

Levi Cleveland, Shungnak
Alaska Rural Justice and Law Enforcement Commission
Kotzebue
February 24, 2005

Tae'goo (Inupiat phonetic).

I don't have a written testimony. But I – going to bring out one Elder out of so many Elders in the eleven villages.

Without a VPSO, I sit in my house just like a duck with a broken wing and that's how helpless I am if somebody comes into my house under the influence of alcohol.

So it is important that we need to look at this or do something about it. We just can't talk about it and help our Elders or our people in the villages so far away from the law enforcement, hospital and all that we have.

And it's very important. You're just hearing it from just one Elder. There are many, many Elders out there that do sit and like I do at home every day; every night. And it is important that we need to do something about it.

A hearing like this is – it's okay. But you're not getting everything that you need to hear from the villages. With all of this stuff; with all the people here sitting behind you and you're not going to get everything that you need to hear. Because nobody's going to tell you that. But we need to do it in different form so we can get the stuff that you need to hear that happened in the villages. You're just getting the good part of it; most of it. If its—There's still a lot more out there in the villages that happen because we're getting into something that we never get into before.

The drugs that they're getting now is a horrible stuff that they're getting.

We're not going to bring that out to you because nobody's going to tell you that. But we need to do something about it; maybe individually – one person goes out to the villages and go around to the houses and maybe three or four or five houses and talk to each people in the houses privately.

People are not going to tell you they have all this stuff. So we need to do better than that. We got lots to cover and we need to do lots more to help our people; our Elders.

And I want to thank you very much for your time. Tae'goo.

JUSTIN: Thank you. Questions? Comments? Commissioner Bullard.

BULLARD: I just had a question. This was raised—We had a hearing yesterday in Nome and we're having our Regional conference there and we had probably about the same number of individuals that testified.

And I think that one of the things that came up is that particularly in our smaller communities, people know whose bootlegging; they know whose selling drugs. Many times they're aware of domestic violence situations or neglectful situations of children. But that people are fearful of reporting those situations because of the concern about retribution.

Do you think that inhibits people reporting in the villages here in the Kotzebue area?

CLEVELAND: It is. It's the same all over. Like I said, nobody's going to tell you what's happening in the villages because of all the this on the air and everything.

But there might be some way to go out in the villages or however – individually or privately or however we want to do it -- you want to do it, I think that's the best way to do it.

BULLARD: I'm just trying to figure out – is there a way to address the retribution issue? That's what I'm asking for.

CLEVELAND: There should be. I mean, its there. It's going to take a little while probably to it.

JUSTIN: Other questions? Comments? Governor's Office?

Levi, thank you much and I want to thank you for your prayer when we started.

CLEVELAND: Thank you. Anytime.

END OF STATEMENT