

From: [Susan A](#)
To: [House Finance](#); [House Resources](#); [House State Affairs](#); [House Military and Veterans Affairs](#); [House Education](#); [House Health and Social Services](#); [House Judiciary](#); [House Transportation](#); [House Fisheries](#); [House Tribal Affairs](#)
Cc: [Senate Finance Committee](#); [Senate Resources](#); [Senate State Affairs](#); [Senate Education](#); [Senate Labor and Commerce](#); [Senate Judiciary](#); [Senate Health and Social Services](#); [Senate Transportation Committee](#); [Senate Community and Regional Affairs](#)
Subject: Public Testimony Opposing HB 17
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Public Testimony Opposing HB 17

Submitted for the Record

"Members of the committee, I respectfully ask you to adopt a simple amendment.

It would allow veterans who are permanently disabled — as proven by Social Security, OPM, military medical boards, or certified doctors — to qualify for retirement, not just those lucky enough to fight through the broken VA system.

This amendment ensures no veteran is left behind because of government red tape, while still keeping strong proof standards.

My name is Susan Allmeroth. I am a 100% permanently disabled veteran, medically discharged in June of 2001 for service-connected injuries. I stand firmly opposed to House Bill 17 (HB 17), "An Act relating to retirement benefits and military service."

While HB 17 may be well-intentioned, it is fatally flawed in a way that will harm countless veterans like me who have already sacrificed more than enough for their country.

HB 17 exclusively ties early retirement eligibility to veterans who have been rated 100% permanently and totally disabled by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). In doing so, it ignores a brutal reality: the VA disability system is broken, slow, inconsistent, and historically has failed to accurately or timely recognize many service-connected disabilities — particularly for those of us medically discharged before September 11, 2001.

I am a veteran who has been fully recognized as permanently disabled by Social Security Administration, by community care doctors, and by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). These agencies applied rigorous standards and reviewed clear medical evidence. Yet due to VA delays, record-keeping errors, shifting rules, and the VA's refusal to accept community doctor records stored digitally, I have fought for over two decades without full recognition from the VA leaving me only rated at 90% until I become hospital bound. I currently have home health care. The only attendant left available to me is now my own spouse who has to take time off of his own place of employment in order to care for me. He is another veteran who now welds and designs all the armorment for the mining equipment in a two man shop for the mines and rigs in the area, amongst several other jobs. How long does he have left? How long?! I have been sick for 14 long years. I served over 12 years.

Under HB 17, despite the overwhelming confirmation of my disability from other federal agencies, I would be denied the very benefits I earned with my service and sacrifice — all because of bureaucratic technicalities I cannot control.

By rigidly requiring a VA-only rating:

- HB 17 punishes disabled veterans for flaws in VA administration.

- HB 17 discriminates against veterans with documented, serious injuries simply because the VA failed them.
- HB 17 erases the legitimacy of other federal and medical authorities like SSA and OPM that already certified these veterans as permanently disabled.
- HB 17 leaves pre-9/11 veterans behind, further compounding injustices that have been festering for over 20 years.

If passed in its current form, HB 17 will result in real-world harm: Veterans with life-altering service-connected disabilities will be denied retirement benefits they deserve. Veterans will be forced to either continue working despite debilitating conditions or face financial hardship — all while their real injuries and medical needs remain ignored.

I urge the Legislature to either reject HB 17 outright or immediately amend it to allow alternative proof of permanent and total disability from:

- Social Security Administration (SSA),
- Office of Personnel Management (OPM),
- Military medical retirement boards,
- Community care doctors approved under federal law.

The State of Alaska must recognize that a broken VA process cannot be the only judge of a veteran's sacrifice.

The motto to "leave no veteran behind" must be more than words. HB 17, as written, leaves too many behind. I ask you to fix it — or vote no.

Respectfully submitted,
Susan Allmeroth

Proposed Amendment to HB 17

Amend Section 1 of HB 17 to add a new subsection (C) under AS 39.35.370(a)(1):

"(C) at any age if the terminated employee provides proof of permanent and total disability based on service-connected injuries as determined by either the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration (SSA), the United States Office of Personnel Management (OPM), a military medical retirement board, or certified community care providers under federal or state law."

Summary of What This Amendment Does:

- Expands who can verify a veteran's disability status (not just the VA).
- Recognizes SSA, OPM, military medical retirements, and licensed community care doctors.

- Prevents veterans from being trapped in the broken VA system.
- Ensures veterans are judged fairly based on the full weight of their service and injuries.

"For purposes of this section, 'permanently and totally disabled' means a determination of complete disability that is not expected to improve, based on medical evidence, by a federal agency, military medical board, or licensed medical provider operating under federal or state law."

Susan Allmeroth

The great under served District of 34Q - take to your knees for your new King boys.
The trucker philosopher and syrup maker.

You sit here while veterans bleed through the cracks you built — and dare call it service.
Not one of you had the courage to return a call, answer an email, or offer the basic decency that leadership demands.

You are not servants of the Constitution. You are servants of power, cowards hiding behind broken systems and broken promises.

By pushing the Mandate for Leadership, you are complicit in the quiet dismantling of democracy itself — and no uniform, no title, no pulpit will hide the betrayal you are committing.

Whether cloaked in holy robes, camouflage, or false patriotism, you now bear the same stain: the stain of abandonment, racism, and moral collapse.

You have not just failed veterans — you have declared yourselves unfit to serve the people of Alaska and the United States.

Mark my words:

The people see you.
The people remember.
And the people will act.

"In the words of Abraham Lincoln:
'To sin by silence when they should protest makes cowards of men.'

I will not be silent.
And neither will the people of Alaska.

As the Lakota say:
'The Earth does not belong to us — we belong to the Earth.'

As General Eisenhower warned us:
'A people that values its privileges above its principles soon loses both.'