

**CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5(FIN)**  
**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**  
**TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

**BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE**

**Offered: 2/4/09**

**Referred: Today's Calendar**

**Sponsor(s): SENATE RULES COMMITTEE**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging the United States Department of Defense to continue to provide retirement**  
2 **benefits for members of the Alaska Territorial Guard who served during World War II.**

3 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **WHEREAS**, in 1942, the Alaska Territorial Guard was formed by Territorial  
5 Governor Ernest Gruening in response to Japanese activity around Alaska; and

6 **WHEREAS**, during World War II, approximately 6,389 members of the Alaska  
7 Territorial Guard served without compensation in the state while the Alaska National Guard  
8 was deployed; and

9 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Territorial Guard engaged in combat with the enemy,  
10 protected the lend-lease route that stretched from North America to the Soviet Union, and  
11 rescued downed airmen; and

12 **WHEREAS**, in 2000, because of the efforts of Alaska's U.S. Senator, Ted Stevens,  
13 the United States Congress passed legislation that required that service as a member of the  
14 Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II of an individual who was honorably discharged  
15 be considered active duty for purposes of all laws administered by the United States Secretary  
16 of Defense; and

1           **WHEREAS** sec. 8147 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2001 (P.L.  
2 106-259, 38 U.S.C. 106) requires the United States Secretary of Defense to issue certificates  
3 of honorable discharge to members of the Alaska Territorial Guard based on the nature and  
4 duration of each individual's World War II service; and

5           **WHEREAS** Alaska Territorial Guard members who have been honorably discharged  
6 are considered to be on active duty for the purposes of all laws administered by the United  
7 States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, including laws relating to veterans' benefits; and

8           **WHEREAS** approximately 25 Alaska Native elders who served in the Alaska  
9 Territorial Guard are still receiving benefits; and

10           **WHEREAS** the recent decision of the United States Department of Defense to reverse  
11 the determination that service in the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II be  
12 regarded as active duty for military retirement purposes is of grave concern because it will  
13 leave approximately 25 Alaska Native elders who live in the most remote parts of Alaska  
14 without critical funds to pay the costs, among the highest in the nation, of heating fuel and  
15 food during an already tough Alaska winter;

16           **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United  
17 States Department of Defense to honor the service provided by the Alaska Territorial Guard  
18 by continuing retirement benefits for members of the Alaska Territorial Guard; and be it

19           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature thanks the Alaska  
20 Congressional delegation for its swift action on behalf of the remaining elderly members of  
21 the Alaska Territorial Guard by their introduction of S. 342 and H.R. 744, which provides for  
22 the treatment of service as a member of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II as  
23 active service for purposes of retired pay for members of the United States armed forces; and  
24 be it

25           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that  
26 the United States Department of Defense continue to use its emergency and extraordinary  
27 expense funds to provide retirement benefits for the Alaska Territorial Guard members until  
28 the United States Congress passes S. 342 or H.R. 744, or the United States Department of  
29 Defense reverses its January 2009 decision.

30           **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of  
31 the United States; the Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, United States Secretary of Veterans

- 1 Affairs; the Honorable Pete Geren, United States Secretary of the Army; and the Honorable
- 2 Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don
- 3 Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.