

From: Susan A [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 2, 2025 1:47 PM
To: House Military and Veterans Affairs
Cc: Sen. Scott Kawasaki
Subject: Public Testimony on HCR 6

Public Testimony on HCR 6

To the Alaska State Legislature:

I speak today not to oppose the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, but to rebuke the hollow symbolism of HCR 6 in a time when real, material support for our veterans—especially women and BIPOC service members—is dangerously lacking in the State of Alaska.

While HCR 6 praises the legacy of the Marine Corps and calls on Alaskans to honor service members, it fails to confront the realities many face right now:

- Alaska has the highest per-capita veteran population in the country, yet thousands lack access to mental health care, transitional housing, or culturally responsive services.
- Women veterans, especially survivors of Military Sexual Trauma (MST), remain underserved and underprotected.
- BIPOC veterans often face systemic barriers to accessing care, justice, and community reintegration, compounded by rural isolation and racial disparities in service acknowledgment and benefits.

Yes, programs like Operation Mary Louise, VA minority outreach, and tribal veteran services exist. But they remain underfunded, underpublicized, and inaccessible to too many—especially in our Indigenous and remote communities.

What does it mean to "honor the fallen" or "celebrate the Corps" when we cannot even guarantee survivors of trauma, racism, and war have basic dignity, housing, or healing?

HCR 6 is a feel-good resolution that uses military pride to distract from the Alaska Legislature's chronic failure to pass comprehensive veterans' protections. There is no mention in this resolution of:

- Expanding rural mental health resources,
- Funding mobile VA outreach in underserved boroughs,
- Addressing the VA claims backlog, or
- Launching community reintegration programs for returning BIPOC and female service members.

We do not need empty gestures. We need a legislative agenda rooted in justice, truth, and tangible support.

Therefore, I call on the Legislature to:

- Amend HCR 6 to include commitments to service member protections—especially for women and BIPOC veterans;
- Introduce companion legislation to expand and fund Operation Mary Louise, MST response, housing programs, and mental health care tailored to Alaskan realities;
- Require public reporting and community oversight of how state and federal veteran funds are allocated and spent;
- Support grassroots veteran organizations, particularly those led by women and Native Alaskans;
- End performative patriotism that glorifies military service while abandoning those who served.

We owe them more than pageantry. We owe them action.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Allmeroth
District 34Q
Advocate for the Silent, Unseen, & Unheard