

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

March 8, 2001
3:40 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gene Therriault, Chair
Senator Randy Phillips, Vice Chair
Senator Bettye Davis

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Rick Halford
Senator Drue Pearce

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 100

"An Act establishing the third Saturday of each June as Juneteenth Day."

MOVED SCS HB 100 (STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Relating to proclaiming April 2001 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

MOVED CSSCR 6 (STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

HB 100 - No previous action recorded.

SCR 6 - No previous action recorded.

WITNESS REGISTER

Representative Lesil McGuire
Alaska State Capitol, Room 418
Juneau, AK 99811-2995

POSITION STATEMENT: Prime sponsor for HB 100

Dino Allen
Anchorage, AK 99513

POSITION STATEMENT: Supports HB 100

John Joeright
Staff for Senator Leman
Alaska State Capitol, Room 516

Juneau, AK 99801-182

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained SCR 6

Trisha Gentle

Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Abuse

No address provided

POSITION STATEMENT: Supports SCR 6

Lauree Hugonin

Alaska Network Domestic Violence Sexual Assault

130 Seward, Room 209

Juneau, AK 99801

POSITION STATEMENT: Supports SCR 6

Annette Kreitzer

Staff to Senator Leman

Alaska Capitol Building Room 516

Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SCR 6

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 01-11, SIDE A

Number 001

CHAIRMAN GENE THERRIAULT called the Senate State Affairs Committee meeting to order at 3:40 p.m. Present were Senators Phillips, Davis and Chairman Therriault.

The first order of business was HB 100.

#HB 100

HB 100-JUNETEENTH DAY

REPRESENTATIVE M^CGUIRE, prime sponsor of HB 100, said that Juneteenth Day is the oldest known celebration commemorating the end of slavery and is observed in Alaska on the third Saturday of each June.

Juneteenth Day has been celebrated in Anchorage and the Park Strip for many years and HB 100 is an effort to have the State of Alaska give it the recognition it is due. HB 100 respectfully requests the Governor to issue a proclamation commemorating the day and providing Alaskans a time to gather in celebration of the end of slavery.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT asked Representative M^CGuire to remain at the witness table while teleconference testimony was taken.

DINO ALLEN, from Anchorage, said he had organized Juneteenth Day celebrations on the Park Strip since 1993 and he heartily supports the celebration and the legislation. It is a wonderful opportunity to educate Alaskans on the long and difficult history of African Americans.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT said that he spoke with Representative McGuire just before the meeting and she said the legislation started as a resolution. He asked whether the drafter recommended a change from the resolution to a section of statute.

REPRESENTATIVE M^CGUIRE said that initially, she thought a resolution was sufficient, but decided that it was important enough to deserve a place in statute. Because resolutions carry distinction through just one legislative session, a resolution would need to be passed each session for yearly recognition so she decided it was best to put it into law.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT observed that language for bills is much more concise than that for resolutions and that language in the statute needs to clearly explain that Juneteenth Day celebrates an end of slavery in the United States and its territories in 1865 and requests that the Governor make a proclamation for the day. He recommended that on page 1, line 6, the sentence end after "1865". The second sentence would read, "The Governor shall issue the proclamation to commemorate the day." The third sentence would say "On Juneteenth Day, the citizens of the state are urged to reflect on the plight of early African Americans and appreciate the unique freedom and equality enjoyed by all state citizens today."

He asked for Representative McGuire's response to the more concise wording.

REPRESENTATIVE M^CGUIRE thought the comments were constructive but wanted assurance that if she agreed to the changes, the amendment would be passed as a conceptual amendment so passage wouldn't be delayed. She objected to removing "suffering and sacrifice" and changing it with "the plight" because it doesn't capture the essence of what she intended. However, her primary goal is to get the measure passed from committee so she would acquiesce. Other changes seemed to be technical and clean up.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT said that passing a conceptual amendment would allow opportunity to work with the language.

REPRESENTATIVE M^CGUIRE agreed but said that "plight" is a nebulous concept and she would prefer specifics.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT said they would work on the wording to reflect her desire to use "suffering and sacrifice."

He asked for questions or objections from committee members. There were none so amendment 1 was adopted. He noted that there was a zero fiscal note for the bill.

He asked for the will of the committee.

SENATOR DAVIS made a motion that SCS HB 100 (STA) and its fiscal note move out of committee with individual recommendations.

There being no objection, SCS HB 100 (STA) moved from committee with individual recommendations.

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#SCR 6

SCR 6-APRIL 2001 SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH

JOHN JOERIGHT, staff to Senator Leman, introduced the resolution as legislative desire to increase public awareness of the prevalence of sexual assault and abuse in Alaska by proclaiming April 2001 Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Sexual assault crimes in Alaska are the highest, per capita, in the nation at 2.4 times the national average. It is estimated that one in four Alaska women will be an assault or abuse victim in her lifetime. Greater awareness is needed because unreported incidents are about eight times higher than the documented occurrences.

Thirty-six other states have declared April Sexual Assault Awareness Month to better coordinate national efforts in preventing, educating and promoting a better understanding of sexual assault. The Statewide Sexual Violence Prevention Conference, to be held September 5-7, 2001, will undoubtedly have a greater impact with the passage of SCR 6.

He pointed out the need to delete the word "first" on page 2, line 10, because this isn't the first conference to be held.

TRISHA GENTLE, Director of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, expressed support for the resolution and thanked the sponsor and the committee for their efforts in heightening the public awareness of domestic violence and sexual assault problems in Alaska.

LAUREE HUGONIN, Director of Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and

Sexual Assault, also thanked the sponsor and committee. She explained that activities are usually planned throughout the month; communities plan marches and candle light ceremonies and provide time and place for victims to speak out about crimes perpetrated against them. The recognition that the resolution would provide would be appreciated.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT asked for questions. There were none.

He proposed deleting the word "first" from page 2, line 10, as amendment 1 because this isn't the first conference. There was no objection.

He spoke with Senator Leman's staff about rewording lines 6 and 7 on page 1 and they agreed that it could be improved. He asked Senator Phillips for his input.

SENATOR PHILLIPS said it was a formal resolution and the word "our" on line 6 was informal.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT suggested substituting "Alaska" for "our."

SENATOR DAVIS asked whether "one in four" referred to Alaskan or national statistics.

LAUREE HUGONIN said she thought it was a national statistic that one in four women and one in six men will be sexually abused by the time they are eighteen.

ANNETTE KREITZER, staff to Senator Leman, clarified that it is a national, not Alaskan, statistic.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT proposed amendment 2, page 1, line 6, to read, "Whereas one in four women in America are likely," thereby dropping the specific reference to mothers, daughters, sisters or wives and making it a collective.

ANNETTE KREITZER said that they struggled with the word "will," just as Chairman Therriault had, when rewording line 6. Since they were quoting a national statistic, the word "will" is more accurate because one in four women will experience sexual assault. This is very different than one in four women are likely to experience sexual assault.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT said he had no objection to that being an amendment to amendment 2. There were no objections and the amendment was adopted.

He asked for other amendments and noted that there was a zero fiscal note. There were no other amendments.

SENATOR DAVIS moved CSSCR 6(STA) and zero fiscal note from committee with individual recommendations. There were no objections.

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The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.