

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 28, 2006

3:37 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gene Therriault, Chair
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Bettye Davis

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Thomas Wagoner, Vice Chair
Senator Kim Elton

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 167(STA) am
"An Act relating to providing a death certificate for a deceased veteran without cost; and relating to a program to honor the memory of a deceased veteran."

HEARD AND HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 279

"An Act relating to missions and desired results to be applied to certain expenditures from state operating budgets by the executive branch of state government and the University of Alaska and by the judicial branch of state government; and providing for an effective date."

BILL POSTPONED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 167

SHORT TITLE: DECEASED VETERAN DEATH CERTIFICATE/HONOR

SPONSOR(S): MILITARY & VETERANS' AFFAIRS

02/22/05	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/22/05	(H)	MLV, STA
03/17/05	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 124
03/17/05	(H)	Moved CSHB 167(MLV) Out of Committee
03/17/05	(H)	MINUTE(MLV)
03/18/05	(H)	MLV RPT CS(MLV) 5DP
03/18/05	(H)	DP: THOMAS, GRUENBERG, CISSNA, ELKINS, LYNN
03/21/05	(H)	FIN REFERRAL ADDED AFTER STA

04/12/05	(H)	STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/12/05	(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard
04/14/05	(H)	STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/14/05	(H)	Moved CSHB 167(STA) Out of Committee
04/14/05	(H)	MINUTE(STA)
04/15/05	(H)	STA RPT CS(STA) NT 6DP
04/15/05	(H)	DP: GARDNER, LYNN, GRUENBERG, RAMRAS, ELKINS, SEATON
04/25/05	(H)	FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
04/25/05	(H)	Moved CSHB 167(STA) Out of Committee
04/25/05	(H)	MINUTE(FIN)
04/26/05	(H)	FIN RPT CS(STA) NT 6DP 3NR
04/26/05	(H)	DP: HAWKER, MOSES, WEYHRAUCH, FOSTER, MEYER, CHENAULT;
04/26/05	(H)	NR: HOLM, JOULE, KELLY
04/29/05	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
04/29/05	(H)	VERSION: CSHB 167(STA) AM
05/01/05	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/01/05	(S)	STA, FIN
02/28/06	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211

WITNESS REGISTER

Representative Bob Lynn
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 167

Representative Max Gruenberg
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information on HB 167

John Cramer, Director
Administrative Services Division
Department of Military & Veterans
Affairs
PO Box 5800
Ft. Richardson, AK 99505-0800
POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information on HB 167

Philip Mitchell, State Registrar
Department of Health &
Social Services
PO Box 110601
Juneau, AK 99801-0601
POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information on HB 167

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR GENE THERRIAULT called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at [3:37:28 PM](#). Present were Senators Bettye Davis, Charlie Huggins and Chair Gene Therriault.

CSHB 167(STA)AM-DECEASED VETERAN DEATH CERTIFICATE/HONOR

[3:37:42 PM](#)

CHAIR THERRIAULT announced HB 167 to be the first order of business.

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN, Chair of the House Special Committee on Military and Special Affairs, stated that HB 167 sends a signal that Alaska supports its troops. It provides that when a veteran passes away eligible family members receive, free of charge, one copy of the certified death certificate and one copy of the Governor's Memorial Certificate. The latter is a program that is modeled after the Presidential Memorial Certificate Program and acknowledges the State's appreciation for the deceased veteran's service.

[3:39:04 PM](#)

SENATOR CHARLIE HUGGINS expressed support for the bill and mentioned the fiscal note.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN said it's less than \$1,000 per year.

CHAIR THERRIAULT noted that the fiscal note is zero.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN responded it's actually indeterminate.

CHAIR THERRIAULT referenced page 3, lines 4,5, and 6 and noted that Alaska Territorial Guard isn't listed, but the definition of veteran under AS 26.10.080 includes that group.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN responded he would be amenable to a friendly amendment to include that group.

SENATOR HUGGINS moved to insert Alaska Territorial Guard on page 3, line 4 after the word "force."

CHAIR THERRIAULT found no objection and announced that his staff would work with the drafter to determine how it should be inserted.

Referring to the Health and Social Services fiscal note analysis, he asked if the idea is to establish a reasonable limit to the number of complementary copies that are provided to the families.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN replied, establishing a reasonable limit is acceptable.

CHAIR THERRIAULT questioned how many certificates would be reasonable.

SENATOR HUGGINS recommended it not exceed five.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN agreed.

CHAIR THERRIAULT recapped the discussion for Representative Gruenberg.

REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG directed attention to page 2, line 23 and said that each eligible member of a veteran's family would receive a certificate and it's for the purpose of applying for death benefits.

SENATOR HUGGINS said his experience is that families typically need five copies and he would suggest that it say, "not to exceed five."

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG agreed.

[3:48:12 PM](#)

PHILIP MITCHELL, State Registrar with the Department of Health & Social Services, advised that he helped prepare the fiscal note and that five was used in the calculations.

[3:50:42 PM](#)

JOHN CRAMER, Director of the Administrative Services Division of the Department of Military & Veterans Affairs, stated agreement with a previous statement that the definition of "veteran" is given in AS 26.10.080 and it includes the Alaska Territorial Guard.

CHAIR THERRIAULT observed that it's confusing that the bill doesn't include the Alaska Territorial Guard in the list of veteran groups being addressed yet the Alaska Territorial Guard

is included in the statutory definition of "veteran," which is referenced in another section of the bill.

MR. CRAMER suggested the reference to Alaska Scouts is confusing because the Alaska Territorial Guard members were scout battalions and therefore the Alaska Territorial Guard includes the Alaska Scouts.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG asked if an Alaskan resident who died and wasn't yet retired would be covered.

SENATOR HUGGINS informed members that you're a veteran on the first day of service whether you're on active duty or not.

CHAIR THERRIAULT announced he would hold HB 167 in committee to work with the drafters to: delete reference to Alaska Scouts and insert Alaska Territorial Guard; limit the number of copies to not exceed five; and correlate the fiscal note to the math that was used.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG remarked the drafters might prefer to use the term veteran with no specific references.

CHAIR THERRIAULT said he'd take that up with the drafters and hopefully have a CS for the committee to consider soon. There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Therriault adjourned the meeting at [3:55:22 PM](#).