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Bullard
1/27/25

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 7(STA)
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATOR KAWASAKI

A RESOLUTION

Urging the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of the Interior, the United States Board on Geographic Names, and the members of the state's delegation in Congress to maintain Denali as the official name for the tallest mountain in North America.

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

WHEREAS the name Denali is deeply ingrained in the state's culture and identity;
and

WHEREAS residents of the state believe that the names of the geographic features in the state should be determined by state residents and representatives; and

WHEREAS the Athabaskan people and their ancestors have lived in the Interior of the state for more than 10,000 years; and

WHEREAS Denali, the traditional Koyukon Athabaskan name, meaning "the high one," was designated as the official name for North America's tallest mountain in 1975 by the state; and

WHEREAS, on June 7, 1913, Walter Harper, a 20-year-old man of Athabaskan

descent, became the first person to stand on the summit of the mountain; and

WHEREAS state lawmakers petitioned the United States Board on Geographic Names to change the mountain's name to "Denali" in 1975, and, in 2015, the United States officially adopted the name Denali for the mountain; and

WHEREAS residents of the state from all backgrounds and political persuasions embrace Denali as the rightful name for the tallest mountain in North America; and

WHEREAS residents of the state take pride in the fact that people outside the state also recognize Denali as the mountain's well-established name; and

WHEREAS both Denali National Park and the mountain are well-known and established landmarks, and changing the mountain's name could cause confusion and negatively affect tourism in the state; and

WHEREAS there were once hundreds of languages spoken by Alaska Native peoples, many of which are still used by their descendants today; and

WHEREAS the use of, and names and terms from, Athabaskan languages have a rich legacy in the Interior and Canada; and

WHEREAS traditional Indigenous names for certain geographic features, places, and communities are commonly used by local, state, and federal government agencies in the state; and

WHEREAS residents of the state understand that the use of Indigenous names throughout the state reflects the long history, diverse cultures, traditions, and languages of the state's Alaska Native peoples; and

WHEREAS the Alaska State Legislature supports efforts to recognize the heritage of the state's Alaska Native peoples and the continuing importance of the mountain to Alaska Native culture;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of the Interior, and the United States Board on Geographic Names to maintain Denali as the name for the tallest mountain in North America and that action to rename the mountain not be taken; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the members of the Alaska delegation in Congress to advocate on behalf of, and work to preserve, Denali as the name for the tallest mountain in North America.

1 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President
2 of the United States; the Honorable J. D. Vance, Vice President of the United States and
3 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Walter Cruickshank, Acting United States
4 Secretary of the Interior; the Domestic Names Committee, United States Board on
5 Geographic Names; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan,
6 U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nick Begich, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
7 delegation in Congress.