

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER

Sponsor Statement CSHB 180 (FIN)

House Bill 180 seeks to help Alaska veterans receive more of the benefits they have earned through their sacrifice and service in uniform, and to which they are entitled by law and custom. With the approval of the person/applicant, this bill would allow the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to add the United States Flag background to state drivers' licenses or identification cards signifying the holder's status as a veteran, and would allow DMV (with permission of person/applicant) to share that information with the state's veterans benefit office.

Alaska is among the most veteran-friendly states in the Union. Many businesses and organizations demonstrate their appreciation by offering various discounts, preferences and other benefits to *bona fide* veterans. However, veterans must usually prove they qualify by presenting certified copies of their discharge documents – the DD-214, DD-215, or NGB-22 forms, exposing these critical documents to wear, damage or loss.

By giving veterans a way to carry reliable and convenient proof of their status on state-issued cards, this bill would help them more easily enjoy the full range of personal, business and social benefits offered to them by a grateful state.

HB 180 could also help relieve the situation in which tens of thousands of Alaska veterans may be missing out on significant government benefits, because they have no contact with the state's Office of Veterans Affairs. Should a an applicant express interest and permission, HB 180 would allow DMV to provide the names and addresses of those who are issued veteran-designated driver's licenses or ID cards to the state veterans' office. That office could then reach out to make more veterans aware of programs available to them, and to help them receive any benefits owed to them.

I respectfully request your support for House Bill 180.

Thank you.