

JUNE 2022 | VOL.5



# VOICES, LANGUAGES AND TEACHINGS

*Increasing Safety For Alaska Native Women and Villages*



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

*Tami Truett Jerue*

Hello! There are many exciting things happening right now and I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some of them. Let's start with the Reauthorization of VAWA 2022! In it there are key tribal provisions that strengthen tribal jurisdiction on crimes on domestic violence victims, children and law enforcement, including a historic pilot project that will allow 5 Alaska Tribes per year to be chosen to prosecute crimes. If your Tribe is interested in this project, feel free to reach out to us for

more information. On the state level we are very excited about some of the legislation that passed this session. A bill recognizing Tribes in Alaska was a long time coming and is waiting for the Governor to sign into law. There has also been legislation that tightens up the language in the sexual assault laws and addresses the rape kit back log.

The Alaska Native Women's Resource Center (AKNWRC) is enlarging some of our programs through ARP funding enabling us to expand our technical assistance and training opportunities in various areas. We are currently receiving numerous technical assistance and training requests for onsite and have begun calendaring these events. If any communities are interested in planning for onsite training and technical assistance, please reach out to [Janelle.chapin@aknwrc.org](mailto:Janelle.chapin@aknwrc.org). We will be also be holding our first Prevention Summit on August 9-11, 2022 in Anchorage, Alaska

Since our last newsletter the Resource Center participated in a Week of Action bringing attention to the MMIW crisis with our national partners including the National Indigenous Women's Resource Center, the Indian Law Resource Center, and the Native Hawaiian Pouhana Wahini as well as other local Alaska organizations.

The AKNWRC will be putting out an RFP to help fund programs that are working with Alaska Native survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault. You can join our mailing list for more information as it becomes available. Please also follow us on our social media.

**To contact us:**

Main office phone number: (907) 328-3990

Main email: [info@aknwrc.org](mailto:info@aknwrc.org)

Website: [www.aknwrc.org](http://www.aknwrc.org)

Join our **mailing list** at <https://bit.ly/2XjV6Dr>

Important Legislation  
Updates

*See pages 3 & 5.*

AKNWRC Summit:  
Standing Together We  
Take Our Power Back  
August 9-11

*See page 7.*

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# ALASKA STATE POLICY WATCH

*Debra O'Gara*

The Alaska Legislature ended on May 18 and there is no sign the Governor will call for a special session. This session there was a focus on public safety and social services. AKNWRC was watching a few specific bills.

HB 5, carried by Rep. Tarr, was aimed at strengthening the criminal statutes of sexual assault crimes to require lack of consent, rather than just force or threat of force. This bill would require the state process rape kits within 6 months. The House committees conducted 18 hearings but never voted out of committee despite major efforts by the sponsor and advocates across the state. In the last days of session, several key provisions were added, by amendment on the Senate floor, to HB 325 which had passed the House in the last week of session.

HB 325 expanded the definition of harassment to be a domestic violence crime, with the consent and rape kit provisions from HB 5 and passed the Senate on May 18. The bill passed the House the same day. It is waiting for the Governor's signature.

HB 106 and its companion SB 92, drafted by the Governor, requires reports of someone under 21 years as missing be sent to Dept. of Public Safety, the NCIC and Missing Person Information Clearing House immediately and not more than 24 hours from the time of the report. This bill passed fairly easily in April.

HB 123 and its companion SB 108 required the state to recognize the 229 Tribes in Alaska as federally recognized.



This bill has no fiscal impact and doesn't add any additional rights to the tribes or responsibilities on the state. After 11 hearing in both the House and Senate, the bill passed and has been sent to the Governor to sign.

HB 184, requires the state to participate in the child welfare compact process. It did pass both bodies and has been sent to the Governor.

HB 291, a very important bill, would renew the state's Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. This Council provides grant funding, assistance, and policy analysis to several DV and SA organizations, throughout the state, both tribal and non-tribal. An amendment was made to add two additional seats to the Council's governing board – "one of whom shall be a member of an Alaska Native organization; the governor may consult with the" ANDVSA "and the Alaska Native Women Resource Center . . . and the chief executive officer of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority . . ."

The passage of HB 291 became a heated debate when key provisions from the defeated HB 183 were added in. There was strong support for continuing the CDVSA but the legislators were split on support for continuing the Criminal Justice Commission. Eventually this bill passed both with amendments. The CDVSA and the Justice Data Commission were renewed. This bill is getting the final language approved and will be sent to the Governor for signature.

SB 81 passed both the House and Senate, with amendments, and will require the Dept. of Public Safety to conduct background checks on all VPSO officers hired with state grant monies. This final bill has been sent to the Governor.

The Governor conveyed 3 bills to the legislature. These were: SB 187/HB 319 relating to harassment, sex offenders and sexual offenses, SB 188/HB 318 relating to criminal procedure and name change petitions, and SB 189/HB 317 relating to the crime of sex and human trafficking. All 3 of these bills died in committee. Some of the provisions from these bills were included in the successful HB 325 and HB 172.



# FEDERAL POLICY WATCH

*Michelle Demmert*

The Violence Against Women's Act was reauthorized on March 15, 2022. The new law reauthorizes the 2013 provisions to prosecute non-native domestic violence perpetrators and expands prosecution of these defendants to include obstruction of justice-type crimes, sexual assault crimes, sex trafficking and stalking; and creates pilot project for up to five Alaska Tribes per year. There are several key provisions that are specific to the unique circumstances in Alaska and clarified that existing programs do include Alaska Native Tribes. Key highlights, include:



You can find the full VAWA Fact Sheet on our website at

[aknwrc.org/resources/aknwrc-resources/](https://aknwrc.org/resources/aknwrc-resources/)

**VAWA 2022 AND ALASKA INDIAN TRIBES: NOW THAT VAWA IS REAUTHORIZED, WHAT NEXT?**

The Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2022, includes a Tribal title with a specific section on Alaska Indian tribes titled "Subtitle B: Alaska Tribal Public Safety Empowerment." These provisions, Sections 811-813, empower tribal governments to work, in partnership with state and federal authorities, to address public safety in Alaska Native Villages by clarifying tribal authority, creating a pilot project extending certain jurisdiction over non-Indians made available under VAWA 2013, and providing new resources and recognized authority.

VAWA 2022 is complementary to existing state, tribal and federal jurisdiction by creating more resources and tools to address domestic violence and other qualifying crimes in communities that may lack local law enforcement. In this law, Congress recognizes and affirms the inherent authority of any Indian tribe occupying a Village in the State of Alaska to exercise criminal and civil jurisdiction over all Alaska Natives and American Indians present in the Village. It reaffirms and strengthens tribal authority, while the state jurisdiction continues in the same manner it does under current law. The proposed change is about collaboration and partnership.

**WHAT VAWA 2022 AND THE ALASKA TRIBAL PUBLIC SAFETY SECTION DOES AND WHY IT IS NEEDED**

What does VAWA 2022 do?

- THE LAW CLARIFIES ALASKA TRIBAL AUTHORITY TO ADDRESS CIVIL AND CRIMINAL MATTERS, INCLUDING PROTECTION ORDERS, INVOLVING ALASKA NATIVES IN THE VILLAGE OR WITHIN THEIR AUTHORITY.
- THE LAW ALSO CREATES A LIMITED CRIMINAL JURISDICTION PILOT PROJECT MODELED AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL PILOT PROJECT IMPLEMENTED BY TRIBES OUTSIDE ALASKA THAT WAS INCLUDED IN VAWA 2013.
- THE LAW DEFINES THE TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION OF AN ALASKA TRIBE, INSTEAD OF THE USUAL REFERENCE OF "INDIAN COUNTRY" AN ALASKA TRIBE'S JURISDICTION IS THE "VILLAGE," WHICH MEANS THE ALASKA NATIVE VILLAGE STATISTICAL AREA COVERING ALL OR ANY PORTION OF A NATIVE VILLAGE ...AS DEPICTED ON THE "TRIBAL STATISTICAL AREA PROGRAM VERIFICATION MAP OF THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS."

Why are these changes needed?

- ALASKA NATIVE COMMUNITIES, PARTICULARLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN, ARE EXPERIENCING EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH RATES OF VIOLENCE.
  - DESPITE MAKING UP 19% OF THE STATE POPULATION, ALASKA NATIVES ARE 47% OF REPORTED RAPE VICTIMS IN THE STATE.
  - ALASKA NATIVES ARE OVERREPRESENTED IN THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE POPULATION BY 250%.

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- Provides a specific finding for Alaska and jurisdictional challenges because of restrictive land settlement, lack of law enforcement and geographic immensity.
- Expands Tribal Access Program (TAP) to tribes without law enforcement and additional funding.
- Expands enforcement of tribal protection orders specifically in Alaska with land issues.
- Reimbursement Provisions: for exercising the criminal special jurisdiction.

AKNWRC has created a Fact Sheet on VAWA 2022 providing specific examples of key provisions.

# NEW STAFF SPOTLIGHT

## *Frances Andrews*

My name is Frances Andrews, I joined the Resource Center at the beginning of March as the Senior Program Specialist with a focus on Grants Administration/Management. I am Tlingit - Daaklaweidi (Eagle Killerwhale) from Angoon. My Tlingit name is Khin-du-ane. The last five years of my career were spent with the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska; I worked as the Court Administrator and ended my time with them as the Tribe's Grant Manager. My background is in Administration and Grant Management. I am excited to bring this experience to the TA Team as we provide support in this area at AKNWRC. I was born and raised in Southeast Alaska where I have spent most of my life. In the summer of '21 I relocated to Anchorage, where I now live with my youngest daughter. I am also blessed to be the mother of a recent high-school graduate, Amanda and a HS Sophomore, Shaun.



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*I am excited to  
bring this  
experience...as  
we provide  
support...at  
AKNWRC*

## UPCOMING DATES

### **NCAI Task Force on Violence Against Women**

June 13, 2022, 9am - 11:30am

Location: Dena'ina Center in Anchorage, AK

### **NCAI Mid Year Conference & Marketplace**

June 12, 2022 - Jun 16, 2022

Location: Dena'ina Center in Anchorage, AK

### **Save the Date: NIWRC Consultation Webinar**

August 3rd, 11am - 12:30pm



**AKNWRC  
Summit:  
August 9th-  
11th, 2022**

## **AKNWRC Summit: Standing Together We Take Our Power Back**

**When:** August 9-11, 2022 (9:00am-4:00pm AKST with Evening Activities)

**Where:** Embassy Suites Anchorage & Virtual option (TBD)

**Who:** Tribal leadership and tribal advocates

**What:** Training on domestic violence and building our community safety nets around prevention. Enhancing our community safety through education and prevention while weaving culture in as a healing factor.

For more information, please contact us at [info@aknwrc.org](mailto:info@aknwrc.org)



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**Unity  
Meeting:  
October  
19th, 2022**

## **Save the Date: Unity Meeting 2022** Increasing the Safety of Alaska Native Women

**When:** October 19, 2022 at 1 pm - 5 pm AKDT

**What:** Get updates on AKNWRC's year, policy changes, and other important DV/SA field updates.

**Where:** Anchorage & Virtual

**Who:** Alaska Native village-based advocates/victim services, tribal leadership & community members

For more information, contact us at [info@aknwrc.org](mailto:info@aknwrc.org)



For more information on these events please visit  
<https://www.aknwrc.org/news/events/>