

Now we look forward to the next 40 years of ANCSA. I call on my colleagues in this Chamber to work together to help all American Indian and Alaska Native people gain their economic independence. Through ANCSA, we see this happening in Alaska. Alaska Native groups are proud of their culture and heritage but also of their business success. We all should be proud of this success.

In Alaska, we innovate. We rely on fresh approaches to solve our unique challenges. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act is such an example. It was a monumental act of Congress—one my father pushed forward and I know is profoundly successful and one that today I profoundly defend.

With our national economy in its current state, we need more of this in America. We need to lift our people to build capacity and to allow the first people of this Nation to succeed. When that happens, we all benefit.

Madam President, Senator MURKOWSKI and I ask you and our colleagues to support this resolution to recognize and honor the impact and importance of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. More important, it honors Alaska's first people and their extraordinary accomplishments over the past 40 years.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

NOMINATION OF MORGAN CHRISTEN

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Madam President, I feel as if this is a little bit of Alaska day here. We just celebrated the very successful nomination of Morgan Christen to the Ninth Circuit. I am really quite proud of Morgan and her accomplishments. As an Alaskan and as an Alaskan woman, to achieve what Morgan has achieved, to be the example she has set makes me quite proud today. So I am pleased the Senate gave her such a resounding confirmation. This is quite significant for us, and Alaskans are feeling good today.

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

Ms. MURKOWSKI. As Senator BEGICH mentioned, Alaskans are celebrating other occasions this week as well.

I rise today to speak about a resolution Senator BEGICH and I have submitted that recognizes December 18, 2011, as the 40th anniversary of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Our resolution recognizes and commends the significant achievements Alaska Native people have made over the past 40 years through their congressionally created Alaska Native corporations.

Not only has the Alaska community risen to the challenge of creating sustainable businesses, but they have created employment opportunities for our

Nation's citizens really across the country—not just located in the State of Alaska but really all across our country and through the world. Alaska Native corporations continue to make significant contributions to their communities, our Nation, and the global economy, and for this they should be commended and they should be applauded.

Our resolution encourages the citizens of the United States to acknowledge and support the leadership and continued efforts of Alaska Native people in managing their resources through the Alaska Native corporations. The resolution also sends a strong message of support to thousands of Alaska Native youth from across the State who are working and contributing positively to their families and to their communities, focusing their efforts on earning a college education, participating in cultural activities, and realizing a dream that they may one day earn places of leadership within their own corporations. Their efforts are recognized and appreciated.

Over this coming weekend, Alaska Natives and advocates from across the United States will participate in community dialogs and celebratory events to reflect upon what has been accomplished over these past 40 years since passage of ANCSA. Participants will focus on the next steps that are needed to improve upon the continued success and the unity of Alaska Native tribes, villages, and our corporations.

Through their participation and commitment to management of their resources through the vehicle of Alaska Native corporations, many young Alaska Native people will embark upon a lifetime journey of service, community engagement, and philanthropy. Alaska Native corporations have afforded a unique opportunity for Alaska Native people to gain valuable insights into the business world, while maintaining thoughtful focus on issues concerning Alaska Native tribes and communities.

The next generation of Alaska Native people will continue to make positive changes in the world around them through acquired leadership skills, cultural advocacy, and community engagement, and through their dedication and enthusiasm, the next generation of leaders honors the previous generation of Alaska Native leaders who really worked so very diligently to achieve the passage of the most significant Native lands settlement in our Nation's history.

In addition to all of the very remarkable young people who will one day be managers and policymakers of their Native corporations, I honor the work of those who contributed to the success of the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. It was no easy feat negotiating this very complex piece of litigation. It took the drafters years for the settlement to be discussed, to be interpreted, analyzed, debated, negotiated, and finalized. It was truly an accomplishment.

While no piece of legislation can claim perfection, the original drafters of the ANCSA bill worked tirelessly to achieve a fair and a just settlement for the native people of Alaska and the ever-evolving document has had a number of significant amendments that have considerably improved the original bill.

While a list acknowledging all of the Alaska Native leaders and advocates who worked on the act would prove impossibly long, I wish to recognize a few of the people who have since passed, who played an instrumental and an unforgettable role in its passage.

First, U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Secretary Udall. I had both TOM and MARK UDALL sitting right in front of me before I began my comments here. It is a tribute to him that he did so much in his service as Secretary of the Interior. Also our own Senator Ted Stevens and his efforts; U.S. Congressman Nick Begich, who was instrumental in passage of ANCSA, and Morris Thompson, who is an Athabaskan out of the Koyukon area. It was back in 1966 that Stewart Udall, who was Secretary of the Interior then, responded to pleas from Alaska Native groups, imposed a "land freeze" on all land in Alaska under Federal control, which amounted to about 96 percent of all the land in the State at the time. Secretary Udall helped develop a program for solutions to the Native land claims issue throughout the State. Although ANCSA at that time was still in its infancy, the freeze prevented the transfer of all remaining Federal lands and would remain in effect until the Native land claims were resolved. Without that freeze, the Alaska Native people might have won their claim but they may not have had lands to select.

Senator Stevens, in his role, called his work on the unprecedented landmark legislation of ANCSA his Senate baptism of fire. In a 1991 newspaper article, the Senator is quoted as saying that he believed a settlement could be achieved because of his "faith in the determination and the unity of purpose of Alaska's Native people." Senator Stevens was one of the advocates who pushed for the 40-million-acre land provision versus the 1 million acres the White House had initially proposed.

With threats looming that subcommittee sessions would be called off, which would effectively end a negotiated settlement, Congressman Nick Begich played a key role in keeping the legislative process moving. By the end of the negotiations, the subcommittee package was a tribute to the Congressman's role as architect of the House compromise. One veteran lobbyist said:

It is the best individual achievement I have ever heard of for a freshman Congressman.

I would be remiss in not mentioning the very unforgettable Morris Thompson. At 34 years old, Morris was the youngest commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He held a Cabinet position in the Nixon administration and,

with his Interior Department positions, Morris was very deeply involved in passage of the ANCSA at the time. He was a prominent leader in the Native, corporate, and political worlds. He was known for a good sense of humor, wit, and wisdom, but was also a very savvy businessman who led Doyon, which was an Alaska Native regional corporation, to great success. His lifelong commitment to the people and progress of Alaska truly lives on in his legacy.

I am proud of all these people. I value their idealism, their energy, dedication, and unique perspectives they brought to the table in working toward the initial crafting of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

I thank Senator BEGICH for standing with me to submit this important resolution that acknowledges the hard work of the Alaska Native people in the success of their Alaska Native corporations on this 40th anniversary of passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. I know Congressman YOUNG joins with us in celebrating this anniversary as well.

HONORING RAY MALA

Since, as I mentioned, we are working a little bit on Alaska Day, I wish also to take a couple of moments here to recognize yet another Alaskan leader, truly an Alaskan legend. Two days after Christmas of this year would have marked the 105th birthday of an Alaska legend, Ray Mala. Despite insurmountable odds, Ray Mala dared to dream and he went on to become our Nation's first Native American international film star. He would have been 105, or he will have been, 2 days after Christmas, but he was our Nation's first Native American international film star. He was born in the remote village of Candle, to an immigrant father of Russian Jewish descent. He was fluent in both English and his mother's native language of Inupiat. He was a skilled hunter. He learned the Inupiat ways from his maternal grandmother, Nancy Armstrong, and while the family lived a traditional lifestyle, Mala learned to walk in both the traditional and modern worlds. Facing poverty, Mala was a very accomplished hunter, using a bow and arrow to catch whatever food he would bring home. Wearing a handmade fur parka, he and his grandmother would traverse through harsh arctic storms in pursuit of subsistence land animals. When they would return home, Mala would pour himself into academic studies at the local school, always striving to improve himself.

At age 16 he made his acting debut in the film "Primitive Love." Mala was initially hired as a laborer on the remote film set there in the State, but film makers discovered his natural talent behind the camera and, as I say, the rest is history. He was bitten by the acting bug. Mala set out for Hollywood. He worked his way up from sweeping the stage floors to being an assistant cameraman at Fox Studios.

Initially he was turned down for any leading roles because of the his mixed

Eskimo-Jewish heritage, but Mala landed his first role in the silent film "Igloo," which was shot in Barrow, AK. The film's success earned him the title of the Eskimo Clark Gable.

In 1932, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, MGM Studios, sent a film crew from Hollywood to Nome. My mother was born in Nome in 1932. Nome was a pretty interesting community back there, still very rough around the edges, but they sent a film crew to Nome to begin shooting the film that would thrust Mala into stardom. MGM struck gold with the film "Eskimo," a film also called "Mala the Magnificent," the first full-length feature film ever shot in Alaska. Mala became Alaska's first Hollywood film star and also the first nonwhite actor cast in a leading role. Over the span of his career, Mala would appear in over 25 films, all the while winning devoted fans across generations, across cultures—they loved him. His widely acclaimed role in "Eskimo" would earn Mala his place in Hollywood history.

He was more than an actor. He also excelled in cinematography and screenwriting. Keep in mind, this is a young Eskimo boy, raised in the traditional ways back in the early 1900s. Not only is he picked up by Hollywood and is a phenomenal actor, but he also excels in cinematography and screenwriting. He worked on films with many legendary filmmakers, including Alfred Hitchcock and Cecil B. DeMille. But his blossoming career was cut short by his death at age 45 due to heart complications. Mala faced many challenging personal circumstances, such as racial discrimination, at a very early age. But that did not prevent him from achieving both personal and professional excellence. I am sure he would be very proud to see that his grandson was following in his acting footsteps.

This year, in her newly released book "Eskimo Star," author Lael Morgan chronicled the inspirational life story of Ray Mala, and the State of Alaska hosted a Ray Mala film festival celebrating Mala's films in community theaters from Juneau all the way up to Point Hope.

It is a great honor for me to reflect on the life of this inspirational Alaska Native icon, and to offer a tribute to his spirited and very triumphant journey from small-town village boy to silver screen leading man. Alaskans look forward to the day when Ray Mala's magnificent star might be posthumously added to the Hollywood Walk of Fame, a tribute to the Nation's first ever Native American film star.

It is a good way to end our Alaska day series. I appreciate the indulgence of my colleagues.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The Senator from Iowa.

THE ECONOMY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, it seems the President of the United States has finally acknowledged that the economy is in a terrible state and there is nothing he can do about it. So, rather than offer new ideas to grow the economy, the President has now shifted into blame mode. I recognize that the slow economic growth and high levels of unemployment are having a significant impact on the middle class. But rather than listen to political rhetoric and witness finger pointing by President Obama, the unemployed would likely prefer ideas, ideas on how to turn this economy around.

I presume President Obama aspired to lead the country because he believed he had the vision and the ability to lead to a more prosperous nation. But beyond the vision, a President also needs a plan and the leadership to put that vision into place. Where is that leadership? During the past 3 years, we witnessed President Obama's theory on economic stimulus. We saw a massive expansion of government and deficit spending. More than \$800 billion was spent on a failed economic stimulus bill that was supposed to keep unemployment below 8 percent. But it did not. Government spending in the process has reached an unprecedented level. Today, the size of government, if you combine local, State, and Federal, is 40 percent of our gross national product. One hundred years ago when Teddy Roosevelt delivered his speech in Kansas, it was 8 percent. I refer to Teddy Roosevelt and the speech in Kansas because the President of the United States now tried to duplicate that speech 100 years later.

Today, government consumes 40 percent of the entire economy. According to economic policies of President Obama, government needs to grow even bigger to help our economy, and in the process there is a goal to use government to redistribute wealth. If government gets a little bit bigger, the argument goes, and if it gets a little more involved, and particularly if it gets involved in every facet of our economy and our lives, that will surely increase economic prosperity of all Americans. Right?

Of course not. All of this has led to taxes and deficit spending that crowd out private investment that could grow the economy and, in the process, create jobs. Government doesn't create self-sustaining jobs; government only creates government jobs. The private sector creates jobs. It is the responsibility of the government to create an environment that leads to job growth. It does this by instituting the rule of law, property rights, the patent system, among others—and there are a lot of others I ought to add to it. Government sets the tone.

Remember, government consumes well, it does not create well. Through economic freedom, entrepreneurs are free to innovate and prosper. This economic success leads to higher standards of living and a better quality of