

STATE OF ALASKA



Executive Proclamation by Governor Mike Dunleavy

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Wanamaker Peratrovich, an Alaska Native woman of the Tlingit Nation, set Alaska on the path of ensuring that every man, woman, and child is afforded equal opportunity and protection from discrimination. Leaving a permanent mark on Alaska's history, Mrs. Peratrovich persistently campaigned against the pattern of discrimination against Alaska Natives that plagued the Alaska territory; and

WHEREAS, despite being granted citizenship in 1924, having fought alongside white comrades in World War II, and paying taxes, among other things, Alaska Natives were consistently discriminated against and restricted on where they could eat, live, receive medical care, and attend school; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth and her husband fought for their campaign tirelessly, and after four years of penning legislation, enlisting the help of other Alaska Natives, and lobbying territorial legislators for their support, their Anti-Discrimination Bill passed the House and was sent to the Senate in 1945; and

WHEREAS, a two-hour long hearing ensued, with Territorial Senators spewing inflammatory comments, when Elizabeth finally stood, commanding the attention of all in the room. Her impassioned and eloquent speech successfully gained the support needed, and at last the first Anti-Discrimination Law in the United States was passed—remarkably, 14 years before Alaska Statehood; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth continued her humanitarian work championing civil rights until her untimely death on December 1, 1958 at the age of 47. Many consider her the face of civil rights in Alaska. She has awards, buildings, and monuments named in her honor and, most recently in 2020, the United States Mint issued five million \$1 coins honoring Elizabeth and the passing of the Anti-Discrimination Law of 1945; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth Wanamaker Peratrovich left behind a strong and inspiring legacy, and will forever be a woman of distinction, exceptional courage, and a beacon of hope to many. Each year on February 16, we honor and celebrate her life and her contributions to freedom and equality. This is a day for all people to reaffirm belief in the principles of social equality and respect for all.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Mike Dunleavy, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA, do hereby proclaim February 16, 2021 as:

Elizabeth Peratrovich Day

in Alaska, and encourage all Alaskans to honor the life and legacy of one of Alaska's most distinguished women and to celebrate, support, and respect every individual within all communities.

Dated: February 16, 2021



A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Mike Dunleavy".

*Mike Dunleavy, Governor
who has also authorized the
seal of the State of Alaska to
be affixed to this proclamation.*