

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 23, 2006

3:38 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

SENATE BILL NO. 274

"An Act relating to the disposition of surplus firearms by the state."

MOVED CSSB 274(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 21

Relating to the Vietnam War, to veterans, and to the Vietnam War memorial entitled "The Moving Wall."

MOVED CSSCR 21(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 214

"An Act making appropriations for energy assistance and weatherization; and providing for an effective date."

MOVED SB 214 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 215

"An Act relating to the energy dividend for 2005; and providing for an effective date."

MOVED SB 215 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 274

SHORT TITLE: STATE FIREARM DISPOSAL AND INVENTORY

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DYSON

02/09/06	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/09/06	(S)	STA, FIN
02/14/06	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

02/14/06 (S) <Bill Hearing Rescheduled to 2/23/06>
02/23/06 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211
02/23/06 (S) Heard & Held
02/23/06 (S) MINUTE(STA)
03/06/06 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
03/06/06 (S) Heard & Held
03/06/06 (S) MINUTE(STA)
03/23/06 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211

BILL: SCR 21

SHORT TITLE: VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL:MOVING WALL
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) HUGGINS

02/14/06 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/14/06 (S) STA
03/23/06 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211

BILL: SB 214

SHORT TITLE: APPROP FOR ENERGY DIVIDEND & ASSISTANCE
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) THERRIAULT, KOOKESH

01/09/06 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 12/30/05
01/09/06 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/09/06 (S) STA, FIN
01/26/06 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211
01/26/06 (S) Heard & Held
01/26/06 (S) MINUTE(STA)
03/23/06 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211

BILL: SB 215

SHORT TITLE: ENERGY DIVIDEND: INCREASE 2005 PFD
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) THERRIAULT, KOOKESH

01/09/06 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 12/30/05
01/09/06 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/09/06 (S) STA, FIN
01/26/06 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211
01/26/06 (S) Heard & Held
01/26/06 (S) MINUTE(STA)
03/23/06 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 211

WITNESS REGISTER

Senator Fred Dyson
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: As sponsor of SB 274, explained Version X and answered questions.

Wes Keller, Staff
Senator Fred Dyson
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered a question on SB 274, Version X.

James Helgoe, Lieutenant
Division of Alaska State Troopers
Department of Public Safety
5700 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99507-1225

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 274, Version X.

Josh Tempel, Staff
to Senator Charlie Huggins
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SCR 21 on behalf of the sponsor.

Representative Bill Thomas
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SCR 21, Version G, and suggested an amendment.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR GENE THERRIault called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at [3:38:30 PM](#). Present were Senators Charlie Huggins, Bettye Davis, and Chair Gene Therriault. He noted that the remaining members were in another meeting.

SB 274-STATE FIREARM DISPOSAL AND INVENTORY

CHAIR GENE THERRIault announced SB 274 to be up for discussion.

[3:39:14 PM](#)

SENATOR CHARLIE HUGGINS moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS), Version X [labeled 24-LS1636\X, Bannister, 3/22/06], as a work draft. Without objection, it was so ordered and Version X was before the committee.

[3:39:39 PM](#)

SENATOR FRED DYSON, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of SB 274, characterized Version X as a much more polished version that he believes the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Department of Administration, and the attorneys are comfortable with. It clarifies there is no liability for the state to dispose of firearms. For guns that the general population cannot legally own, such as sawed-off shotguns and fully automatic weapons, it makes provisions for them to be sold to a Class 3 dealer. The few weapons that are illegal to own - such as those with defaced serial numbers - can be disassembled, the illegal parts can be thrown away, and the remaining parts can be made available to whoever wants them. Furthermore, DPS must report yearly to the finance committee what firearms it traded in.

[Due to technical difficulties, there is no audio recording for the time period 3:41:06 PM to 3:43:18 PM.]

[3:41:06 PM](#)

CHAIR THERRIAULT referred to page 2, subsection (d), which talks about a part of a surplus firearm. He asked whether that includes ammunition.

WES KELLER, Staff to Senator Fred Dyson, pointed out that "surplus firearm" [page 3, line 3, in the definitions section] means a firearm or ammunition.

[3:43:23 PM](#)

SENATOR DYSON, in response to Senator Huggins, referred to page 2, line 2, saying this makes it clear that the state is still able to trade firearms in.

[3:44:06 PM](#)

JAMES HELGOE, Lieutenant, Division of Alaska State Troopers, Department of Public Safety, informed members that DPS supports the bill in its current version, which gives DPS the flexibility to dispose of firearms that come into state possession.

[3:44:52 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS moved to report CS for SB 274, Version X [24-LS1636\X, Bannister, 3/22/06] from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). Without objection, CSSB 274(STA) was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

SCR 21-VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL:MOVING WALL

CHAIR GENE THERRIAULT announced SCR 21 to be up for discussion. He noted that a proposed committee substitute (CS), Version G was in the packets.

3:45:11 PM

JOSH TEMPEL, Staff to Senator Charlie Huggins, presented SCR 21. He explained that this issue is a big one for numerous veterans across the state. The memorial will go to seven cities, and people are ecstatic. Noting that many of Alaska's veterans have seen extreme combat, Mr. Tempel suggested this memorial will provide a chance for closure.

He said this will be educational, not just about the Vietnam War, but also about America's veterans in general and what they've given for our country. Although the memorial came to Alaska about a decade ago, this time it will go to communities where it has never been, including Bethel and Cordova. Mr. Tempe offered his belief that Cordova has the highest percentage of any city in the nation of fallen Vietnam veterans.

He explained that in honoring veterans across the state, it was thought an appropriate title for this summer would be "a summer of honor and a season of gratitude." He expressed hope that the state would adopt that title for this summer.

3:47:57 PM

SENATOR CHARLIE HUGGINS, sponsor, added that Vietnam War veterans, including himself, are now the majority of veterans, since those who served in World War II are passing away. Unfortunately, there are many scars from the Vietnam era, both physical and mental. Thus he believes the wall will be therapeutic. For some, it will bring closure, while others will see it as a harsh reminder. What SCR 21 requests is a voice from the Senate in recognition that the wall is going to communities where it hasn't yet been, including the Matanuska-Susitna area, Eagle River, Kodiak, and other places.

He mentioned teleconferencing with various communities about how to make it happen. Senator Huggins surmised it will be a grand occasion, though a somber one. He expressed pride in being a small part of this, and commended Representative Thomas for having a big part on behalf of Southeast Alaska. He concluded by saying this is well deserved by veterans.

3:50:18 PM

CHAIR THERRIAULT asked for a motion to adopt the \G Version.

SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS moved [to adopt the proposed CS, Version G, labeled 24-LS1682\G, Bannister, 3/14/06, as the work document]. Without objection, it was so ordered.

[3:50:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BILL THOMAS informed members that he is a Vietnam veteran from 1968. He thanked Senator Huggins and Representative Stoltze for helping him get the memorial to Cordova, where people were overwhelmed when they found out about this; four of them were classmates with three young men whose names are on the wall. Representative Thomas expressed great pleasure that this is happening, agreeing there is a lot of emotional scarring.

[3:51:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS suggested a conceptual amendment [page 2, line 3], to replace "a" with "the" after "2006"; thus the title for the time period would begin "the summer of honor". He offered his belief that this would be stronger language, and asked if Senator Huggins agreed.

SENATOR HUGGINS concurred.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS expressed support for the resolution. He said he's also working on getting the names on a citation, which could be taken to each community. He noted that the platoon sergeant for one young man who is listed on the memorial wall lives in Skagway, and two soldiers in Haines and Sitka had served with the young men he'd mentioned. Representative Thomas said he is trying to find a way to take them to Cordova, where the memorial will be on June 23. He thanked Senator Huggins and Representative Stoltze for their assistance in Southeast Alaska.

[3:53:01 PM](#)

CHAIR THERRIAULT moved to adopt Amendment 1, on page 2, line 3, after "2006", to change "a" to "the". Thus it would read: "the summer of honor and a season of gratitude". He added that the drafters would be asked to put it into whatever form is necessary to clarify that the observance is to be given that title. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

[3:54:00 PM](#)

SENATOR DAVIS moved to report CS for SCR 21, Version G [24-LS1682\G, Bannister, 3/14/06], as amended, from committee [with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s)].

Without objection, CSSCR 21(STA) was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

SB 214-APPROP FOR ENERGY DIVIDEND & ASSISTANCE
SB 215-ENERGY DIVIDEND: INCREASE 2005 PFD

[3:54:25 PM](#)

CHAIR GENE THERRIAULT announced SB 214 and SB 215 to be up for discussion. As one of the bills' sponsors, he explained that this is energy-dividend legislation. He noted that he had touched base with committee members and asked them to consider passing the bill on to the Senate Finance Committee. He reminded members that the bills propose a dividend to help cover increased energy costs for Alaskans, with additional money to make up a difference for power cost equalization (PCE) in the current fiscal year. They also propose a \$10 million appropriation for multiple-year use for weatherization for low-income people.

He pointed out that when it comes to PCE for the current fiscal year and the following one, the issue ultimately will be dealt with in the Senate Finance Committee. He suggested the likelihood that funding would continue for weatherization for low-income people, and said he'd like the Senate Finance Committee to consider a multiyear appropriation.

[3:56:25 PM](#)

SENATOR CHARLIE HUGGINS moved to report SB 214 and SB 215 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). Without objection, SB 214 and SB 215 were reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Therriault adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at [3:56:52 PM](#).