

Alaska State Legislature

REPRESENTATIVE
ERIC FEIGE
House District 6

House Resources Committee Co-Chair
Transportation Committee
Joint Armed Services Committee



During Session:
State Capitol Room 126
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-4859
Fax (907) 465-3799
1-888-465-4859

House of Representatives

SPONSOR STATEMENT – HB 52

"An Act relating to allowable absences from the state for purposes of eligibility for permanent fund dividends; and providing for an effective date."

With great dismay, on February 13, 2011, I, along with other members of the legislature, received an e-mail from Lt. Cmdr. Tiko Crofoot about the denial of his Permanent Fund Dividend. An Alaskan, who joined the U.S. Navy, Lt. Cmdr. Crofoot has been stationed outside of Alaska, through no fault of his own, for more than ten years.

Military service is an allowable absence for continuation of eligibility of a Permanent Fund Dividend. The justification for the denial occurs only because Lt. Cmdr. Crofoot and others have sacrificed not just three, five, or seven years serving our country, but have made a career serving our country in the armed forces.

According to current statute, anyone on an approved absence from the state, except members of Congress, congressional staff, and their families, is denied a permanent fund dividend after ten years of absence from the state.

Although these individuals choose to serve in the Armed Forces of the United States, once they are sworn into service, they do not have the option to choose to be physically present in Alaska.

It is time to correct this injustice and allow Alaska residents who decide to join the military the opportunity to continue to receive their deserved Permanent Fund Dividend while at the same time making sure that only those that truly intend to return to Alaska continue to receive a dividend on an allowable absence.

We sleep soundly in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm.

Winston Churchill