



Dear Governor Parnell,

We are a grass roots group of concerned Alaska citizens, comprised of native and non-native people. We are not affiliated with any specific political, tribal or state government. We believe the *Choose Respect* campaign is not just a women's issue, nor just a native issue, but a human rights issue. We are encouraged that you have pledged to take every step necessary to stop the epidemic of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse. We gather today to express our concern that you have not spoken out against the "Murkowski fix" in the Violence Against Women's Act (VAWA) that excludes 228 Alaska tribes from obtaining the benefit of "full faith and credit" for civil protection orders issued by Alaska tribal courts. We know that you are aware that statistics regarding domestic violence in the State of Alaska are among the worst in the United States.

Alaska tribal courts offer victims a safe, comfortable and culturally significant venue to find remedy from the scourge of domestic violence. Many tribes in Alaska have been successfully issuing civil domestic violence protection orders for years. The "Murkowski fix" shrinks the scope of VAWA with unnecessary discussion of Indian country, and singles out Alaska natives for discriminatory treatment. Sadly, the "Murkowski fix" provides less protection for women than before VAWA was reauthorized. Providing less protection for Alaska Native women is not acceptable. We must work together peacefully in cooperation to truly take all necessary steps to stop the epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault.

We respectfully request the State of Alaska work with Alaska tribes and recognize that Alaska tribes can provide an alternative forum for Alaska Native women to seek civil protection orders. We join you today in this *Choose Respect* rally and ask you to take the additional step of contacting the Alaska delegation, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Mark Begich and Congressman Don Young, and work with them to *Choose Respect* and remove the Alaska tribal exemption from the civil provision of VAWA.

Thank you for Choosing Respect.