

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER

### Sponsor Statement

#### HJR 11

This resolution commemorates the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's "Strategic Defense Initiative" address to the nation on March 23, 1983.

President Reagan believed that we should achieve "peace through strength," and called for the nation to develop the ability to intercept and destroy strategic nuclear missiles before they could reach the United States.

Though his idea was initially mocked as a "Star Wars" fantasy, Reagan's vision was eventually realized. Americans developed what became better known, and better respected, as the "Strategic Defense Initiative."

HJR 11 commemorates the 30th anniversary of President Reagan's speech to the nation calling for the creation of the "Star Wars" defense system, and credits Reagan for his vision.

HJR 11 also honors the Alaskans who play a critical role in this system: The Alaska National Guard's 49<sup>th</sup> Missile Defense Battalion mans the nation's primary installation of the Ground-Based, Mid-course Defense System and interceptor missiles, at Fort Greely, in Interior Alaska.

But while we have 26 missiles and silos at Fort Greely, the plans had originally called for 40. In 2009 President Obama stopped short of finishing deployment of the last 14 interceptors planned for deployment.

This incomplete system left the nation vulnerable to the threat of increasingly sophisticated and capable missiles: from Iran, from China, and from North Korea.

In recent weeks, the threat has gotten even more real, North Korea has made clear and credible threats to launch nuclear attacks on the United States.

HJR 11 therefore, also calls on the current President to deploy the full number of ground-based missiles originally intended to be installed at Fort Greely. But just as this resolution was being drafted, Secretary of Defense Hagel announced his decision to deploy an additional 14 interceptors to Fort Greely, Alaska by 2017 -- bringing the total to 44 (40 in Alaska, 4 at Vandenberg AFB in California)

It's clear that President Reagan was right about Star Wars; that our nation needed and someday would be very glad to have, a defense against the threat of ICBMs.

- recognizes President Reagan's "Star Wars" vision
- honors his commitment to ensure our nation maintains peace through strength
- expresses appreciation of the brave Alaskans manning the defenses at the frontiers of space
- and validates Defense Secretary Hegel's timely decision to complete the installation of the full complement of missiles at Fort Greely.