

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. 561

Designating February 16, 2024, as “National Elizabeth Peratrovich Day”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 13 (legislative day, FEBRUARY 12), 2024

Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself and Ms. MURKOWSKI) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Designating February 16, 2024, as “National Elizabeth Peratrovich Day”.

Whereas Elizabeth Wanamaker Peratrovich, Tlingit, was a member of the Lukaax__ádi clan in the Raven moiety with the Tlingit name of K__aax__gal.aat (referred to in this preamble as “Elizabeth”) who fought for social equality, civil liberties, and respect for Alaska Native and Native American communities;

Whereas Elizabeth, who was born in 1911 in Petersburg, Alaska, experienced discrimination as a Tlingit woman, and dedicated her life to creating a better future for Alaska Natives;

Whereas, more than 6,000 patriotic Alaska Natives protected the United States alongside non-Native Servicemen and

women during World War II, despite suffering from unjust discrimination;

Whereas, in 1941, Elizabeth and her husband, Roy Peratrovich, moved to Juneau, the capital city of Alaska, to campaign tirelessly for the passage of the anti-discrimination legislation of Ernest Gruening, the Governor of Alaska, which would later result in the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945;

Whereas, in campaigning for the passage of anti-discrimination legislation, Elizabeth persevered for several years traveling across the Alaska Territory enabling, rallying, and uniting Alaska Natives to fight for recognition that they are created equal to others and equally endowed with “unalienable Rights”;

Whereas Elizabeth was a powerful orator who envisioned unity and then spoke it into existence through community advocacy and the support of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and the Alaska Native Sisterhood;

Whereas Elizabeth testified strongly before the Alaska Territorial legislature vote on the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945, passionately asking the legislature, “Have you eliminated larceny or murder by passing a law against it? No law will eliminate crimes but, at least you as legislators, can assert to the world that you recognize the evil of the present situation and speak your intent to help us overcome discrimination.”;

Whereas the Alaska Territorial Legislature passed the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945 on February 16, 1945, which was the first anti-discrimination law enacted in the history of the United States;

Whereas Elizabeth dedicated the rest of her life to creating a better Alaska for future generations;

Whereas Elizabeth tragically died of cancer in 1958, but her legacy has not been forgotten;

Whereas, beginning in 1988, the State of Alaska has recognized February 16 as Elizabeth Peratrovich Day; and

Whereas, in 2020, the United States Mint released the Elizabeth Peratrovich \$1 coin to commemorate the significant impact that Elizabeth had on advancing equality under the law in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) designates February 16, 2024, as “National
3 Elizabeth Peratrovich Day”;

4 (2) calls on the people of the United States to
5 observe National Elizabeth Peratrovich Day by re-
6 membering the work of Elizabeth Wanamaker
7 Peratrovich and other civil rights leaders; and

8 (3) encourages the people of the United States
9 and Members of Congress to commemorate the life
10 and civil rights advocacy of Elizabeth Wanamaker
11 Peratrovich by continuing the important work of en-
12 suring equality for Alaska Natives and Native Amer-
13 icans.

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