

Subject: HJR 23: March 27, 2014, as Good Friday Earthquake Remembrance Day

Good Morning:

For the record, my Name is Charles E Volanti. I am a former member of the Alaskan Air National Guard, and at the time of the "Good Friday Earthquake on March, 27, 1964", was the Guard's Flight Dispatcher stationed at Kulis Air National Guard Base in Anchorage. I was honored and privileged to have served with a group of the finest men one would ever know and saddened at the passing of some whom made the ultimate sacrifice.

It is both, my and honor and privilege, to be able to write in support of this Joint Resolution under consideration.

First, however, I extend my expression of heartfelt thanks and appreciation to the Honorable Governor Sean Parnell and his staff, for allowing me the opportunity to seek and submit a formal request for an official and legislatively supported, 50th Anniversary, "day of remembrance."

Second, I thank all members of this legislative body, for the many displays of support, and offers of sponsorship for a "day of remembrance," as they relate to the communication submitted to each of you back on September 4, 2013. Please know that I remain deeply moved and honored by the overwhelming responses which were received.

Finally, I give my gratitude to the Resolution's ultimate sponsor, the Honorable Representative Charisse Millett and her staff. Her written rendition of the Joint Resolution, "Proclaiming March 27, 2014, as Good Friday Earthquake Remembrance Day," is exemplary. The writing definitely portrays not only the events, and respondents of the day, but more importantly humanizes this tragic and historic event.

My emotional motivation and feelings from the beginning have been that "history unwritten is history that will be forgotten." Ladies and Gentlemen of the legislature, with your dedicated support, passage of this written Joint Resolution will help to ensure that the "day of remembrance" will forever take its' rightful place in Alaska State History.

There has been no greater adverse impact on the State of Alaska, than the attack of a 9.2 magnitude earthquake, and the resultant tsunamis which occurred on March 27, 1964, at 5:36pm. An event lasting over four minutes; where seconds seemed like a hours. The state was attacked, not by some foreign invading force, but rather the angry ravages of the forces of nature transcending thousands of square miles. To say that many areas of the state resembled a "war zone," would pragmatically reduce the true picture of what those cities, towns, and villages really looked like. Soon afterwards our resolve would be severely tested.

Nothing of this magnitude before, or since, has had more impact on the state's people, or its topography. Pristine landscapes decimated or forever changed. Towns like Valdez, Seward, Portage, Girdwood, and Chenega Village destroyed, including substantial loss of lives in those same areas. The city of Anchorage and neighboring communities suffered deadly and severe devastation, including massive landslides and in some areas tossing entire neighborhoods into the mud flats and waters of Turnagain Arm. Parts of Kodiak Island encountered severe destruction and turmoil caused by ensuing tsunami waves. And the list goes on with regards to the devastation and loss within state and there are too many others to mention here.

Further, the Good Friday Earthquake of 1964 was no respecter of borders or boundaries. It continued spewing a swath of death and destruction down the Pacific coast, heavily impacting British Columbia's Vancouver Island, causing great destruction of homes and property. The event had now gone international. Continuing on, the damage and death tolls would raise as the quake's related tsunamis invaded Washington, Oregon, and California. Four deaths were recorded in Newport Beach, Oregon, while yet another 12 people lost their lives in Crescent City, California.

The number of people who perished, were displaced, suffered great loss, or selflessly served during the state's utmost time of need number in the thousands. The well documented and innumerable personal stories of tragedy and triumph are scattered across the pages of many forms of written and electronic media. The scope of this tragedy, to this day, remains one of the most epic occurrences in Alaska State history.

Because of my love of the State of Alaska, its' grandeur, and beauty and my association with the Alaska Air National Guard, I will conclude by saying the following. When I worked at the Kulis Air National Guard Base, I was privileged to have stood beside men who shared common bonds. Unfortunately, some paid the ultimate sacrifice and their lives were cut short by tragic circumstances. These were selfless men, men of honor and integrity. Committed to duty and devoted to the State of Alaska and its' citizens. On their behalf, and behalf of the families they left behind and the citizens of Alaska, I dedicate all of my efforts thus far expended in seeking legislative support for a "day of remembrance."

For all that has been mentioned on these pages and in recognition of those who perished, suffered great loss, and selflessly served during Alaska's greatest time of need, I respectfully request, that when this resolution is presented at hearing, I am hopeful for the legislature to give unanimous approval, followed by the welcome endorsement of the Governor of Alaska, The Honorable Sean Parnell.

With Humility, Respect, and Gratitude,

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