ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES
2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 26-50

TITLE: OPPOSING PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE 2030 DECENNIAL CENSUS AND PROTECTING ACCURATE ALASKA NATIVE DATA

WHEREAS: The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska and its membership includes 192 federally recognized tribes, 152 village corporations, 11 regional corporations and 11 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 United States decennial census is a foundational source of demographic information used to understand communities, inform public policy, and support the allocation of federal resources; and

WHEREAS: The proposed changes to the 2030 Decennial Census would alter the definition of “usual residence” and remove race and ethnicity questions, including the ability to identify American Indian and Alaska Native populations in census data; and

WHEREAS: The United States decennial census is a foundational source of demographic information used to understand communities, inform public policy, and support the allocation of federal resources; and

WHEREAS: Accurate American Indian and Alaska Native demographic data are essential to understanding the needs and circumstances of Alaska Native people and Tribal communities, including communities that have historically been undercounted; and

WHEREAS: Census data inform federal funding formulas, appropriations, program planning, and civil rights enforcement, including programs serving Tribal communities in housing, education, law enforcement, transportation, health, community development, and other essential services; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Native people may spend time away from their home communities for employment, education, health care, caregiving, military service, incarceration, housing, and other reasons, and changes to the “usual residence” rule could distort counts of Alaska Native people and the needs of their communities; and

WHEREAS: An undercount or miscount can make Tribal communities appear smaller or less in need than they are, weakening the data available to support services, resource allocation, and informed decision-making; and

WHEREAS: Tribal Nations are sovereign political entities, and Tribal citizenship is determined by each Tribal Nation under its own laws; census demographic data must not be conflated with Tribal citizenship or affiliation; and

WHEREAS: The federal government has a trust responsibility and government-to-government relationship with Tribal Nations, requiring meaningful and timely consultation on federal actions that may affect Tribal governments and their citizens; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates of the 2026 Annual AFN Convention request that the U.S. Census Bureau and U.S. Department of Commerce withdraw the proposed changes and retain current 2030 Census regulations unless and until meaningful Tribal consultation and a comprehensive assessment of impacts have occurred; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Census Bureau provide additional formal Tribal consultation opportunities and sufficient time for Tribal governments to review the proposal and submit comments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Census Bureau conduct and share a comprehensive impact analysis identifying federal programs, funding formulas, appropriations, statistical products, and civil rights enforcement activities that rely on American Indian and Alaska Native census demographic data, including potential impacts on Alaska Tribes and Alaska Native communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no existing American Indian and Alaska Native demographic measure be eliminated unless reliable alternatives have been validated and shown to provide accurate, comparable, community-level information for Alaska Native populations and rural Alaska communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any proposed “usual residence” criteria undergo Tribal-specific testing and analysis that accounts for Alaska Native people who spend time away from their communities for work, education, health care, caregiving, military service, incarceration, or housing instability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the Census Bureau work with Tribal Nations to improve the accuracy and completeness of American Indian and Alaska Native enumeration, preserve the visibility of multiracial American Indian and Alaska Native people, and protect the demographic data needed to understand and address disparities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that the federal government uphold its trust responsibility and government-to government obligations by ensuring that changes to census methods do not proceed without meaningful Tribal consultation and transparent assessment of foreseeable impacts on Tribal self-governance and essential services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: that AFN call on the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to hold congressional or field hearings for Tribal leaders to testify on the necessity and impacts of the proposed 2030 Decennial Census changes, including threats to Tribal sovereignty, cultural preservation, and government-to-government consultation, and affirm that changes affecting Tribal rights require congressional oversight and direct Tribal engagement, not merely administrative rulemaking; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AFN distribute this resolution to the U.S. Census Bureau, the U.S. Department of Commerce, Alaska's congressional delegation, the Alaska Governor and Legislature, federally recognized Tribes in Alaska, and relevant Tribal and intergovernmental organizations, and further, that AFN submit comments to Docket No. USBC-2026-0628 before the critical November 2, 2026, deadline; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that no existing American Indian and Alaska Native demographic measure be eliminated unless reliable alternative have been validated and shown to provide accurate, comparable, community-level information for Alaska Native populations and rural Alaska communities.

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SOUTHEAST ALASKA CAUCUS BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT ON OCTOBER 22, 2026

CONVENTION ACTION: ADOPTED ON THE FLOOR AND PASSED