

## PRESS RELEASE



### **Anchorage Assembly Leadership Condemns Racist Testimony**

**October 18, 2022**

At last Tuesday's Regular Assembly Meeting, statements made by a member of the public during public testimony invoked racist stereotypes that were based on misinformation. In response, Chair Suzanne LaFrance and Vice Chair Christopher Constant have issued the following statement:

"As the Assembly Leadership, we want to speak out against the racist and offensive statements made by the member of the public. Unfortunately, this is not the first time racist views have been expressed in the Assembly Chambers. The First Amendment gives wide latitude to members of the public to express opinions, even hateful ones, and this latitude extends to the Assembly Chambers.

"We are saddened by the pain the statements have caused to our friends, neighbors and community members who are Alaska Native. We want everyone in our community to feel welcome, safe and valued. Our community is full of rich and diverse cultures that should be celebrated and acknowledged for their important contributions to our society, culture, government, schools, and economy. We recognize that there is much work to be done to end racism and ensure that everyone is treated with respect.

"As to the comments the member of the public made pertaining to housing and homelessness, the Assembly will continue to work diligently with the community and the Administration to solve this complex issue until everyone who resides in the Municipality of Anchorage feels welcome and has a place to call home. More information is available here: <https://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Pages/FOCUS-Housing-and-Homelessness.aspx>."

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