



Alaska Federation of Natives
2014 Annual Convention
Resolution 14 - 37

- TITLE:** A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ALASKA’S CURRENT SYSTEM OF SELECTION AND RETENTION OF STATE COURT JUDGES
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska and its membership includes 165 federally-recognized tribes, 146 village corporations, 12 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs; and
- WHEREAS:** The mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community; and
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Judicial Council (AJC) is an independent citizens’ commission established by the Alaska Constitution to screen applicants for judicial vacancies, nominate the most qualified applicants for appointment by the governor, evaluate the performance of sitting judges, recommend to voters whether judges should be retained, and conduct research related to the administration of justice in Alaska; and
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Constitution provides that the AJC shall have seven members, including three attorneys appointed by the Alaska Bar Association, three non-attorneys appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature, and the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, who acts as the chairperson; and
- WHEREAS:** Through the AJC process the Alaska Constitution created a merit-based system for appointing judges while retaining accountability to the voters, and this Alaska system is widely considered to be one of the best state judicial selection processes in the United States; and
- WHEREAS:** AFN does not support any amendments that would change Alaska’s merit- based system for selecting judges into a partisan political process controlled by the governor and in the long term would inevitably diminish the quality and fairness of the state judiciary; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska Native Tribes, tribal organizations, and individual Alaska Natives subjected to Alaska’s civil or criminal judicial system are best served by an independent state judiciary, selected on merit.
- NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the delegates of the 2014 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives support Alaska’s current system of selection and retention of state court judges; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska Federation of Natives opposes any attempt to amend the Alaska Constitution to alter the composition of the Alaska Judicial Council to politicize the judicial selection process; and