Representative Carolyn Hall

House District 16 | Turnagain, Spenard and Sand Lake

HB 221

Sponsor Statement

April 28th, 2026

Version N

"An Act Establishing Alaska Arts and Culture Day"

House Bill 221 would establish the first Friday of each October as Alaska Arts and Culture Day. Alaskans know how many amazing resources our state offers, and that these resources make Alaska one of the greatest places to live. We regularly honor some of these resources with days, such as Alaska Wild Salmon Day, Alaska Mining Day, and Alaska Agriculture Day.

Alaska's artistic and cultural resources should be no different and should be recognized and uplifted with similar regularity. Designating the first Friday of October as Alaska Arts and Culture Day highlights the creativity and dedication that Alaskans infuse into their everyday lives. The day will further encourage celebration of the many artistic and cultural treasures that bring economic prosperity, beauty, and meaning to Alaskan communities.

The October date is particularly apt for an Arts and Culture Day. The first Friday of October aligns the day with its goals of educating Alaska's younger generations and raising widespread awareness of our Arts and Culture. For one, this date ensures that Arts and Culture Day will occur on a school day, allowing teachers to participate with their classrooms. October is also already a special month for the arts nationally. In 1993, our federal government established October as Arts and Humanities Month. However, since then, Alaska has only irregularly acknowledged its creative culture through the governor's proclamations. By setting a date on the first Friday of October, we would more regularly remind Alaskans of our role in this national arts celebration and facilitate avenues for participation in classrooms.

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HB 221

Explanation of Changes

April 28th, 2026

Version N

"An Act Establishing Alaska Arts and Culture Day"

1) On page 1, line 6, "June 21 of each year" is replaced with "the first Friday of October each year"

Version N of HB 221 changes the original bill's date from June 21st to the first Friday of October. This change reflects discussion in committee over which date best serves the goals of HB 221 to uplift and recognize Alaska Arts and Culture. The first Friday in October each year provides several benefits that June 21st did not. For one, this date ensures that schools can recognize Arts and Culture Day on a school day. This date would also coincide with First Friday events across Alaska and align Alaska's Arts and Culture Day with the National recognition of Arts and Humanities Month. Overall, the date change better aligns HB 221 with its intent to raise awareness and encourage participation in the Alaska's arts and culture activities.

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HB 221

Sectional Analysis

April 28th, 2026

Version N

"An Act Establishing Alaska Arts and Culture Day"

Section 1.

Amends AS 44.12 by inserting a new section, AS 44.12.197, which denotes the first Friday of October as Alaska Arts and Culture Day and welcomes the public to perform suitable activities in recognition of the day.

Section 2.

Establishes the effective date as the date of passage.

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CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 221(STA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/16/26
Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVE HALL

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

"An Act establishing the first Friday of every October as Alaska Arts and Culture Day; and providing for an effective date."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

*** Section 1.** AS 44.12 is amended by adding a new section to article 2 to read:

Sec. 44.12.197. Alaska Arts and Culture Day. Alaska Arts and Culture Day is established on the first Friday of October each year. Alaska Arts and Culture Day may be observed by schools, community groups, and other public and private agencies and individuals with celebratory events, projects, and activities directed at or involving people of all ages to increase awareness and appreciation of arts and culture in the state.

*** Sec. 2.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).