



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

POLICY RESEARCH CENTER

October 30, 2020



Research Policy Update

Native Vote Regional Report: Alaska Region

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Native Vote initiative is a nonpartisan effort to promote American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) voter engagement throughout Indian Country. The purpose of this report is to share bi-weekly updates on the status of competitive elections during the 2020 election cycle for states in each NCAI region where turnout of the Native Vote may make a difference.



NCAI Alaska Region – Voting Age Population

For the 2020 election cycle, a number of close races have the potential to be impacted by the number of voting age AI/ANs who vote, especially if they are a significant percentage of the total population in the state. The NCAI Alaska Region includes the state of Alaska and its 229 federally recognized tribal nations. For the state of Alaska, the AI/AN voting age population number and percentage of the overall population for the state is shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1: AI/AN Voting Age Statewide Population Percentage for States in the Alaska Region

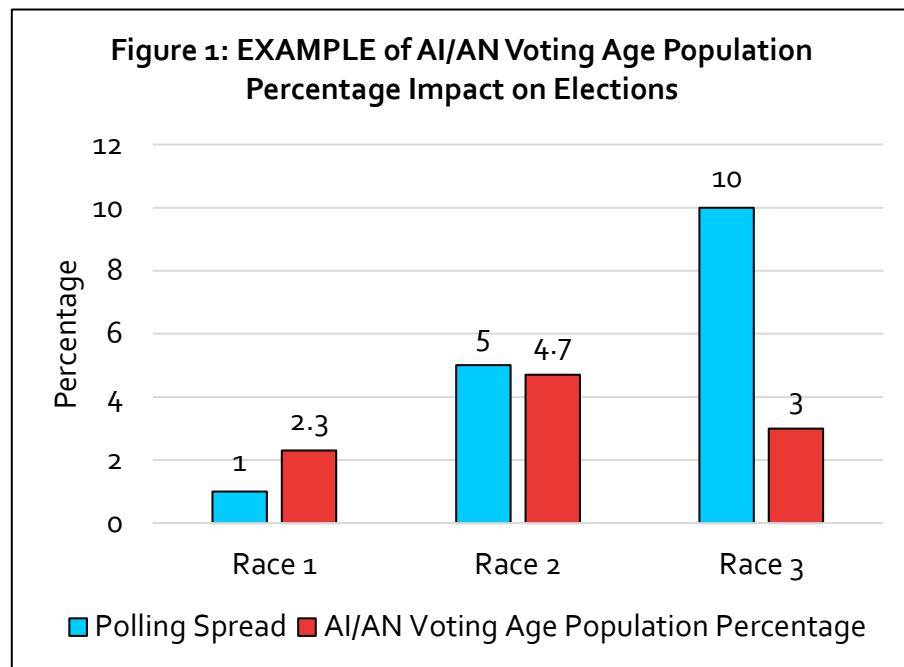
State	2019 State Total Voting Age Population Estimates	2019 AI/AN State Total Voting Age Population Estimates	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage of State Population
Alaska	551,562	97,231	17.63%

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5.

The AI/AN voting age population has the potential to impact competitive national, Congressional district, and state legislative races where the margin of victory is estimated to be similar to the AI/AN voting age population percentage.

Figure 1 illustrates an example of how graphs are used in this report to illustrate how the AI/AN voting age population percentage can impact close elections. The polling difference or margin between candidates is represented as a percent in the blue bars, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage of the total state population is represented in the red bars in the graph.

In *Race 1*, the AI/AN percentage in the example state (red) is larger than the polling difference between candidates (blue) in Race 1. Here AI/AN voters can clearly impact the outcome of the race.



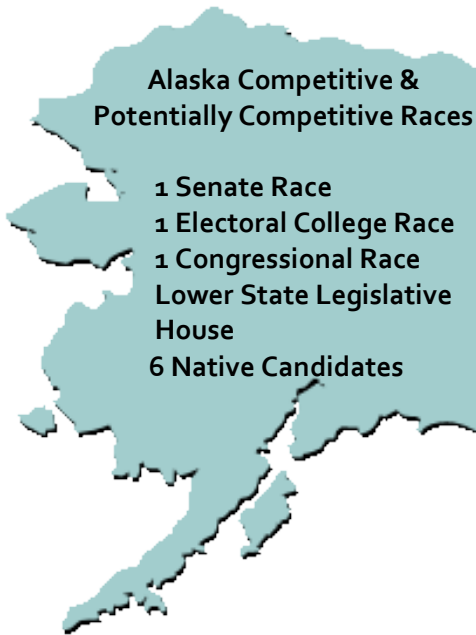
In *Race 2*, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is close to the polling difference between candidates. AI/AN voters in elections like this example can potentially impact the outcome.

In *Race 3*, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is smaller than the polling difference between candidates. In this example, AI/AN voters may not have a big impact on the outcome.

In this report, data on competitive and potentially competitive elections may change over time and is monitored with the *Cook Political Report*, which is a non-partisan newsletter that regularly analyzes elections at the national and state level. The *Cook Political Report* ranks races as tossups, with either candidate having a possibility to succeed, or as “leaning” or “likely” to result in a specific outcome, Democratic (“D”) or Republican (“R”).

This report also uses current polling on competitive races as collected by *FiveThirtyEight*, which is a news media source and national polling clearinghouse. Finally, this report uses data from the U.S. Census Bureau on the number and percentage of AI/AN voters in election districts. For national and statewide elections [Electoral College (Presidential), Senate, and Gubernatorial races], the data on AI/AN voting age population is drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2019 population estimates. For all other elections, AI/AN voting age population data for U.S. Congressional districts and state upper and lower legislative house levels is drawn from the Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) Census Bureau dataset from 2018. These reports are compiled using the NCAI regions, which may differ from other organizational or federal department regional designations for tribal nations.

NCAI Alaska Region – Alaska



In Alaska, the latest *Cook Political Report* shows three competitive and potentially competitive races. **Table 2** illustrates the competitive races for Alaska, the *Cook Political Report* ranking, the voting electorate or district, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in those districts. The races include the Senate race between incumbent Senator Dan Sullivan and challenger Al Gross, the Electoral College (Presidential) race, and one Congressional district race. The Senate race ranks competitive and potentially may result in a Republican outcome, or “Lean-R.” The Electoral College race ranks potentially competitive and likely to result in a Republican outcome, or “Likely-R.” The Congressional district race ranks

competitive and potentially may result in a Republican outcome, or “Lean-R.” *Cook Political Report* also considers control of Alaska’s lower state legislative houses to be a tossup.

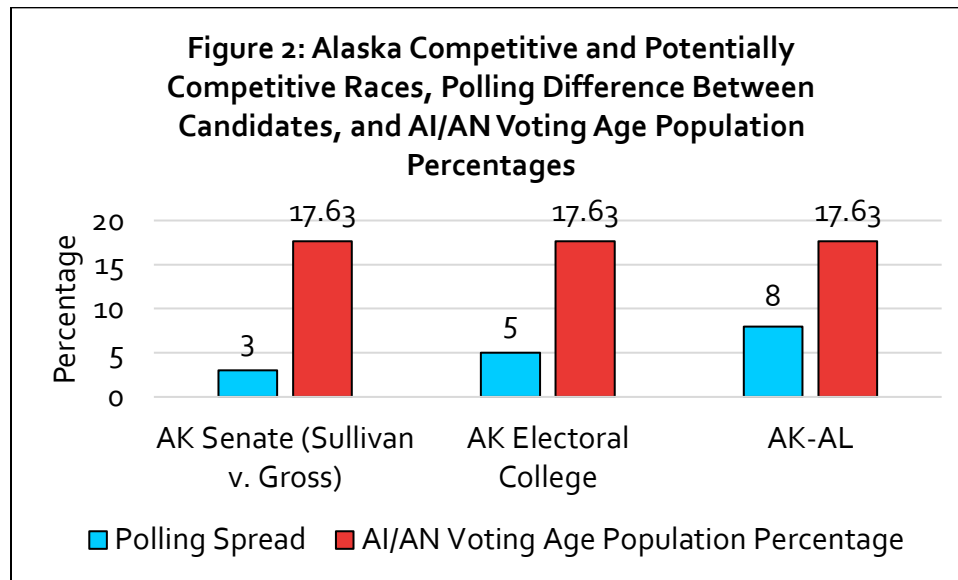
Table 2: Alaska Competitive and Potentially Competitive Elections

Race	<i>Cook Political Report</i> Ranking	Electorate	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Senate (Sullivan v. Gross)	Lean-R	Statewide	17.63%
Electoral College	Likely-R	Statewide	17.63%
Congressional At-Large District	Lean-R	Congressional District	17.63%
State Legislative Lower House	Tossup	State Legislative District	Varies by District

Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; *Cook Political Report*, Accessed October, 30, 2020.

AI/AN voters can impact the outcomes of races where the current polling shows the candidates are expected to receive a similar percentage of votes and in areas where the percent of AI/AN voters is larger than the difference in polling percentages between the candidates.

Figure 2 illustrates the AI/AN voting age population percentages and recent polling spread or percent margins for the Senate, Electoral College, and Congressional district races for Alaska. In all of the races, the Senate, Electoral College and Congressional district, the AI/AN population is larger than the current polling difference between candidates. AI/AN voters can impact the outcome in these races.



Source: 2019 Census Bureau, 2019 Population Estimates, Tables SCPRC-EST2019-18+POP-RES and SC-EST2019-ALLDATA5; Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; FiveThirtyEight, Accessed October 30, 2020.

A number of Native candidates are running for state legislative office in Alaska. As reported by *Indian Country Today*, there are six candidates running for office in the NCAI Alaska Region.

Table 3 describes each Native candidate, their district race, and the AI/AN voting age population percentage in the district.

Table 3: Alaska State Congressional Candidates and AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage

Candidate	District Race	AI/AN Voting Age Population Percentage
Thomas Baker	State Senate District T	71.15%
Bryce Edgmon	State House District 37	42.38%
Elizabeth Ferguson	State House District 40	61.12%
Neal Foster	State House District 39	81.59%
Donny Olson	State Senate District T	71.15%
Tiffany Zulkosky	State House District 38	83.25%

Source: Census Bureau, 2018 Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) by Race and Ethnicity, Table CVAP 2014-2018 t Year ACS Data; Indian Country Today, Accessed October 30, 2020.

In every Native candidate's state legislative district, the AI/AN voting age population percentage is over 42%, and in five of the races, the AI/AN voting age population constitutes a majority in the district. In upcoming Alaska state legislative district elections, the Native vote has the potential to have a significant impact on outcomes.

For more information, email research@ncai.org or visit NCAI's Native Vote website at: <http://www.nativevote.org/>

Suggested citation: NCAI Policy Research Center (2020). *Research Policy Update – Native Vote Regional Reports: Alaska Region*. Washington DC: National Congress of American Indians, October 30, 2020