
5 *Federation of Natives shall—*

6 *(1) examine the recommendations of the Alaska*
7 *Natives Commission;*

8 *(2) examine initiatives in the United States,*
9 *Canada, and elsewhere for successful ways that issues*
10 *similar to the issues addressed by the Alaska Natives*
11 *Commission have been addressed;*

12 *(3) conduct hearings within the Alaska Native*
13 *community on further ways in which the Commis-*
14 *sion's recommendations might be implemented; and*

15 *(4) recommend enactment of specific provisions*
16 *of law and other actions the Congress should take to*
17 *implement such recommendations.*

18 *(d) CONSIDERATION OF LOCAL CONTROL.—In develop-*
19 *ing its recommendations pursuant to subsection (c)(4), the*
20 *Alaska Federation of Natives shall give specific attention*
21 *to the ways in which the recommendations may be achieved*
22 *at the local level with maximum local control of the imple-*
23 *mentation of the recommendations.*

24 *(e) REPORT.—Not later than 12 months after the date*
25 *on which the grant is made under subsection (b), the Alaska*

1 *Federation of Natives shall submit a report on the study*
2 *conducted under this section, together with the recommenda-*
3 *tions developed pursuant to subsection (c)(4), to the Presi-*
4 *dent and the Congress and to the Governor and legislature*
5 *of the State of Alaska. In addition, the Alaska Federation*
6 *of Natives shall make the report available to Alaska Native*
7 *villages and organizations and to the general public.*

8 *(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is*
9 *authorized to be appropriated \$350,000 for the grant under*
10 *subsection (b).*

11 *(g) ADDITIONAL STATE FUNDING.—The Congress en-*
12 *courages the State of Alaska to provide the additional fund-*
13 *ing necessary for the completion of the study under this sec-*
14 *tion.*