Convention Protest Policy

I. Purpose and Guiding Values

The AFN Annual Convention is the largest gathering of Alaska Native people in the state, bringing together delegates, Tribal and regional leaders, state and federal officials, and other guests from across Alaska and beyond. It is held for the collective benefit of our people, and it is meant to embody and promote values that have guided Alaska Native communities for generations: respect for one another, respect for those who came before us, hospitality toward guests, balance between individual voice and collective responsibility, and the pursuit of unity—rather than division—through respectful dialogue.

Consistent with these values, AFN welcomes open, honest, and even difficult conversation on the issues that matter to our people. Free expression—including respectful disagreement, advocacy, and public demonstration—has a place at convention. At the same time, convention is a space of respect. Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit respectful expression, but rather to ensure that all participants may engage in convention activities safely and for the orderly conduct of convention activities.

III. A Place of Respect for All Guests

Every person present at convention—delegate, Tribal or corporate leader, state or federal official, dignitary, candidate, member of the press, or invited guest—is a guest of AFN while at convention and will be treated accordingly. This obligation of hospitality does not silence disagreement; it shapes how disagreement is expressed. Consistent with Alaska Native traditions of welcoming and honoring guests, protest activity at convention must never take the form of personal humiliation, intimidation, or disruption of another person's ability to speak, be heard, or move safely through convention spaces.

II. Definition of Protest

For purposes of this policy, “protest” means any organized or spontaneous action taken during convention to publicly express disagreement, opposition, or grievance regarding a person, organization, policy, decision, or issue. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Organized marches, rallies, or gatherings held on convention premises or in connection with convention activities;

- Group demonstrations, chanting, or coordinated walkouts during general sessions, caucuses, or other convention proceedings;
- The display of signs, banners, or apparel with the primary purpose of protesting a specific person, organization, or issue; and
- The distribution of flyers, petitions, or materials intended to organize opposition to a specific person, action, or resolution.

This definition does not include individual expressions of viewpoint made in the ordinary course of convention business — such as floor debate, testimony, resolution sponsorship, or questions to panelists and candidates — which are addressed through convention's standing rules of order rather than this policy.

IV. Flexibility — What Is Allowed

Outside the plenary room (main convention floor), and so long as it does not violate Section V below, a person may:

- Hold or wear a sign, button, or apparel expressing a position, value, or message, as long as it is not derogatory, obscene, or targeted at harassing, ridiculing, or personally demeaning a specific individual;
- Stand or sit quietly with a sign without obstructing another person's view or movement; or
- Wear clothing conveying a cultural, political, or advocacy message.

V. Prohibited Conduct

The following are not permitted at any time during convention while on convention premises:

- Signs, chants, or materials containing derogatory, obscene, racist, or personally demeaning language or imagery, or language that targets a specific person's character, family, or identity rather than their public position or actions;
- Blocking, following, surrounding, or physically confronting any individual, including delegates, candidates, or invited guests;
- Disrupting general sessions, caucuses, or cultural programs by shouting over speakers, refusing to yield the floor, or preventing others from hearing proceedings;
- Obstructing aisles, doorways, stages, or accessibility routes with signs, banners, bodies, equipment, or any other form of obstruction;
- Any threat, intimidation, or act that puts another person's safety at risk; and

- Use of sound amplification (bullhorns, speakers) inside convention facilities without prior authorization from convention staff.

VI. Process

- Organized demonstrations and protests are respectfully asked to be held outside the convention center.
- Groups planning an organized demonstration are encouraged to notify AFN convention staff in advance so that space, safety, and scheduling can be coordinated respectfully.
    - Advance notice helps AFN ensure a demonstration does not unintentionally overlap with a cultural protocol or another group's reserved activity.
- Convention staff and the Sergeant-at-Arms are authorized to redirect activity that violates this policy to a designated area or outside the convention center, or to ask participants to stop conduct prohibited under Section V.
- A participant who does not comply with a redirection request may be asked to leave the convention premises for the remainder of the day.
- Any conduct that threatens the safety of attendees will be referred immediately to venue security or local law enforcement.
- Questions about whether a planned activity fits within this policy should be directed to AFN convention staff in advance of convention.

VII. Content and Enforcement Neutrality

- This policy applies equally to all convention participants regardless of the position advocated and is intended only to ensure safety, accessibility, respect, and the orderly conduct of convention activities. AFN does not endorse or oppose any protest message because of the viewpoint expressed.