

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 122(FIN)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 4/7/05

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES DAHLSTROM, Berkowitz, Kott, Lynn, Hawker, Gruenberg, Wilson, Elkins, Thomas, Kerttula, Foster, Chenault, Croft, Olson, McGuire, Gara, Ramras, Guttentberg, LeDoux

SENATOR Elton

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to certain relief concerning motor vehicle leases, telephone services,**
2 **education, utilities, state loans, and hunting, fishing, and trapping licenses for members**
3 **of the Alaska National Guard deployed to a combat zone; relating to reimbursement of**
4 **premiums for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance paid by members of the Alaska**
5 **National Guard deployed to a combat zone; and providing for an effective date."**

6 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

7 *** Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
8 to read:

9 FINDINGS AND INTENT. The legislature finds that

10 (1) the Alaska National Guard has a proud tradition of military service with
11 many Alaskans having answered the call of the nation and served in the national guard;

12 (2) there have been instances in which the dependents of members of the
13 Alaska National Guard have been left without adequate financial resources when a national

1 guard member has been killed while on active duty;

2 (3) members of the Alaska National Guard are now being asked to serve
3 extended periods of active duty in combat areas; and

4 (4) members of the Alaska National Guard provide the state and its citizens
5 valuable benefits through their service in the state and through recently extended periods of
6 active duty in combat zones outside of the state, and, in exchange for these extended periods
7 of active duty, they should receive assistance and other relief related to the burdens of their
8 deployment when appropriate.

9 * **Sec. 2.** AS 26.05 is amended by adding new sections to read:

10 **Sec. 26.05.261. Relief for servicemembers deployed to a combat zone.** (a)

11 This section applies to a member of the Alaska National Guard deployed to a combat
12 zone for a period of not less than 30 days.

13 (b) The member, the member's spouse, or other person authorized to act on
14 behalf of the member may terminate, without penalty or other cost based on early
15 termination, a

16 (1) motor vehicle lease executed by or on behalf of the member
17 deployed to a combat zone by providing written notice and surrendering the motor
18 vehicle to the lessor, and the payment of any amounts due under the lease not related
19 to the early termination;

20 (2) contract for wireless telephone service executed by or on behalf of
21 a member by providing written notice to the wireless telephone service provider and
22 surrendering the wireless telephone used under the contract, and not owned by the
23 member, to the service provider.

24 (c) Upon request by a member, an institution of higher education in the state

25 (1) shall grant the member and a dependent of a military member a
26 military leave of absence from the institution;

27 (2) shall credit any tuition and fees paid that are applicable to an
28 academic term during a military leave of absence toward tuition and fees due for an
29 academic term beginning within 12 months following the return of the member from
30 deployment;

31 (3) may not change the educational status or degree requirements for a

1 member accepted in a degree program before the date of deployment.

2 (d) A public utility that provides electricity, natural gas, or other heating fuel
3 to the residential premises of a member may not cease to provide electricity, natural
4 gas, or other heating fuel for nonpayment. Upon the return of the member from
5 deployment, the person providing electricity, natural gas, or other heating fuel shall
6 offer the member a period of not less than the length of the period of deployment to
7 pay any arrearages incurred during the period of deployment and may not charge the
8 member interest or late payment fees for payments not made during the period of
9 deployment or the repayment period. A member may request a longer period for
10 repayment upon a showing of hardship.

11 (e) A member may not be required to make a payment on a state loan during
12 the period of deployment. Interest on the state loan shall continue during the period of
13 deployment and the member shall resume making payments upon returning from
14 deployment.

15 (f) The Department of Fish and Game shall reissue, without charge, any
16 fishing, hunting, or trapping license obtained by a member for the year in which a
17 member is deployed to a combat zone for a period of not less than 30 days for the year
18 following the member's return from deployment.

19 (g) In this section,

20 (1) "combat zone" means an area of hostile fire or imminent danger
21 that entitles a member on duty in that area to special pay;

22 (2) "institution of higher education" has the meaning in AS 23.20.520;

23 (3) "member" means a member of the Alaska National Guard
24 described in (a) of this section;

25 (4) "state loan" means any loan made by an agency of the state, a
26 public corporation of the state, or the Alaska Commercial Fishing and Agriculture
27 Bank, except for a loan made by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

28 **Sec. 26.05.263. Reimbursement of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance**
29 **premiums.** (a) Subject to appropriation, the adjutant general of the department shall
30 reimburse premiums paid by a member of the Alaska National Guard deployed to a
31 combat zone to the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program (38 U.S.C. 1965

1 et seq.).

2 (b) A member of the Alaska National Guard deployed to a combat zone, the
3 member's spouse, or person authorized to act on behalf of the member must apply to
4 the department for reimbursement under this section within six months following the
5 date the member returns from deployment using the form provided by the department.

6 (c) In this section, "combat zone" has the meaning given in AS 26.05.261.

7 * **Sec. 3.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
8 read:

9 **APPLICABILITY.** (a) AS 26.05.261(b), enacted by sec. 2 of this Act, applies to a
10 motor vehicle lease or contract for wireless telephone service entered into on or after the
11 effective date of this Act.

12 (b) AS 26.05.261(c), (d), (e), and (f), enacted by sec. 2 of this Act, apply to a member
13 of the Alaska National Guard deployed to a combat zone on or after the effective date of this
14 Act.

15 (c) The reimbursement of premiums paid by a member of the Alaska National Guard
16 deployed to a combat zone to the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance program (38 U.S.C.
17 1965 et seq.) under AS 26.05.263, enacted by sec. 2 of this Act, applies to premiums paid on
18 or after the effective date of this Act.

19 * **Sec. 4.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).