

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 27, 2001
8:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative John Coghill, Chair
Representative Hugh Fate
Representative Gary Stevens
Representative Peggy Wilson
Representative Harry Crawford
Representative Joe Hayes

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Jeannette James

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Scott Ogan

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4
Declaring February 2001 to be African-American Citizen
Recognition Month.

- MOVED CSHCR 4(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16
Urging President Bush, the United States Department of State,
and the United States Congress to intervene and negotiate with
the government of Canada to reconsider the imposition of a fee
to transport firearms through Canada.

- MOVED CSHJR 16(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS ACTION

BILL: HCR 4
SHORT TITLE:AFRICAN-AMERICAN CITIZEN RECOGNIT'N
SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S)DYSON

Jrn-Date	Jrn-Page		Action
02/09/01	0280	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS

02/09/01 0280 (H) STA
02/27/01 (H) STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 102

BILL: HJR 16

SHORT TITLE: OPPOSE CANADIAN

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) CRAWFORD

Jrn-Date	Jrn-Page		Action
02/16/01	0344	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/16/01	0344	(H)	STA
02/27/01		(H)	STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 102

WITNESS REGISTER

Representative Fred Dyson
Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building, Room 104
Juneau, Alaska 99801

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as sponsor of HCR 4.

ROSALEE T. WALKER
[No address provided]
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HCR 4.

ROD ARNO, Lobbyist
Alaska Outdoor Council
P.O. Box 87-1410
Wasilla, Alaska 99687

POSITION STATEMENT: Expressed the Alaska Outdoor Council's support for HJR 16

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 01-17, SIDE A
Number 0001

CHAIR JOHN COGHILL called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:02 a.m. Representatives Coghill, Fate, Stevens, Wilson, Crawford, and Hayes were present at the call to order. Representative Ogan was also in attendance.

HCR 4 - AFRICAN-AMERICAN CITIZEN RECOGNIT'N MONTH

Number 0099

CHAIR COGHILL announced the first order of business would be HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 4, declaring February 2001 to be African-American Citizen Recognition Month.

Number 0121

REPRESENTATIVE FRED DYSON came forward to testify as sponsor of HCR 4. "We have a delightful population in our state: very diverse," he said. "What we are trying to do here with this bill is ... raise people's awareness of the contribution that African-Americans have made in Alaska's history and are making currently." He explained that the timing of the resolution is tied in with what is going on nationally. Thirty-some other states have passed similar resolutions, and there is a national African-American Citizen Recognition Month as well.

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON suggested that because it was unlikely that HCR 4 would get through both houses of the legislature before the end of February, the committee might wish to change the date of African-American Citizen Recognition Month from February of 2001 to February of both 2001 and 2002.

Number 0239

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON noted that there have been African-Americans in Alaska since early in the American period of Alaskan history. One of his favorites is "Roaring Mad" Mike Healy, the famous captain of the U.S. Revenue Marine Service who served with distinction on the Revenue Cutters Corwin and Bear. Captain Healy, who was born in slavery, is a significant figure in Alaskan history. John Muir sailed with Captain Healy and rode aboard the Corwin on two of his famous trips to Alaska, one of which included the exploration of Glacier Bay.

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON said Captain Healy also was [among] the first Americans to land on Wrangell Island, establishing the "interesting claim we have to Wrangell Island off the coast of Northern Siberia," as Representative Dyson put it. Captain Healy also participated in the rescue of literally scores of people on ships, particularly noteworthy being his search for survivors of the Jeannette. Many maps still in use are based on surveys made by Captain Healy.

Number 0376

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON continued, saying, "The Alaska Highway was largely built by African-American troops in 1941-43, and African-Americans are continuing to make significant contributions to Alaska." He said one of his best friends in Eagle River is Bill Green, "who pastors an amazing church there, ... started the food bank, and is a constant source of agitation for many of the very best things in my little community." Alaska also has a remarkable repository of World War II, Korean, and Viet Nam veterans, including a number of African-Americans who served with great distinction. One was among the airmen in an elite group that flew P51-Ds in World War II and had the singular distinction of never losing a bomber that they escorted over Germany.

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON was pleased to sponsor HCR 4. "You can always argue that these things are full of sound and fury and signifying very little," he said. "But, in fact, I think it does send a signal that we recognize a remarkable and disproportionate contribution made by this group of Alaskans, and, hopefully, ... will help to raise people's awareness and appreciation."

Number 0555

ROSALEE WALKER, a retired educator and a 34-year resident of Juneau, thanked Representative Dyson for sponsoring HCR 4. She quoted Eleanor Roosevelt, saying, "It's better to light one little candle than to stumble in the dark."

MS. WALKER said she has been among those educators pushing for a long time to get school curriculum updated to ... include the contributions of ... minority groups, especially the African-Americans, throughout the United States. She belongs to a national organization, "and we do do a little bit of agitation from time to time" to get people to recognize [that] African-Americans have more value than people give them credit for [in] the advancement of the United States of America. "We helped to make this a great country, and we have helped to make this a wonderful state in which to live," she said. "It's not always a bed of roses, but just like the family, you fight and then you go back and hang together."

MS. WALKER appreciates HCR 4 because, she said, unfortunately, children do not often have role models who are other than sports figures. There are highly educated [African-American] people in high positions in Alaska that they never hear about. When she talked to a group of about 50 children in Anchorage, only two

knew that there was at that time a black judge in Anchorage, Superior Court District Judge Larry Card, and that included the adults who were with the children.

MS. WALKER continued:

This type of thing [African-American Citizen Recognition Month] really is a step forward to help us to spread the word to our children that there's more to our [African-American] people than just sports figures or those on the ... page that talks about illegal actions that people have taken. I really get disturbed when there's not a balance of [emphasis on] the good that's done and the bad that's done. I'm not saying hide the bad, because we need to know that, too. But I'm saying there should be a better balance.

MS. WALKER said African-American Citizen Recognition Month "is a candle to keep us from stumbling in the dark, and it serves as a reminder that all groups in this state have some value, and we [African-Americans] have a commitment to the state just like anybody else."

Number 0880

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS called HCR 4 "a great resolution" and said he certainly intends to vote for it, but was concerned about the date because it is asking the governor to sign a proclamation "after the fact." He asked Representative Dyson if he would be comfortable with leaving out any reference to the year and just saying, "declare February to be African-American Citizen Recognition Month."

Number 0907

REPRESENTATIVE DYSON explained that if the month were to be designated in perpetuity, that action would have to be taken as a bill rather than as a resolution. He shared Representative Stevens's sensitivity [about the date], and again suggested changing the reference in the bill to the years 2001 and 2002. "Then, maybe next year, some of us will come back with a bill," he added.

CHAIR COGHILL proposed resolving the issue by adding the year 2002 and sending HCR 4 out of committee with that amendment. There being no objection, HCR 4 was amended to declare February

to be African-American Citizen Recognition Month in both years, 2001 and 2002.

Number 0967

CHAIR COGHILL said something "that always concerns me when we do this is that the respect for other people is maintained as we honor others." The resolution itself is good, "that we recognize people of African-American descent." But in his lifetime, he has seen many instances in which:

"... the equality issue ... [has been seen as] a cultural issue, and I don't want to foster a cultural issue that is going to help us misinterpret our equality as individuals. Many times, we come [up to] the very edge of that by recognizing ...[particular] cultures, and my attitude is for us to be color blind when it comes to equality under the law and to appreciate each other's color when it comes to culture. So as we send this resolution forward, I'm going to pass it out, but it's going to be with a caveat that I'm always cautious of honoring one group and not recognizing that [doing so] always presents the danger of [fostering] that color sensitivity.

CHAIR COGHILL acknowledged that he was treading on thin ice because many people do not understand what he is trying to say, "That equality under law and recognition of culture can go hand in hand, but I want to make sure we're not misunderstanding that here."

Number 1096

MS. WALKER understood Chair Coghill's concern, but suggested looking at the issue more from an educational point of view than from a cultural one. She noted that February has been designated as Black History Month, which originated years ago as Negro History Week. The designation of February as African-American Citizen Recognition Month is ...[an] addendum to teaching young people about the African-American role in American history. "We're not looking at any special favors because there are other groups," she said. "I go around to schools ... all during the year and talk about Elizabeth Peratrovich and other people who have made contributions to the state. But I appreciate the fact that Representative Dyson brought [HCR 4] during ... Black History Month, when we can tie it in as an educational entity.

Number 1203

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS moved to report HCR 4, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHCR 4(STA) was passed out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

HJR 16-OPPOSE CANADIAN FEE TO TRANSPORT FIREARMS

Number 1220

CHAIR COGHILL announced the next order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16, urging President Bush, the United States Department of State, and the United States Congress to intervene and negotiate with the government of Canada to reconsider the imposition of a fee to transport firearms through Canada.

Number 1263

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD came forward to testify as prime sponsor of HJR 16. He described HJR 16 as a simple resolution about fairness and equity. Many Alaskans pass through Canada, especially going between Southeast and Southcentral Alaska, and there is a \$50 fee for transporting a firearm any time they cross the border. The fee [covers any additional crossings within 60 days], but when Canadians come into the United States, they don't have to pay a fee. "We [in HJR 16] are urging President Bush to negotiate with the Canadians to treat us fairly," he said.

Number 1353

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON commented that in her district, this [issue] is crucial because of the Stikine River that people are going up all the time throughout the year. The Canadian requirement creates a very difficult situation because those people aren't going to come up [to Juneau] to take a firearms safety course and pay the \$50 "before they leave my little island and take a boat up the river." This [Canadian policy] has a huge impact in her district, and she supports HJR 16.

Number 1405

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS noted that HJR 16 speaks to two issues, filling out a nonresident firearm declaration form and paying

the \$50 fee. He asked Representative Crawford if he wanted to consider putting something in the first few lines about the declaration form, as only the fee is mentioned there.

Number 1437

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD thought it would be very objectionable to the Canadians if U.S. citizens didn't fill out the declaration; it seems to him that the Canadians' biggest concern is that people leave their guns in their cars when in Canada, and the guns might be stolen. For that reason, they want to know exactly what is being carried through. He thought it was only the fee that needed to be addressed. As Representative Wilson had said, he wants to make it easier for people to cross the border in places where there are not checkpoints. "We need an accommodation also for air travel, for private planes. " That's part of our law to have a gun [in a plane] as survival gear," he explained.

Number 1515

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS asked for clarification" So this bills speaks specifically to the fee, not necessarily to the declaration form?"

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD said he would rather not have to fill out the form, but thought the Canadian government would never agree to that.

Number 1535

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS noted that on page 2, line 11 of HJR 16, there is reference to both the declaration and the fee. He asked if Representative Crawford wanted to delete that reference to the declaration.

Number 1575

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD looked at that line and confirmed that both the declaration and the fee were mentioned there. He conferred briefly with staff, and then explained that the reference to the declaration was left in to allow the president to include it in negotiating with Canada.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS said he had just wanted to call the sponsor's attention to [that mention of the declaration], and that he "can live with it however you want to do it."

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD said the specific mention had been discussed extensively and he had thought it was taken out.

Number 1651

CHAIR COGHILL observed that including the reference to the declaration would allow the United States to negotiate on-site inspection issues. It might be appropriate to include the reference so that it can be part of the integral discussion. "That's all we're asking to do is to bring it up for ... discussion, as I understand the resolution," he said. He thought its inclusion would give the resolution more impact.

Number 1694

REPRESENTATIVE FATE said because HJR 16 is trying to pave the way for negotiation, [it might be wise to look at] line 11, page 2, where there are two adjectives, "onerous" and "burdensome". "It may be burdensome; I'm not sure it's onerous; and which one are you talking about, the declaration or the fee?" he asked. He thought, "You can point to the things that they're doing to us, but when you get too descriptive ..., I think it takes away a little bit from ... this legislature and the prestige that we enjoy."

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD replied, "If the representatives from North Pole and Fairbanks would like to change the wording, I wouldn't be adverse to it."

Number 1769

REPRESENTATIVE FATE said he would like to delete the word "onerous," but not "burdensome." There is no question that the Canadian policy is burdensome. "That's not a descriptive term that belittles; it's just a descriptive term that states the fact."

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD remarked that he thought the \$50 fee was onerous, but he would be glad to remove the word.

REPRESENTATIVE FATE replied, "If that's onerous, what about the ... \$250 that's required to get across the border ...? You have to show that you have that [much money]. That's burdensome." He added that he is in concurrence with Representative Crawford's goals because the Canadian policy is burdensome, and

he thinks the Canadian government may have gone "a bit overboard" and that the \$50 fee should be negotiated.

Number 1824

REPRESENTATIVE FATE moved to amend HJR 16 by removing "onerous".

Number 1837

CHAIR COGHILL observed that the word "onerous" also appears on page 2, line 5.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON added that it would be necessary to remove two words, both "onerous" and the following "and".

Number 1873

CHAIR COGHILL agreed that she was correct, and that both words would need to be deleted from both line 5 and line 11. Hearing no objection, he declared that HJR 16 was thus amended.

Number 1881

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS asked if any other states have similar fees for Canadians crossing into them.

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS answered, "Not to our knowledge."

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON raised the question of including some mention of the declaration in the title, wondering if that might [provide additional leverage] in negotiations. She emphasized that she didn't want to "mess it up," and was just raising the question.

CHAIR COGHILL said from the chair's perspective, he thinks the message is clear enough, and that changing the title was not necessary.

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD said a good deal of time had been spent on the title, and drafters thought it was fine as it is.

Number 1992

REPRESENTATIVE FATE noted that a declaration of firearms had been required for many years, "so we're not talking about something that's new here as far as the declaration of the firearms is concerned."

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON asked if any change had been made in the form that those crossing the border must complete. She couldn't remember having to fill out any papers.

REPRESENTATIVE FATE described the "small things" one had to do when taking firearms into Canada, explaining, "There simply was no fee attached to that declaration."

CHAIR COGHILL noted that although the discussion was pertinent to the declaration, it was not pertinent to HJR 16.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON wanted to know if the paperwork was new along with the \$50.

REPRESENTATIVE CRAWFORD did not know if the declaration form had been changed in January when the \$50 fee was imposed, but he assured her that a form had been required in the past when people took firearms through Canada.

Number 2149

REPRESENTATIVE STEVENS moved to report HJR 16, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

CHAIR COGHILL discovered that there was a witness in the room who had wished to testify.

Number 2174

ROD ARNO, Lobbyist, Alaska Outdoor Council, expressed the Alaska Outdoor Council's support for HJR 16. The only thing he wished to add was a suggestion that in negotiating, it might be proposed to charge Canadians for bringing golf clubs across the border into the United States. [Laughter]

CHAIR COGHILL added that there are many other trade and other reciprocal agreements between the United States and Canada, "so this is a really good and genuine request."

Number 2233

CHAIR COGHILL, hearing no objection, declared that CSHJR 14(STA) was moved from the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

CHAIR COGHILL told members that the committee would hear HB 95, concerning use of the third floor of the Capitol, at 8:00 a.m. March 8, and would hold a joint meeting with the House Judiciary Standing Committee at 10:00 a.m. the same day.

ADJOURNMENT

Number 2320

CHAIR COGHILL adjourned the meeting of the House State Affairs Standing Committee at 9:35 a.m.