

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

April 1, 2003

3:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Senator John Cowdery, Vice Chair
Senator Gretchen Guess

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Fred Dyson
Senator Lyman Hoffman

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 18(MLV) am
Supporting the men and women of the United States armed forces.

MOVED SCS CSHJR 18 (STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

#SB 137

SENATE BILL NO. 137

"An Act imposing a tax on employment; and providing for an effective date."

SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

#

#SB 29

SENATE BILL NO. 29

"An Act establishing a sunset date for each department of state government; relating to the review of the functions of state agencies, certain instrumentalities of the state, and other persons and offices."

SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

#

PREVIOUS ACTION

HJR 18 - No previous action to record.

SB 137 - No previous action to record.

SB 29 - No previous action to record.

WITNESS REGISTER

Representative Bob Lynn

Alaska State Capitol, Room 415
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Bill sponsor

Carol Klopf
1191 Eastwood Lane
Fairbanks, AK 99702
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Ann Godduhn
940 Sheep Creek Road
Fairbanks, AK 99701
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Suzanne Rich
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Nina Mollett
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Sister Diane Bardol
Kodiak, AK 99615
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Kate Finn
Kindness Without Borders
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Alana Grear
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Robert Ward
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Jim Sykes
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Chris Riggio
4031 Woronzof Drive
Anchorage, AK 99517
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Kathleen McClellan
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Stacey Fritz
Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Ryan Tinsley
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Douglas Leggett
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

Marilyn Russell
No address provided
POSITION STATEMENT: Opposed HJR 18

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 03-13, SIDE A

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. Present were Senators Cowdery, Guess and Chair Gary Stevens.

The first order of business was HJR 18.

#HJR 18

HJR 18-SUPPORTING U.S. ARMED FORCES

CHAIR GARY STEVENS asked Representative Lynn to take a seat at the witness table.

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN, bill sponsor, gave the following testimony:

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I thank you for hearing HJR 18 today. I don't have a lot to say about it. Probably everything I could say about it or should say about it, I said at the rally on Friday. I do have a copy of the remarks that I gave on Friday, which I won't read to you

because you already heard it. I'll submit it as my written testimony. [See bill file.] I do urge you to pass this out of committee. Our troops need to have tangible evidence of the official support of the State of Alaska to help us win the war and to protect human life. I said during my comments at the rally, 'If you don't have the morale you need that endangers your life.' And as a Vietnam Veteran, I know I didn't have that when I came back from Vietnam. I don't want these troops and supporters to have to go through the same thing that some of us Vietnam Veterans did. And with that, I would urge you to pass it.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS noted there was a great turn out at the rally.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN replied he was pleased with the audience.

SENATOR JOHN COWDERY commended the Representative on the work he did, but was disappointed that he didn't see it on TV.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN stated to the best of his knowledge, Channel 2 did not cover the event, but he understands some of the local stations did.

SENATOR COWDERY said he would like to move the bill.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS noted a letter from Mr. Thompson points out that the troops haven't all made the ultimate sacrifice, which is death. He suggests on page 2, line 1 to delete "have made" and insert "are prepared to make". He asked if the Representative would be comfortable with that change.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN agreed to the change.

There being no objection, the motion passed.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS announced there were a number of people that were waiting to give testimony.

SENATOR GRETCHEN GUESS remarked she didn't know whether a country could make the ultimate sacrifice.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called for public testimony.

CAROL KLOPF testified from the Fairbanks LIO in strong opposition to HJR 18. As elected representatives of the State of

Alaska, legislators should be representing all the citizens of Alaska. Because there are large numbers of individuals on both sides of the issue, it's wrong for the Legislature to take sides regarding the war in Iraq. She thought nearly all Alaskans support the soldiers and military personnel and said, "We in the peace community do support our soldiers, we just don't support President Bush." She advised there was a different resolution that was prepared that states support of the United States Armed Forces and members of the peace community believe the State of Alaska should endorse the resolution.

ANN GODDUHN testified from the Fairbanks LIO. She and 56 affiliates of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks signed a declaration objecting to the adoption of HJR 18 because it proclaimed support for the armed military interception in Iraq. They did express support and deep appreciation for the U.S. Armed Services for their dedication of cause.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS ask her to send the list of the individuals that signed the declaration rather than reading them.

MS. GODDUHN replied she would prefer to read the list because all the people were planning to give testimony.

SENATOR GUESS stated the resolution mentions Iraq, but it focuses on the support for the armed services and does a good job of balancing a difficult issue for some people in the nation. She asked Ms. Godduhn and Ms. Klopff to point to places in the resolution that were objectionable because the resolution is about supporting the men and women in the armed services.

MS. GODDUHN replied she did not have a copy of the committee substitute, but the original document had strong language supporting President Bush's initiative in taking preemptive action. She advised she was giving her own views, but the idea of altering the war paradigm to include preemptive action as legitimate was an incredibly dangerous step. She expressed deep disappointment that the State of Alaska would consider endorsing that kind of paradigm shift.

SENATOR GUESS said she didn't see that in the resolution and asked her to review the version that passed the House and then get back to her for further discussion.

MS. GODDUHN observed the language was toned down in the committee substitute, but the resolution still endorses the war and supports President Bush as evidenced by the language, "as

this nation is engaged in combat." She said this is misleading the public regarding the origins of this new preemptive paradigm. She heartily agreed there is a need to support the troops, but not the war.

SENATOR COWDERY said, "You say you have 50 names from the university and it's ironic.... I'd be interested in looking at those names of the faculty there that have them if you'd send it to us because they're down here asking for money as you speak. And also, are you supportive of the devastating events that happened in New York when they hit our towers?"

MS. GODDUHN exclaimed she grew up in Brooklyn and loves the city. She entreated him not to misrepresent this as being anti-American. She is as much an American as anybody who was killed in the towers. Although President Bush has held that Iraq was behind the attack, it hasn't been substantiated.

SENATOR COWDERY said he would like to move the bill.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS advised there were many people that needed to speak and he wanted to hear them.

SENATOR COWDERY noted there was a caucus in 45 minutes.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS announced the committee would take testimony from three people in Fairbanks initially then give people at other sites an opportunity before returning to Fairbanks. He asked that testimony be limited to a minute or so.

SUZANNE RICH from Fairbanks testified she was an organizer of SOS for peace, which was a group of 375 Fairbanks citizens who are opposed to going to war in Iraq. She supports the troops and that is the reason she is against the war. The U.S. must take responsibility for the part we played in putting Saddam Hussein in power and that we turned our back when he was using chemical weapons. She added the American people need to be told the truth and she is totally against HJR 18 but she absolutely supports the troops.

NINA MOLLET said she was unhappy that the hearing for HJR 18 wasn't noticed. She was sure a large number of Juneau residents would have attended if they had knowledge of the hearing. According to the Juneau Empire, there were 1,500 participants at one peace rally. There have also been weekly meetings to discuss peace rather than war with Iraq.

She said she didn't have prepared comments because she didn't know about the meeting until the last minute. She added, "I don't know whether this was deliberate or some kind of mistake."

CHAIR GARY STEVENS explained the five-day rule [Uniform Rule 23] was waived on the Senate floor on 3/27/03.

MS. MOLLETT pointed out when you look at the schedule you didn't see that this was being considered and people didn't know.

She noted there was a moving letter in the Juneau Empire thanking people who disagreed with the war for attending the rally. She added, "This is a very divisive resolution and it would be much better to have a resolution that more people would feel comfortable with." It's deliberately divisive and is trying to put democrats on the defensive so that if they don't go along with the resolution they'll be attacked as being unpatriotic.

She said the rest of the world sees the history of Saddam Hussein differently than the U.S. does because he was placed in power by the United States in a military coup. She pointed out the U.S. doesn't have a very good reputation in that area for bringing freedom. "This is very simplistically worded that we are fighting for their freedom."

She quoted from the Kurdistan Democratic Party opposition that has been shut out by the Bush Administration. "There is a difference between a war of liberation and a war of conquest. Liberation means Iraqis are at the forefront. Conquest means the invaders are in charge." She urged the Legislature to pass a resolution supporting the troops that she could sign. Judging from the letters to the editor, this resolution alienates a huge population. HJR 18 shuts out people who are patriotic but don't feel the war in Iraq is a just war.

SENATOR GUESS stated that as a member of the Senate she is always ready to admit her mistakes and she wanted to extend her apologies for waiving the five-day notification rule. It was done for the right reason, which was the rally on Friday, March 28, 2003. There was no other motive in doing so. She doesn't view the resolution as an attempt to put Democrats on the defensive and the Representative from Anchorage has good intentions regarding supporting the troops.

As the sole Democrat member in attendance, she wanted it stated in the record she does not take issue with the Representative's motives and she disagrees with Ms. Mollett's interpretation.

MS. MOLLETT replied she was not impugning his motives in particular, but she knows what happens at election time and she knows some Democratic legislators in the state who have felt isolated after speaking against a resolution on principle.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS asked whether there were further comments.

SENATOR GUESS replied no one was more aware than she of some of those votes, but she wanted to make it clear that, "We try not to impugn the motives of people."

SENATOR COWDERY commented there is never 100 percent on anything, but the majority of Americans support this effort.

SISTER DIANE BARDOL from Kodiak opposed HJR 18 because the resolution seems to say that to support the troops you must support United States' involvement in war in Iraq. To her, supporting the troops means bringing them home and stopping war. The last few lines of the resolution states resolve to support President George W. Bush as this nation is engaged in combat. This appears to be the primary purpose of HJR 18 and secondarily it expresses support to the men and women in the armed services and the coalition. If her brother or nephews were engaged in this war, she wouldn't be slightly comforted by a resolution such as HJR 18.

KATE FINN from Anchor Point opposed HJR 18 as a member of Kindness Without Borders. She didn't have the time to prepare a statement because of the way the bill was noticed. However, she felt she could be quite succinct and say she did not support the President on his position in Iraq at all. If she were in the armed forces she would not be the least bit comforted by this resolution. If the true intent of the resolution was to show support for the troops, "It's way off target." The Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice made a resolution that is on record as of March 28 and clearly supports the troops. She suggested using that resolution as a model if the intent of HJR 18 was indeed to support the troops. Personally, she abhors the war and believes we are in it for the wrong reasons. She thinks the President is being dishonest with U.S. citizens. If we knew the real motivation we might feel differently, but we truly don't know what we're doing there. She said, "I will object to this war till the last day and I support our troops completely... I don't object to them being there, it's what they're doing."

The resolution doesn't do its stated intent and there is a better one in place to make that happen. She said, "You do not have the support of a large percentage of the Alaska population."

ALANA GREAR from Homer opposed HJR 18. Additionally, she and the people in the Homer office took issue with Senator Cowdery's comments regarding University funding.

ROBERT WARD from Homer opposed HJR 18. He was unable to read his prepared statement, but if the intent was to support the troops, it shouldn't include support for the President in the same document. "The President is currently engaged in an illegal war which goes against all normal international law including the United Nations Charter." If the President truly supports the troops he asked why he is leaving veteran health care and education needs short funded.

He advised he would send the Chair a copy of his testimony.

JIM SYKES testified from the Mat-Su LIO in opposition to HJR 18. He read the following from a letter. "I'm a vet, a former infantryman who has recently taken up the unappreciated task of removing unexploded ordinance [munitions] from various locations. I completely understand and appreciate all those who want to support those of us in uniform. However, there seems to be a pretty wide gulf between those who support us by wanting us all to come home safe and those who claim to support us by wanting us to go to war and apparently stay there. If I actually believed we would want to put a real democracy in the Middle East, maybe I would be more supportive. Call me cynical, but I just don't see it happening."

As Senator Robert Byrd said, "This is a war of choice, not a war of necessity." He added he has attended a number of peace rallies and has yet to meet any who oppose the men and women in uniform. Veterans who have never attended a demonstration before have participated. There is no question regarding the universal support for the uniformed forces; the opposition arises from President Bush's policy for war.

He said the committee had three options: to pass no resolution, to pass HJR 18, or to amend HJR 18. He proposed passing a resolution that unifies Alaskans rather than one that divides them. He suggested the following:

- Keep the first "WHEREAS"

- Keep the "WHEREAS" at the top of page 2 and change the wording as set forth in amendment 1
- Keep the "FURTHER RESOLVED" as the only "RESOLVED"
- Strike the balance of the resolution

CHRIS RIGGIO from Anchorage testified in opposition to HJR 18. He advised he would fax his testimony to the Chair. He read the following shortened version:

I've been a resident of Alaska since 1993. I'm also a former officer in the United States Air Force and I served in the Persian Gulf during 1990 and 1991. I've seen war and I'm against the blind use of violence to solve international problems. I'm here today on behalf of the Iraqi people, the American troops and their families, and millions of Americans who cannot be here today to speak out against this war in Iraq.

More specifically, I'm here today to voice my strong opposition to HJR 18. This invasion of Iraq is immoral, illegal, and unjust. This war is also in violation of international law as well as the United Nations Charter. President Bush's arguments for this inappropriate use of force are illegitimate and unsupported by facts.

I urge you to consider the grim realities of this conflict. This war is about oil and imperialism. Over one week ago Congress nearly unanimously supported a resolution similar to HJR 18 supporting the war and supporting the troops. But less than one week earlier Congress also passed a bill drastically cutting support to the Veterans Administration which is already limping along and unable to support all of its several million veterans from WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Gulf War I and hundreds of other U.S. military actions throughout the world. We still haven't figured out what is wrong with the thousands of veterans suffering from the Gulf War Syndrome.

Who are we supporting with these ridiculous resolutions? Is it really the Bush Administration and the multi-national corporations who are lined up at the feeding trough for pieces of Iraq who we are supporting? And yet there will be thousands of U.S. veterans from this war who will need help dealing with the physical and emotional problems resulting, but

they will likely be abandoned by their country at that point.

Let's support our troops by calling an end to this illegal war and stopping the killing of Iraqi citizens, Iraqi military, and U.S. soldiers. Let us end this slaughter, this bloodshed and destruction of life on earth. Let the inspections work. Let's act like a global citizen instead of a global tyrant. Let us work with the international community instead of unilaterally against it.

Again, I urge you to end debate on HJR 18 and shelve this proposal for eternity. I strongly encourage you to have a backbone, unlike our Congress, and stand up for what is right and just and pass a resolution condemning this destructive war. Please, for the sake of human life, our children and our Earth, do what is right.

KATHLEEN McCLELLAN from Anchorage testified in opposition to HJR 18. She has been active in Alaskan's for Peace and Justice and there are many people that would have come to oppose the resolution had they known they could express their views at a hearing. She supports the troops but opposes the resolution based on her opposition to the expressions in support of the war. She supports bringing the troops home from an unjust and illegal conflict. It's hypocritical to cut veteran benefits at the same that you claim to support the troops.

4:10 pm

Saddam Hussein may have posed a threat to his neighbors but it has never been proven that he poses a threat to U.S. security. He becomes a threat when we attack him, but he has never had the ability to attack the U.S. from his soil. Just because the Administration has repeated that Saddam Hussein is linked to September 11 doesn't make it a truth. There has been no substantiated evidence of that link.

STACEY FRITZ from Fairbanks testified on behalf of No Nukes North and the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice in opposition to HJR 18. She advised the following resolution speaks for 194 constituents:

BE IT NOW RESOLVED BY
THE FAIRBANKS COALITION FOR PEACE
AND JUSTICE:

WHEREAS the men and women of the United States Armed Forces have been sent into battle in Iraq; and
WHEREAS the men and women of the United States Armed Forces must sacrifice their personal safety in duty and service to their country; and
WHEREAS the men and women of the United States Armed Forces have made the ultimate sacrifice; and
WHEREAS the men and women of the United States Armed Forces must leave their families, their spouses, partners and children, for an uncertain and prolonged period of time; and
WHEREAS the men and women of the United States Armed Forces believe that they are fighting for the liberation of the Iraqi people; and
WHEREAS the men and women of the United States Armed Forces may be required to remain in Iraq for several years to assist in the restoration of peace and rebuilding of the nation's infrastructure;
THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice honors the brave men and women engaged in the conflict in Iraq; and be it
FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice will continue to work for a swift resolution to the conflict so as to minimize all loss of life; and be it
FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Peace Coalition will steadfastly petition our nation's government to honor its commitment to the men and women of the United States Armed Forces to provide full health care, disability pay, education and all other just and equitable benefits to our veterans and their families.
FURTHERMORE:
WHEREAS the present conflict in Iraq is neither just nor legal under recognized international law; and
WHEREAS the President of the United States and his administration did enter into this unjust and illegal conflict willfully; and
WHEREAS the President of the United States and his administration did undermine the diplomatic processes of the United Nations by knowingly providing false documents and incomplete intelligence regarding Iraq's involvement; and
WHEREAS the President of the United States and his administration promoted the unsubstantiated notion that Iraq was linked to the September 11 terrorist acts; and
WHEREAS the President of the United States and his administration did circumvent the United Nations inspections and declare a so-called "preventive war" on

Iraq when that nation offered no clear and present danger to the United States;

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice believes these actions of the President of the United States and his administration to be impeachable offenses; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice will join the rest of the world in demanding a full accounting of the loss of life, both military and civilian; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice will work for electoral reform to provide honest representation of the will of the People of the United States; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice will steadfastly petition that the United States Congress shall adequately fund all necessary humanitarian aid to the people of Iraq and shall pay for the reconstruction of all damage to the Iraqi infrastructure; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice will join the rest of the world in calling upon the United States government to involve the United Nations fully in the reconstruction of Iraq's government, economy and infrastructure; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks Coalition for Peace and Justice will continue to work for peace and justice in Iraq, the United States and all nations, thereby ensuring that the men and women of the United States Armed Forces will never again sacrifice their lives and health in an unjust and illegal attack on any nation.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS asked Ms. Fritz to sent a copy of the resolution.

MS. FRITZ replied she would do so.

RYAN TINSLEY agreed with all the preceding comments. Members of 19 Alaskan communities and two other states signed the resolution Ms. Fritz read. The movement against the war consists of over 200 nations. When Desmond Tutu called for a vigil, it happened in two days. In 129 different countries there were 6,000 different vigils.

For the Legislature to put forth a resolution that divides Alaska and supports the President who is losing a popularity

contest with Saddam Hussein is uncalled for. He supports the troops, but not the war.

DOUGLAS LEGGETT from Fairbanks opposed HJR 18. He said he has been a law abiding citizen his entire life. He loves his country and he wishes to support the troops, but he can't condone an action that supports the U.S. breaking the law.

MARILYN RUSSELL from Fairbanks opposed HJR 18. She does not give her consent for the resolution as written. She agrees with those who spoke previously. She challenged legislators to speak up against the resolution.

SIDE B
4:20 pm

CHAIR GARY STEVENS announced everyone that signed up to testify had done so. He asked whether there were questions of Representative Lynn.

SENATOR GUESS noted the testimony was powerful and the one point of agreement was to support the troops. She asked whether the Representative had given consideration to amending the resolution to support the troops and not include the war.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN replied,

I sat here and listened to the testimony and in one respect it makes me proud to be an American to know that we can hear this type of testimony. I regret some of the ad hominem remarks that were made and my emotions, as I've listened to this, have ranged between anger, the urge to vomit, but probably more accurately sadness. Very sad testimony to hear what all of us have heard today because I do think we need to support our troops. And I might point out our President is in fact the Commander-in-Chief of our armed services. He also is a member of the military and a military person knows that. If we were to substitute with Saddam Hussein, the words "Adolph Hitler" before World War II started would these people be thinking the same thing? I hope they would not.

I think the part talking about supporting the troops and the background of why the troops need to be supported and why they're there is like the left hand and the right hand. We looked at several versions of this, we've talked about it, we've discussed almost

every "Whereas" in here. I think it would be a sad day when we can't support our troops and give the condemnation to Saddam Hussein that he deserves.

I'm not prepared to state that every action in the history of the world that has lead up to this thing has always been as proper as it should be. Nonetheless, we live in the real world and the real world is we are in fact in danger of international terrorism as was amply demonstrated by 9/11. It's been very fortunate we haven't had any further acts of that type...

When you are serving in combat it's a shallow argument to say we support the troops, but we don't support the fellow who sent you there. We're all for you guys coming home safe, but you shouldn't be there to begin with. If you shouldn't be there to begin with, and people tell you this. What do you think that does for a person's morale? In addition to bombs and bullets, the most important things to winning any kind of armed conflict is your morale.... When you attack the Commander-in-Chief, who also happens to be the President of the United States, you are attacking a troop and that's the military viewpoint.

All these people talk today, and God bless their right to be able to do that. I don't know how many people we had at the rally the other day. It's too bad that these folks were not here testifying. They're probably out working for a living and I urge your support of it. No resolution is perfect; I think this works.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called for further questions or comments.

SENATOR COWDERY noted all 40 members of the House supported this resolution.

He made a motion to move SCS CSHJR 18 (STA) and zero fiscal note from committee. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

CHAIR GARY STEVENS reminded everyone the resolution would move to the Senate floor. He encouraged everyone who participated to contact his or her Senator.

#

CHAIR GARY STEVENS adjourned the meeting at 5:00 pm.