

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
May 3, 2007
9:37 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Meyer called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at [9:37:09 AM](#).

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mike Chenault, Co-Chair
Representative Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Stoltze, Vice-Chair
Representative Harry Crawford
Representative Richard Foster
Representative Les Gara
Representative Mike Hawker
Representative Reggie Joule
Representative Mike Kelly
Representative Mary Nelson
Representative Bill Thomas Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Kelly Huber, Staff, Representative Nancy Dahlstrom

SUMMARY

HB 226 An Act repealing the termination of the state training and employment program; and providing for an effective date.

HB 226 was HEARD & HELD in Committee for further consideration.

HB 244 An Act creating an Alaska Medal of Honor and establishing criteria for awarding the medal.

HB 244 was HEARD & HELD in Committee for further consideration.

[9:37:57 AM](#)

#HB244

HOUSE BILL NO. 244

An Act creating an Alaska Medal of Honor and establishing criteria for awarding the medal.

KELLY HUBER, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE NANCY DAHLSTROM, explained that HB 244 creates an Alaskan Medal of Honor. Last year, the Legislature passed HCR 48 directing the Joint Armed Services (JAS) Committee to create the Alaska Medal of Honor and established the criteria; HB 244 provides the enabling legislation. The Alaska Medal of Honor will recognize military service members who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty, killed in action while under deployment orders in enemy territory. To be eligible for the medal, the bill proposes that they are an Alaskan resident or someone stationed in Alaska under deployment.

Ms. Huber continued, the legislation allows the Joint Armed Services Committee to create the standard operating procedures for awarding a medal.

[9:39:44 AM](#)

Representative Foster asked if a medal could be retroactive. Ms. Huber explained that was the desire of the Joint Armed Services Committee, recognizing anyone killed in the line of duty.

In response to comments made by Representative Joule, Ms. Huber pointed out that the legislation states "under deployment orders", because there have been situations in which death happened on their way to a mission; the language is all encompassing.

[9:41:30 AM](#)

Representative Foster asked if eligibility requirements would include suicide. Ms. Huber understood that any death would be eligible.

Representative Kelly stated that would depreciate the honor of the medal. Ms. Huber offered another example.

Representative Kelly recommended clarity in the definition of Medal of Honor and thought it should be only acts of "heroism", to be worthy of a medal.

[9:44:57 AM](#)

Representative Joule inquired if the Legislature would be the deliberating body. Ms. Huber explained that the Joint Armed Services Committee would determine a standard of operating procedures. To make it formal, the names would be put into a concurrent resolution of those to be honored & then brought forward to the Legislature for consideration.

[9:45:49 AM](#)

Representative Joule referenced the language on Line 8, indicating that "they may consider", which provides latitude to the Legislature. Ms. Huber agreed, noting those concerns could be discussed.

[9:46:37 AM](#)

Vice Chair Stoltze worried about the proposed Medal of Honor designation; he thought that the Legislature could be put in a difficult and awkward situation when excluding someone recommended. He wanted it to be a "positive thing".

[9:48:57 AM](#)

Representative Crawford noted that people equate the Alaska Medal of Honor with the Congressional Medal of Honor, which is given for acts of extreme heroism. He questioned if there had been consideration made that the medal be for both those that lived or died when committing heroic act.

[9:49:51 AM](#)

Ms. Huber pointed out it was a resolution passed by the 24th Legislature, establishing the Alaskan Medal of Honor. A determination of what to call it was predetermined and the Joint Armed Services Committee and they implemented that.

[9:50:38 AM](#)

Representative Kelly inquired if there had been discussion regarding tracking what medal to give. Ms. Huber suggested it could move through the creating procedural process, accomplished over the interim if the bill passes. She added that indicating medals for those still living was not part of the initial directive; it would need to be revisited.

[9:52:11 AM](#)

Representative Gara asked if there could be a way to make the medal automatic so that it would not need to come to the Legislature. Ms. Huber advised that the reason it comes to the Legislature is that it creates a more formal process for the award.

[9:53:53 AM](#)

Representative Foster agreed with the intent; however, noted concern regarding those who have denounced the military. He felt that vets, who had received a dishonorable discharge, should not be eligible. Ms. Huber understood the concern, indicating that the award is only given to those who have died. She added that if there were concerns, they could be

addressed through the Joint Armed Services (JAS) Committee process.

Representative Foster mentioned the deserters killed in action.

[9:56:43 AM](#)

Representative Hawker supported concerns voiced by Representative Foster, encouraging the legislation to be held for reconsideration.

[9:57:20 AM](#)

Co-Chair Meyer indicated that the bill would be held in Committee in order to consider the points recommended by Representative Foster.

HB 244 was HELD in Committee for further consideration.

#HB226

HOUSE BILL NO. 226

An Act repealing the termination of the state training and employment program; and providing for an effective date.

[9:57:45 AM](#)

Co-Chair Meyer advised that Commissioner Bishop from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development indicated agreement for the amendments attached to HB 226.

HB 226 was HELD in Committee for further consideration.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:58 A.M.