



CONSULATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA
ANCHORAGE

800 E. Dimond Blvd., Suite 3-695, Anchorage, AK 99515
TEL : (907) 339-7955 · FAX : (907) 339-041

February 21, 2023

The Honorable Members
the 33rd Alaska Legislature

Alaska State Senate
Alaska State House

Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Honorable Alaska Legislature Members,

I write to you in support of SJR 6 and HJR 4: Honoring the Alaska-Korea relationship; and celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea, the 70th anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement, and the 120th anniversary of the first Korean immigration to the United States.

The United States and the Republic of Korea enjoy one of the closest relationships in the world. We are friends, allies, and partners. Our longstanding relations began 141 years ago with the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation in 1882, when Korea was a dynasty called Joseon. About 70 years later, the ROK and the US became allies with the signing of the Mutual Defense Treaty in October 1953. The ROK-US alliance was founded on the spirit of comrades-in-arms forged in blood during the Korean War. We fought together for freedom and democracy in the Korean War, which broke out with North Korea's invasion in June 1950, and ended three years later with the Ceasefire Agreement in July 1953. Approximately 1.8 million US troops were engaged in the Korean War, with over 36,000 of them dying during the conflict, while 2,500 or more Alaska troops served in the war, with 10 of them falling. Today, about 28,500 US troops are stationed in Korea.

The ROK-US alliance has become, not only the foundation of Korea's defense and security, but also the cornerstone of its rapid economic growth and stable democracy. We, the ROK and the US, have successfully stood the test of time for the past seven decades. We have overcome numerous threats and provocations, including nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, from the North, and have successfully maintained peace on the Korean Peninsula based on our ironclad alliance cooperation.

Economic relations between our two countries have been upgraded by the ROK-US Free Trade Agreement, which entered into force in March 2012 and celebrated its 10th anniversary last year. The bilateral FTA has served as a vehicle to promote ROK-US economic ties. Bilateral trade for the past decade has expanded 67.8 percent to about \$169,100,000,000 in 2021 from \$101,800,000,000 in 2012. The mutual investment



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between the ROK and the US more than doubled during the same period. In particular, Korea's investment in the US has increased significantly, mainly in the semiconductor, battery, and automobile sectors. That has brought about the employment effect of 90,000 jobs in the US and strengthened bilateral supply chain cooperation. In 2019, about 2,300,000 Korean tourists visited the United States, and more than 1,000,000 American tourists visited the Republic of Korea, contributing considerably to the economies of each country. Covid-19 resulted in a sharp diminution in mutual visits in 2020 and 2021, but a rapid recovery is underway since the pandemic curve began to flatten last year.

Of course, the relationship of the ROK and the great state of Alaska has made great progress in the economy, people-to-people exchanges, military cooperation, and local government exchanges in lockstep with the development of ROK-US relations. Since 2018, the Republic of Korea has been Alaska's largest trading partner, with a volume of \$2,300,000,000 in 2021. The major trade items between Korea and Alaska are minerals & ores, fish & other marine products, petroleum & coal products, and computer & electronic products.

Some Korean companies have been contributing to Alaska's economy and employment. Korean Air and Asiana Airlines have been operating as major air cargo carriers at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, which is the world's 4th busiest airport for cargo throughput. Since the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, the importance of air cargo has increased, and the role of Korean air cargo carriers has also been growing.

Each year, the ROK Air Force participates in Exercise Red Flag-Alaska, a joint aerial combat training exercise held by the US Air Force. Last year, two Korean Navy ships arrived in Anchorage for the first time in history as part of the ROK Navy Cruise Training. Alaska's strategic location and ROK-US common interests on the Korean Peninsula and in the region will make our bilateral military cooperation more expanded and stronger in the future.

Local governments in both countries acknowledge the strong ties between the ROK and Alaska and promote cultural and economic exchanges through establishing a sisterhood relationship: Incheon, a Korean metropolitan city, and Anchorage, Alaska's most populous city, signed in 1986. Assemblies between Incheon and Anchorage have also had a sisterhood relationship since 1993.

7,000 Koreans and Korean Americans live in Alaska, enriching Alaska's history and culture. They also serve at various corners of Alaska as military personnel, police officers, fire fighters, nurses and doctors, teachers, business owners, public servants, etc., contributing their talents to Alaska's safety, diversity, and unity. A shining example was Ms. Emma Broyles, a Korean American, who became Alaska's first Miss America last year and made Alaska's name widely known. Since 2008, the state of Alaska has celebrated Korea-Alaska



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Friendship Day on June 20. The Anchorage Korean community, in collaboration with the Korean Consulate in Anchorage, holds the Korea-Alaska Friendship Festival each year, acknowledging the longstanding ties, economic and cultural exchanges, and friendship between the Republic of Korea and the state of Alaska.

The ROK and the US have been developing a steadfast partnership, anchored in shared values and interests, as friends, allies, and partners. As agreed at the ROK-US summit in May 2022, our two countries are collaborating to achieve our shared goal of transforming the bilateral alliance into a global comprehensive strategic alliance, capable of addressing the most pressing regional and global challenges. Korean Americans, since their first immigration to the US 120 years ago, have become an integral part of America and also of Alaska, enriching the lives of both US and Alaska.

All things considered, I have the honor hereby to urge you to support this resolution honoring the Alaska-Korea relationship.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Seung Man Sang'.

Seung Man Sang
Consul and Head

Key E. Getty, CPA
10975 Vosikof Pl
Anchorage, AK 99507
(907) 301-3159

February 26, 2023

Rep. Genevieve Mina
State Capitol Room 420
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Mina:

As a Korean American, the president of Korean Cultural Center Alaska (KCCA), and as an immediate past president of the Korean American Community of Anchorage, Inc (KACA), I am writing this letter in support of HJR 4, "Honoring the Alaska-Korea Relationship."

During many years of serving the community in various capacities, I realized more and more each year how tightly our communities are connected. As one of the most diverse cities in the country, we have many ethnic communities that make up our city, with well over 100 different languages spoken at home and many cultures and customs practiced. Despite the diversity, racial violence seen in other cities is largely absent. Instead, cultural diversity's beauty and richness shine through daily.

To maintain harmony, the Korean community has played a significant role in working with other communities. We carry on various activities and hold a number of community events throughout the year utilizing volunteers and donations. Some examples are Korea-Alaska Friendship Day, Multicultural Unity Conversations, Elder Law Seminar, Small Business/Nonprofit Seminar, Senior Academy, and Scholarship Day. The annual scholarship program, which is 100% funded by Korean entities, alone has paid out up to \$20,000 annually for the past 20 years and helped many students of all races.

Furthermore, many Korean Americans voluntarily take up community services as individuals using their own funds. Some of them were in the news: Insook Baek provided annually over 1,000 Thanksgiving meals for the past 15 years out of her gas station, and Mr. Kim's Food Truck served the hungry throughout the year for many years.

While younger people were busy at work, many Korean seniors went to work also. You could find a group of elders out at Ship Creek during the Spring Cleaning (until COVID came), and some of them at the Bean's Café.

These are only a few examples to give you an idea of what Korean Americans do in our community in appreciation of our state and our country.

Considering the important allied relationship, the major trade partnership between Korea and Alaska, and the positive contributions the Korean Americans, who love and appreciate Alaska, make every day in our community, I fervently urge the Legislature to pass HJR 4.

Sincerely,



Key E. Getty

David Myung-Keun Song
151 Patterson St.
Anchorage, AK 99504

February 8, 2023

Rep. Genevieve Mina
State Capitol Room 420
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Mina,

I am writing today as a member of the Korean community in Alaska to show my support for HJR 4, "Honoring the Alaska-Korea Relationship."

There has been a long-standing relationship between our state and the country of South Korea. South Korea is one of Alaska's top trade partners, Alaskans have fought for the independence of South Korea during the Korean War, and Korean-Americans have established themselves as an integral part of our Alaskan community.

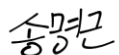
Korean Americans in Alaska are deeply involved in our small business community, both in urban and rural communities across the state. The Korean American Community of Anchorage (KACA) has donated hundreds of thousands in scholarship funds to students of all backgrounds over the years, and are deeply involved in philanthropic efforts across the state.

For example, SB 203, sponsored by Senator Revak, named a bridge in your district after Insook Baik, who has donated thousands of dollars of meals to the Mountain View community. Last year, our very own Miss Alaska was chosen to be Miss America in 2022 and is an involved member of the Korean American community. We are proud that she represented the Korean community gracefully on the national stage and used her platform to advocate for the Special Olympics.

Alaska has already recognized the deep relationship between our two countries through Korea-Alaska Friendship Day, which is held on 6/25 of every year. However, I believe that HJR 4 would be a powerful reaffirmation of this relationship.

To honor the contributions of Koreans to Alaska and for the betterment of the relationships between our two countries, I urge the Legislature to pass HJR 4 posthaste.

Best,



송명근
David Myung-Keun Song