



January 29, 2019

Ms. Gail Fenumiai  
Director, Division of Elections  
PO Box 110017  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Ms. Fenumiai,

Congratulations and welcome back to the Division of Elections, I look forward to working with you again.

In previous years, under your direction, there was some great work accomplished at the Division of Elections in partnership with Alaska Native organizations to increase early voting locations across Alaska. We hope we can continue to work with you to improve access and assistance to Alaskans across the state to ensure everyone has equal opportunity to make their voice heard.

There has been a lot of interest expressed to me through various outlets about the need for an early voting location at our hospitals, especially at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC). Many people throughout Alaska find themselves traveling to our urban hubs for medical care, which can include long stays that are often times unplanned.

We all can agree that voting is a fundamental right and we need to ensure access is available to all Alaskans. Unfortunately, I heard from too many individuals they were unable to vote due to the inability to get to a polling location during their hospital stay. I can personally attest to the difficulty through my experience in providing assistance. One particular story comes to mind of a gentleman who was unable to move from his hospital room during his care at ANMC, which was during the time state elections were taking place. His wife was in town with him but did not have transportation, so she reached out looking for assistance. After calling the Division of Elections to find out the process we were told she could pick up a ballot for her husband, so I picked her up from the hospital, drove her to the Division of Elections to pick up a ballot, drove her back to the hospital so he could cast his vote, drove her back to the Division of Elections to drop the ballot off, and then drove her back to the hospital. This took us roughly two hours. I am sure there are others who could not find the time or the transportation to make this happen, and other circumstances of those who may not have family near to help.

Over the years I have spoken with staff and the CEO of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and all have expressed their support and desire to have an early voting site located at the hospital.

I strongly encourage the Division of Elections to implement an early voting location at the Alaska Native Medical Center and all other hospitals as well. It is extremely important to ensure everyone has access to vote, to ensure every Alaskan has the opportunity to make his or her voice heard and counted. We can do this best by improving access and assistance.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance in making this happen. Native Peoples Action is committed to increasing access and equity in our democracy for all Alaska Native voices to be heard. I greatly appreciate you looking into this, and I hope we can make this positive change for Alaskans.

Gunalchéesh,

Kendra Kloster  
Executive Director  
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