

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS

February 17, 2005

1:09 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Nancy Dahlstrom
Representative Jim Elkins
Representative Bill Thomas
Representative Max Gruenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Lesil McGuire
Representative Sharon Cissna

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 122

"An Act relating to payment of premiums for Service members' Group Life Insurance on behalf of members of the Alaska National Guard deployed to a combat zone; and providing for an effective date."

-HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8

Expressing support of Alaska Army National Guard soldiers deployed worldwide.

-MOVED HJR 8 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 122

SHORT TITLE: LIFE INSURANCE FOR NATIONAL GUARD

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) DAHLSTROM

02/02/05	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/02/05	(H)	MLV, L&C, FIN
02/02/05	(H)	L&C REFERRAL REMOVED
02/17/05	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 124

BILL: HJR 8

SHORT TITLE: SUPPORTING ALASKA ARMY NATL. GUARD

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) WEYHRAUCH

02/02/05 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/02/05 (H) MLV, STA
02/17/05 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 124

WITNESS REGISTER

TERRY HARVEY, Staff
for Representative Bruce Weyhrauch
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HJR 8 on behalf of the sponsor,
Representative Weyhrauch.

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Bridges
Alaska National Guard
Fort Richardson
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered testimony in support of HJR 8.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR BOB LYNN called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at [1:09:41 PM](#). Representatives Dalhstrom, Elkins, Thomas, and Lynn were present at the call to order. Representative Gruenberg arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 122-LIFE INSURANCE FOR NATIONAL GUARD

CHAIR LYNN announced that the order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 122, "An Act relating to payment of premiums for Service members' Group Life Insurance on behalf of members of the Alaska National Guard deployed to a combat zone; and providing for an effective date." Chair Lynn announced that HB 122 will not be moved today and will be heard first.

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM stated that HB 122 pertains to life insurance for the National Guard, at a time when the federal government is considering action to better serve its military men in other countries; The Alaskan Guard deserves the same. This bill will pay life insurance premiums for guardsmen that are deployed to combat zones. She went on to say that these guardsmen are our neighbors, co-workers, and some are even staff here in this building. This bill provides extra security for their dependents, gives them piece of mind, and a little

assistance while they are away. This legislation will allow premiums to be paid up to \$250,000. This bill has bipartisan support. Representative Dahlstrom characterized HB 122 as a work in progress.

CHAIR LYNN asked what the out of pocket expense was for this insurance.

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM answered that it is approximately \$16.25 a month.

CHAIR LYNN replied that the state should be able to afford this, considering what these guardsmen are going through to defend the national policy. He then queried the Representative Dahlstrom as to whether any of the guardsmen had died as of yet.

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM asserted that though they had not come back with any dead among them, some guardsmen had returned with some physical injuries and issues that they needed to address.

[1:13:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS asked if the committee could extend this to property extension payments.

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM replied that this is one of the items that is on a list that is being considered for inclusion in this bill, or within newer ones being considered

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS asked if he could co-sponsor the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM answered that she would love to have him onboard the bill packet.

CHAIR LYNN agreed that anything the committee can do to help those in the military is something it should look into. He opened the floor to more questions and then asked if the committee could go ahead and move it out of committee.

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM agreed the issue of property tax is enormous. She expressed the need to review how deployment affects finances.

[HB 122 was held over.]

HJR 8-SUPPORTING ALASKA ARMY NATL. GUARD

1:15:43 PM

CHAIR LYNN announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 8 "Expressing support of Alaska Army National Guard soldiers deployed worldwide". He related that HJR 8 will show legislative support for the Army National Guardsmen currently deployed around the world.

TERRY HARVEY, Staff for Representative Bruce Weyhrauch, Alaska State Legislature, announced that this resolution is a way to address concerns and give support to the guardsmen from Alaska who are deployed all around the world. This resolution is a way of putting on record that the committee supports the Army National Guardsmen for serving the country. The bill sponsor believes it's important to show support for the National Guard who are letting their lives go while serving their country and state. It is important to show support, but it's also important to extend this gratitude to family and friends, as well as employers who also support the troops.

CHAIR LYNN asked if the Air National Guard was also covered or if there was a similar bill for them as well.

MR. HARVEY answered that there was not, and that since this bill was already in the works the sponsor decided that he would go forward with HJR 8. He indicated that he had been talking to the Air National Guard and that legislation addressing that branch of the military is in the planning stage.

CHAIR LYNN continued by stating that this could be done as a committee bill. He indicated that he did not want to discriminate against any of the Guard units.

1:19:26 PM

MR. HARVEY suggested that the committee ask the military representatives for comment.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MIKE BRIDGES, Alaskan Army/Air National Guard Officers Association, Legislative Liaison, Fort Richardson, stated that the Army National Guard is being deployed in very unique ways right now, more than since the years of World War II, and that he was all for the resolution. He also indicated that although he was all for including the Air National Guard into the resolution, he acknowledged that the resolution was addressing the high deployment that the Alaskan National Guard is currently experiencing. He added as a side note that the

officers association that he is representing did include both Army and Air Force, and that he represented both.

REPRESENTATIVE ELKINS asked if what he was saying was that he wanted to be considered as a separate entity at the present time.

LT. COLONEL BRIDGES answered that the Army National Guard is being deployed at a very different rate than the Air National Guard and that it is more than anything military had experienced since World War II. He then pointed out that the Air National Guard is being deployed as well, but under different [non-combative] circumstances. He then added that the Air National Guard goes only for 30-120 days for operational deployment, whereas the Army National Guard goes for a 18 months and up to two-year deployments.

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM moved to report HJR 8 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

CHAIR LYNN announced that he was looking forward to seeing this on the floor and being voted into law.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:22:18 p.m.