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TESTIMONY
Rural Justice Commission
Kotzebue, Alaska
February 24, 2005

My name is Virginia Commack, Tribal Administrator/~~General Manager~~/Advocate for the Native Village of Ambler. I come from a Tribe that historically had good Inupait Iitqusait way of life with good governance, stable responsible members, stable family lives, community spirit & good health that includes good public safety. *Currently we have a cultural camp teaching our ways & was fortunate to have a person from the federal justice dept. spent 4 days w/us at the camp.*
~~our~~ history reveals how healthy our people were in the public safety arena. They were in control of their destiny and lived good physical lives they simply governed themselves to survive. They knew how to take care of each other through public safety putting together their own scheme of law & order and lived peacefully. Law & order was respected and no jail system no repeat offenders unlike all the history within the state system.

for education
& introduction to our ways

You see our Native People have Intellectual knowledge on basic human needs and how to protect each other from harm through good public safety practices. Now this has changed drastically with influx of influence and a permissible way of life as a choice aside the orderly Inupait life. Our people are now falling between the factors of ^{simple} know how absolutes and a permissible system of governance; second inflating very unstable way of life. You could just about do anything you want and you have the right to this freedom with no absolute law & order in ethics to keep them in line. Western justice system has been for some time there is proof in the number of our people incarcerated. Then even more alarming they are introduced then assimilated to a permissible world then punished for becoming so permissibly doing wrong. They get the message that they are in a free world without ethical teachings in tact, they learn they have rights to this permissible system but they have yet to learn good ethics from this system where are they?

Now this kind of system is represented in majority of the rural justice commission we all know that so we should expect even greater misery for our people.

In the Western Justice System human becomes a number their identity exploited in that way. Their rights exploited in the current system in numerous ways. They experience western justice in a court system with very limited representation then they remain in a space with ~~no connection to their way of life~~ ~~no connection to their way of life~~ ~~parameters of the space~~. Then they are humiliated in numerous ways then judged with foreign words not understood in a foreign system away from their people's rightful ways of law & order.

just a fixed

assimilation is still a tool of injustice

If the state system is going to dominate this rural justice commission we will see ~~more~~ ^{continue to repeated} lawlessness and more jails necessary to accommodate the increase that is the history under this system, ~~that that commission~~

Why is our state striving to dominate ways of our people? We have our own answers, but let us focus on this system that is different than the ways of our people. ^{for these reasons a more etc} Tribal governments have to be given equal chance as the state, it looks hopeless this will ever happen with majority rural justice commissioners representing one system. This same system is allowing all the lawlessness through permissible ways. First infinite number of runaway legislations within the ^{governance of this} ~~governing~~ system contributes then through a justice system so choked up with so many laws to interpret and justify justice. Basic interpretation we have for all this is there are so many laws twisting good basic laws combined they are really back to lawlessness. *- within this system.*

~~For these reasons and more~~ Our Tribal Government is not in support of this rural justice commission and the system the commission upholds. Nothing will change only for the worst for our people if we submit ourselves to a very complex system that simply creates a permissible system and consequences that are alarming for human.

We see it as another systematic control tool to suppress our good ways of Native people. Hindering our people to help themselves causing severe social pain and continue to shut out our good ways. We simply see a power struggle with the good Native Ways.

We recommend this justice commission make recommendations to recognize the Tribal Governments then fund them to build up their own good ways and enable them to exercise their governance in public safety. There should never have been a commission formed just to go and hear these kinds of testimonies from the villages. Precious dollars are being expended theough theis new rural justice commission if only the state governance or whomever would have adhered to asking the Tribes to do what they could in public safety and just simply supported them monetarily and change some of the state laws restricting safety issue laws to tailor to our Tribal Governance. Or simply consulted with the Tribes on a government to government basis we would have worked this out just the same.

Many times we are told more heads are better than one but for too long Alaska has used only heads from within one systematic state, our Native intellectual knowledge has yet to be heard & allowed to be exercised.

Countless proof of Injustice to communities and reasons to allow Tribal Government to govern their own Tribal Justice System for their own people

First, we know our people best and the justice needs in our communities. We know our own tribal public safety practices but our people are repeatedly denied the right to exercise our governance rights. This is foremost injustice to our people to begin with. The denial of tribal justice ways since the statehood, ANCSA and many other injustice legislations continue to affect negatively the rights of the Tribal Governments and their membership.

Problems we encounter with the western justice system so greatly impacts our people. Years ago our eleven villages come together and compared the western justice system with our own Tribal Justice Ways and we underlined injustice supercedes justice within the western system to human beings.

Foremost our own governance is denied. Tribal Governments are not allowed total governance to exercise over our membership that encompass all areas of our Indigenous lifes including Inupait Justice Ways.

We were made landless one of the greatest social & spiritual injustice to our rights to good life, liberty & justice.

Western justice impacts our social, spiritual, physical & mental health psychologically impairing human beings (good people).

When unreliable witnesses are allowed and incarcerate innocent individuals, ^{there is} devastating injustice placed upon human. These individuals rights to good life, liberty & justice are all violated. Families & community holistically feels the pain and consequences a deep aftermath would with hopelessness for Tribal Governments helpless feeling to correct an injustice system. ^{occurs}

through denial of G-to-G consultation.

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Elderly parents, parents, grandparents families suffer greater in loss of survival & basic human need service providers with these providers incarcerated ~~with~~ ^{thru} injustice ways and practices.

Injustice impacts community in more ways than one. Good social, spiritual, physical & mental survival is disrupted with psychological emotional impacts. Children suffer greater pains, affects their young lives and future.

Community is imposed upon many of us - ~~not given~~ full authority to exercise good ways. (2)

Incarcerated individuals that come home to community - has to adjust w/out any help from the system that displaced ~~their~~ their lives.

Community again voluntarily provides counseling + services + encouragement to rebuild self-esteem and worthiness of a human kind - because ~~the~~ human state was jeopardized.

No funds provided to Tribes, Tribe does these her best work to help their people.

Psychological impacts greatest to incarcerated indiv's coming home. Especially those incarcerated w/ poor witnesses poor judgement feels the greatest pain - shame, line w/ defamiation of character - ~~all because of strange system.~~

The 11 villages that came together from both Tribal + City Governments listed pro's + con's of a western justice system in comparison to an Inupait justice ways - justified alarming differences never before discussed.

Greatest concern became human being treated so inhumane justice ways differ like "Night + Day"

Mistreatment thru - poor holding facilities - animal like treatment

No funds to properly care for incarcerated individuals @ the village level AND on + on. ---

You see we have been saying it all along in Inupait + Western ways differ all around ^{all the} up to the governance. It reflects separate Nations within a Nation - treated inhumane all around with injustice. ^{Innocent} Human beings are suffering consequences from the justice system holistically in their lives, what strong will power our Elders instilled in us keeps us alive with good spiritual ways - and guidance - America needs a taste of our good ~~own~~ ways. Only if we are allowed to govern it and use it well for ourselves - Keeping in mind the Federal government has this trust responsibility to the Tribal Governments to protect us in every way.

Extra (3)

Rights directly from creator - Inalienable
Cannot be alienated by any form of governance

Peoples rights violated infinite no. of legislatures
Departing from a more justice

Impairt People have the right to good life, liberty & justice
Equally for Impairt by Impairt Gov.
Protection of the Ind. right inalienable
to all people in the universe.

Indiv. inalienable rights directly links to Tribal Membership
within lies - right to good, healthy life
Good Life
Property Rights
Ownership "
Governance "
Right to own identity

Before any laws are imposed on Impairt - consultation of Tribal
Gov's G to G Basis

To protect lives of innocent people -

Made Dependent is social injustice then jail -

Assimilation is social injustice

Inalienable Rights affirms our responsibility to protect our Impairt Inalien. Rights

Manmade laws departed from the "law" is suffocating our Impairt
Society "Lawlessness

"in the context of "that which western Soc. thinks is right
in their own eyes"