

Alaska Natives

businesses.

The council's members were inspired by the Alaska Federation of Natives, which represents 178 villages, 13 regional Native corporations and 12 regional nonprofit associations. It was formed in 1966 when Alaska Natives came together for a statewide conference to address the need for a settlement of aboriginal land claims.

"So many of us have differences. This is an opportunity to leave those differences at the door and find out where we can come together," said Soon, who is a member of the Hawaii council's board of directors.

Although the idea for the council has been "kicked around" for years, Soon said its formation was spurred by legal challenges to Native Hawaiian programs in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's *Rice vs. Cayetano* ruling.

The decision is being used by Oahu resident Patrick Barrett to challenge the constitutionality of OHA itself, the Hawaiian Home Lands program and Native Hawaiian voting rights.

Pending legislation sponsored by Sen. Daniel Akaka, D-Hawaii, is aimed at limiting lawsuits such as Barrett's by affirming the United States has a trust relationship with Native Hawaiians that is similar to its relationship with American Indian and Alaska Native tribes.

American Indians face rampant poverty in L.A. County

Los Angeles, California (AP)

A report has found rampant poverty and health problems among Los Angeles County's 138,000 American Indians.

More than a third of Indian youth in the county live in poverty, and the community has far higher rates of suicide, alcohol-related deaths and other problems than average, according to the study presented to the county Board of Supervisors during July.

The death rate from alcoholism among American Indians was 620 percent higher than average, the study found. The death rates were 249 percent higher for diabetes, 72 percent higher for suicide and 63 percent higher for homicide.

County agencies have no way of systematically identifying American Indians, making it harder to provide health and child care and other services, the report concluded.

The report was commissioned by the supervisors and conducted by the American Indian Studies Center at the University of California, Los Angeles.

Indian nicknames in schools

attention to elementary and secondary schools. We hope to make them understand just how dehumanizing these racist nicknames, mascots and symbols are to Native Americans and how demeaning it is to see

New York State Education Department study.

Miami University in Oxford changed its Redskins nickname to RedHawks in 1997 at the urging of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma. Jones' group also had urged that change.