

**CITY OF WHITTIER, ALASKA
RESOLUTION 2025-020**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF WHITTIER, ALASKA,
ENCOURAGING VOTING RIGHTS FOR CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES AND
U.S. TERRITORIES, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO AMERICAN SAMOA, IN
STATE OF ALASKA AND LOCAL ELECTIONS**

WHEREAS, the City of Whittier, a culturally diverse community of just over 250 full-time residents, is home to a broad range of residents from various U.S. states, territories, and ethnic backgrounds, including a significant number from American Samoa, who together contribute to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of our city; and

WHEREAS, concerns have been raised regarding unequal treatment of some territorial residents, notably American Samoans, and their access to voting rights and equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS, American Samoans in Whittier are valued members of our diverse community, serving important roles in the public and private sector, volunteering in our community, and actively participating in community events that help bring us together and strengthen our ties to each other; and

WHEREAS, the American Samoan community in Alaska has at times faced discrimination, contributing to a sense of second-class treatment; and

WHEREAS, on September 5, 2024, approximately two dozen Alaska State Troopers entered Whittier without the knowledge of Whittier City officials or law enforcement in a caravan of unmarked vehicles, investigating American Samoan residents regarding their immigration status and voting activities; and

WHEREAS, on January 17, 2025, the City of Whittier filed a public records request to the Alaska Department of Public Safety requesting any and all public records associated with the Trooper incident, to which the Department replied “the record is not known to exist”; and

WHEREAS, on January 30, 2025, the Whittier City Attorney filed a separate public records request to the Alaska Department of Public Safety requesting any and all public records associated with the incident, to which the Department replied that the nondisclosure of the record was authorized by a federal or state law or regulation and that the records request could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings; and

WHEREAS, American Samoans in Whittier, including residents that are U.S. citizens, have expressed fear of State prosecution following the trooper incident and many American Samoan residents have withdrawn from participation in local government and community events; and

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41 **WHEREAS**, the Whittier City Council is committed to fostering an inclusive and
42 equitable community that upholds the dignity and rights of all its residents, regardless of their
43 race, ethnicity, or territorial status; and

44 **WHEREAS**, the City is dedicated to upholding and complying with the Alaska
45 Constitution and all federal, State, and local laws and values its collaborative relationship with
46 the Alaska State Troopers and the importance of avoiding any interference with lawful
47 investigations by the Alaska State Troopers; but

48 **WHEREAS**, the City encourages the Alaska State Troopers to provide the City with the
49 requested records and to communicate with the community to reassure Whittier residents and the
50 advocates that support them that the September 5, 2024 incident was lawful;

51 **NOW, THEREFORE, THE WHITTIER CITY COUNCIL HEREBY RESOLVES**
52 **THAT:**

- 53 1. The Whittier City Council reaffirms its support for equal voting rights in state and
54 local elections for all residents who are citizens of the United States or its territories,
55 including those born in American Samoa.
56
57 2. That the Whittier City Council encourages a constitutional amendment to Art. V,
58 Section 1 of the Alaska Constitution that reads as follows:

59 [e]very citizen of the United States **or a territory of the United States** who is at least
60 eighteen years of age, who meets registration residency requirements which may be
61 prescribed by law, and who is qualified to vote under this article, may vote in any state
62 or local election. A voter shall have been, immediately preceding the election, a thirty
63 day resident of the election district in which he seeks to vote, except that for purposes
64 of voting for President and Vice President of the United States other residency
65 requirements may be prescribed by law. Additional voting qualifications may be
66 prescribed by law for bond issue elections of political subdivisions.

- 67 3. That the Whittier City Council supports a revision to Alaska Statute AS 15.05.010 to
68 ensure inclusion of U.S. territorial residents as eligible voters for state and local
69 elections under the same residency and registration criteria that reads as follows:

70
71 A person may vote at any election who
72 (1) is a citizen of the United States **or a territory of the United States;**
73 (2) is 18 years of age or older;
74 (3) has been a resident of the state and of the house district in which the person seeks
75 to vote for at least 30 days just before the election; and
76 (4) has registered before the election as required under AS 15.07 and is not registered
77 to vote in another jurisdiction.

- 78 4. That the Whittier City Council respectfully requests that the Alaska Legislature and
79 Alaska Governor Dunleavy adopt the proposed amendments in this resolution,

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80 recognizing the need for equitable treatment of territorial residents in Alaska’s electoral
81 process; and

82 5. That the Whittier City Council affirms its commitment to protecting the rights of all
83 residents who are lawful U.S. citizens and territorial nationals, and who meet Alaska’s
84 voting requirements, to fully participate in local elections; and

85 6. That the Whittier City Council respectfully requests that Whittier residents that
86 participated in State and local elections without understanding that unlike all other U.S.
87 territories, citizens of the American Samoa are not considered citizens for voting
88 purposes in State and local elections, be given the minimum punishment permissible
89 under law and that the State of Alaska increase its education efforts and voter
90 information to assist the American Samoan community in understanding their unique
91 voter status and the steps required for them to lawfully vote in State and local elections;
92 and

93 7. The Whittier City Manager, or her designee, is authorized and directed to transmit this
94 resolution to the Alaska Department of Public Safety, the Alaska Department of Law,
95 Governor Dunleavy, the Alaska Legislature, and other relevant government entities or
96 public officials, and to take any and all other actions necessary to implement this
97 resolution.

98 PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the Whittier City Council
99 on this 29th day of April, 2025.

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105 AYES:

106 NOES:

107 ABSENT:

108 ABSTAIN:

109

110 ATTEST:

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112

113 **Shelby Carlson**

114 City Clerk

Daniel Blair

Mayor

(City Seal)