

STATEMENT OF SENATOR DANIEL K. AKAKA
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs
May 15, 2003

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to be a cosponsor of this important measure. This bill ensures that Native American languages are preserved and revitalized by supporting the development of Native American Language Survival Schools and Native American Language Nests.

The culture and tradition of our indigenous peoples are closely tied to our Native languages. Some traditions can only be shared, understood, and appreciated through Native language. As public schools around the nation work toward fulfilling the No Child Left Behind requirements, we must also ensure that "no Native language should be left behind."

We have come a long way since the enactment of the Native American Languages Act of 1990, and I am pleased to have witnessed increased interest and appreciation for our indigenous cultures. As more of us learn to speak the languages of our

ancestors, we gain insight into the ways of our peoples. There is so much to learn, and the preservation of our Native languages is the key to this wealth of information.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to support this important initiative. Together, we will ensure that future generations of our indigenous peoples have the opportunity to appreciate their culture, tradition, and history through the preservation of Native American languages.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to make this statement.