



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Military and
Veterans Affairs

Office of the Commissioner

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The Honorable Bill Stoltze, Chairman
State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Senate
Alaska State Capitol, Room 125
Juneau, AK 99801

March 29, 2016

Dear Senator Stoltze:

In last week's Senate State Affairs Committee discussion of Senate Bill 150, a measure to add the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs (DMVA) to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA), two witnesses testified about the number of public versus Administration Council Members. They expressed concern adding another government Member would detrimentally alter the balance between public Members and government officials on the Council. Committee members were interested in a clarification of our view, which we are happy to provide.

While we recognize the long history and importance of a strong cadre of public members serving their fellow Alaskans through this body, we believe the DMVA commissioner possesses a unique combination of experiences and perspectives both important to the CDVSA and simply not available in any other single individual.

The DMVA commissioner has ready access to and a regular working relationship with Active, Guard, and Reserve military members, veterans, and all their dependents – a familiarity no other Alaskan may claim. That person fills a unique role and is the only individual capable of fully representing the 290,000 Alaskans who are either Active, Guard, or Reserve military, veterans, or their dependents.

It might well prove useful to add a veteran- or military-oriented public sector Council Member, but we feel the Legislature could reasonably add the DMVA commissioner without adding a corresponding public counterpart because no such public counterpart exists. A public member who is a veteran or is familiar with veterans' issues could serve the Council positively, but that person's perspective would likely be limited to the branch and form of service in which he/she was engaged, while the DMVA commissioner has experience with them all.

I hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if you or your Committee Members have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Laurel J. Hummel", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Laurel J. Hummel

Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
and The Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard