

Sullivan	Tillis	Vance
Thune	Tuberville	Wicker

NOT VOTING—3

Murkowski	Rubio	Sanders
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The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SCHATZ). Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider with respect to the Falk and Zakheim nominations are considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

TRIBUTE TO FRANK HUGHES AND LINCOLN BEAN

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, it is Thursday, and it has been a while since I have been on the floor here on a Thursday afternoon, but it is my favorite time of the week because I get to do something that I certainly enjoy. We have a new set of pages here. I think they enjoy it, and I know some in our media enjoy it because it kind of signals the end of the week here. But it is when I get to talk about an Alaskan—or Alaskans, plural—who are doing great stuff for our State or their community or maybe even the country, somebody I refer to as the Alaskan of the week. We have been doing this for, geez, quite some time. I think 5 or 6 years, going on that. We have covered a lot of ground.

And before I talk about our two Alaskans of the week—special Alaskans—I usually give an update about what is going on in the great State of Alaska for anyone watching on TV. We have people back in the Gallery. So we love that.

We always do a plug for Alaska. You have to get up there. Take a vacation with your family. You will love it. You will have the vacation adventure of a lifetime.

So I usually give an update of what has been going on. We have had an intense winter, a lot of snow, particularly in Southcentral Alaska, where I live. Schools have even been closed. That is very rare for our State, to close schools because of winter or really cold weather, but we have had both—some cold snaps, some warming—and much winter fun, as you can imagine, if you love winter sports.

The winter solstice has already come and gone since my last “Alaskan of the Week” and so have Christmas and the holidays. By the way, there is no better place to spend Christmas than in Alaska, where a man named Santa Claus—a good man, by the way—lives in North Pole, AK, and even runs for Congress. You may have seen that news last year. He didn't win, but he is a good guy. I know him well: Santa—Santa Claus—a politician in North Pole, AK.

Now, our two Alaskans of the week are Frank Hughes and Lincoln Bean. They are both Alaska Native leaders, longtime community leaders and members of the organized village of Kake. Kake is a village of about 500 people in beautiful—gorgeous, actually—Southeast Alaska. So, again, if you are vis-

iting, you have to come to Southeast. But we are such a big State that you have to go everywhere.

Now, Frank and Lincoln know what the holidays are about, which we just celebrated, and because of their efforts, they and many others in Kake got a very special early Christmas gift this year that I want to talk to everybody about.

On November 18, both Frank and Lincoln were on a plane from Oregon back home to Alaska. In the belly of the plane was a 40-gallon bin locked with zip ties, filled with 25 precious Native objects, some estimated to be up to 200 years old. And because of their efforts, these precious, sacred objects and the spirits in them were coming home once again and are now resting in Kake, where these objects belong.

Those items include baskets, a head-dress, a replica of a canoe, ceremonial paddles, and rattles used by Tlingit spiritual medicine men. There was also a wooden mask, which would have been carved into a tree in Kake as a territorial marker. Frank said the mask would have had to have been cut out of the body of the tree to be removed.

These items were painfully and lovingly crafted by the village's Tlingit ancestors generations ago, precious items that didn't belong to others but were taken—in some cases, ripped from villages—without even a thought of whom they belonged to. But like I said, now they are home, and, according to Frank and Lincoln, both say that the spirits within these sacred objects are also at home and at peace.

So who are Frank and Lincoln, and why did they think it was so important to bring these items back to their village of Kake?

This is an effort, one of many, being taken across the country since Congress passed the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990. NAGPRA is the acronym. This congressional act requires any public institution receiving Federal money, like colleges and museums, to return indigenous human remains—yes, these institutions literally have human remains—and cultural items to Tribes or descendants throughout America, to Native communities, wherever possible.

Since then, many artifacts have been, and are continuing to be, returned to Tribes in Alaska and in the lower 48. Still, it is a slog. Many institutions, believe it or not, are not always cooperative—big institutions, famous American institutions.

According to the National Park Service, remains from more than 108,000—let me say that number again—108,000 indigenous people and more than 600,000 artifacts are known to be still held by museums, universities, and Federal Agencies across the country. Think about that. Your ancestors' bones are in a museum somewhere. Not acceptable.

My wife Julie is on the board of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the

American Indian and actually serves on the repatriation committee. And the process can be tedious. But it is so important for the communities who have had artifacts removed from their communities—or remains, for goodness' sake—removed from their communities. It is so important for these communities to be able to heal. It is certainly not always easy to identify these objects, for the recipients to request them, and then to get these objects back to where they belong. And it takes work and determination and, literally, years, particularly for small villages like Kake, which don't have a museum or a trained curator. But Frank and Lincoln and others in the community had the will and determination to make this happen. So a big shout-out to them. That is why they are Alaskans of the week today.

They had a letter—and this is a university, by the way—George Fox University in Newberg, OR, a private Christian college that reached out to Kake—very cooperative, by the way—telling them they thought they had some items that might belong to the village.

By the way, that is a great example of a university—an institution—doing the right thing: helping, taking the initiative. It is unclear exactly how the artifacts made their way a thousand miles to George Fox University in Oregon in the first place. There were Quaker missionaries in Alaska in 1891, and George Fox University was founded in 1891 by the Quakers. So Frank and Lincoln think there is probably a pretty good chance that there is some connection between the missionaries and the artifacts.

And the process, as I mentioned, has taken a long time, starting back in 2018, when Frank was the coordinator for NAGPRA and Lincoln was a council member. As a coordinator, Frank had done many indigenous artifact repatriations across the country, but when the community received the letter from George Fox University, they both got very excited because this was their home village. Some of them, they thought, might be artifacts from members of the Eagle and Raven clans in Kake. These are Tlingit, Haida clans in southeast Alaska.

Now, a little bit about both of these great Alaskans. Frank is an Army veteran. By the way, Alaska Natives—they are both Alaska Native leaders—serve at higher rates in the U.S. military than any other ethnic group in the country. Special patriotism, I refer to this as. And Frank is a great example of that. You go to Native communities, Native villages in Alaska, you ask to raise your hands for veterans, and pretty much every male in the village, in communities I have been to raise their hand. It is unbelievable, the patriotism and service of guys like Frank. He spent his career serving his country. When he got out of the Army, he worked as a substance abuse counselor, as an EMT, served on his village council, and continued serving by being the

commander of the veterans of Kake, his village, and making sure his Alaskan Native veterans got the care and benefits they have earned.

Lincoln also spent his career helping his fellow Alaskans in his community. He has been a tenacious advocate for self-determination and for healthcare for Alaska Natives, particularly Alaska Native veterans. He did an amazing job. And I saw him in action for many years as chair of the Alaskan Native Health Board, which is an extremely important organization for our whole State, where he did a great job leading that for healthcare for all Alaska Natives. So that is a little bit about Frank and Lincoln's background.

As I mentioned, in 2018, they get this letter. Wow. We have a great opportunity here to get artifacts from their village back home. They got involved, undertook the very tedious process of reaching out, writing grants. And by the time they were ready to go, COVID hit. So, of course, that set them back and everybody back. They had to wait.

Finally, the two, as we were coming out of COVID, reenergized their efforts. They took a plane from Kake to Juneau, Juneau to Seattle, Seattle to Portland, where they went to George Fox University.

By the way, as I mentioned, it was very, very gracious, very respectful. They actually held a ceremony at the university. The university wanted these items to be returned. They knew it was the right thing to do. It was an emotional experience for all.

So they started to bring back the objects, the artifacts. This is how Frank described it. When he was there, when the box of items that had been in storage at the university for about 100 years was put in front of him, he said:

It was like running into an air-conditioned room. And then when they opened up the box [with the artifacts and objects from our village, it was like] the sun hit them, it was like spirits hitting me in the face.

"Can you feel the spirits?" he asked other people gathered in the room.

Lincoln said that he could feel it, particularly when they opened the boxes of the rattles that belonged to his family—imagine that feeling—and his clan, the Eagle Clan, with the Killer Whale House. Lincoln said:

It was like looking directly back at my family's heritage.

He said he felt a certain wholeness when he saw the items. A piece of his culture and that of his community that had been missing for so long was now back. When they got back to Kake, a crowd was there to greet them. They sang greetings songs. They ate traditional food.

And then, as per the guidelines, Frank filled out the last paperwork—you always have paperwork when you are dealing with the Feds—and put his hand up and said: I am relieved of duty. I got it done.

Lincoln's next project is to build a Tribal house along with a wellness center where these and all the artifacts

and art can live in a temperature-controlled room so the spirits he was talking about can be there—set free, back home to pass down the wisdom to the next generation.

As Lincoln said:

It's powerful looking back on people we know that were here before us—as a family, as a tribe—and it's tangible, we can touch it.

And now they are back home. Because of their efforts, Frank and Lincoln and the whole community in Kake can now experience this power. They can touch it.

So to my friends, Frank and Lincoln, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year to Kake. Thank you for the great job you have done—the determination—and congratulations once again on being our Alaskans of the Week.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). The Senator from Alaska.

WILLOW PROJECT

Mr. SULLIVAN. Mr. President, yesterday, as some of my colleagues may know, the Federal Government issued the final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement on what is called the Willow Project in Alaska. This is a very large oil and gas development in my State. It has been in permitting for about 20 years—20 years. That is a whole other topic. We don't need 20 years to do anything in terms of permitting.

But I want to first begin by thanking several of my Senate colleagues, particularly a number of my Democratic Senate colleagues who have been reaching out to the Biden administration and saying: Hey, you guys need to move this Willow Project forward, for reasons I am going to talk about.

By the way, I am going to talk about this a lot for the next 30 days here on the floor. It is so important to my State, my constituents, but to America. But I want to begin by thanking so many of my Senate colleagues—a big number of them. I am not sure they all want to be recognized. So I won't recognize any of those. Senator MANCHIN put a statement out on this yesterday. But a number of them—especially my Democratic colleague friends—reached out over the last several weeks of the Biden administration saying: Hey, it is time; it is time. This is good for Alaska, good for America, good for our environment.

So I want to talk a little bit about this. As I mentioned, I will be down here talking a lot about this because it is so darned important to Alaska and, I would argue, America.

This project, as I mentioned, has been under some kind of regulatory review since ConocoPhillips got the leases from the Federal Government during the Clinton administration, the late 1990s. Again, something that people always forget: This is a lease from the Federal Government to the private sector. They paid hundreds of millions of dollars for these leases. We are in a contract with the Feds saying we are going to explore and then develop.

It is also in what is called the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska,

NPRA. It is not a controversial area, unlike ANWR—we recognize that—or some of the offshore developments. This is the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska. This was set aside by Congress, this body, I think almost 70 years ago. It used to be called the Naval Petroleum Reserve of Alaska. For what? For developing identifying oil and gas, which our country needs—still needs. It is going to need it for decades to come.

So the review process has been going on for years. Every environmental review, this project advances with flying colors. I will get to that. The Trump administration finished the permitting with a record of decision in 2020. They approved five drilling pads. The Biden administration, after some court delays—and to be honest, after delays from the Biden administration—came back, finally, with a supplemental final EIS and said: We are going to go from five pads down to three.

All right. That is not what I would have preferred. But these are the career people. And they think that this can be developed with this new plan. We would agree. But that is a bare minimum. There were some indications yesterday that the administration is still looking at maybe less. We have 30 more days to review this. And they are looking at maybe less pads.

Well, we have all stated—the private sector companies stated: Hey, anything less than this, you are essentially killing it, because you can't make this an economically viable project.

So let me just give a little bit of a background on this because it is so important, and then I want to make a few points that relate to the voices that need to be heard as it relates to the Willow project.

We could start building this tomorrow. This is clearly a shovel-ready project. We only build, in Alaska, projects like this in the winter because we have such high environmental standards, the highest in the world. We build ice roads, ice paths so we don't disrupt the tundra, and we only, generally, build from January to April. The Conoco team is ready. Estimates are 2,500 jobs—2,500 jobs. Could we use that in America? Could we use that in Alaska? Darn right we could.

By the way, the estimate is 75 percent of those jobs will be union jobs, building trade jobs. That is why the laborers—pretty much every major union in the country—has viewed this as one of their top priorities, not just for Alaska, for America.

Revenues are about \$17 billion for Federal, State, and local governments—\$17 billion. America, Alaska, the North Slope Borough could all use that.

Racial equity, racial justice. I come down here and speak a lot about why resource development in Alaska is so important because it mostly happens in the rural communities in my State where people, primarily indigenous people, don't have the things that the