

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

March 29, 2007

1:03 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Roses, Chair
Representative Nancy Dahlstrom
Representative Anna Fairclough
Representative Robert L. "Bob" Buch
Representative Scott Kawasaki

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Representative Jay Ramras

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 210

"An Act relating to the appointment and qualifications of the adjutant general."

- MOVED HB 210 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 210

SHORT TITLE: QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) DAHLSTROM

03/21/07	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/21/07	(H)	MLV, STA
03/29/07	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

MCHUGH PIERRE,
Director of Communications;
Legislative Liaison
Office of the Commissioner/Adjutant General
Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Fort Richardson, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 210.

COLONEL MIKE BRIDGES, Chair

Legislative Affairs
Alaska National Guard Officer's Association
Anchorage, Alaska,
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 210.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR BOB ROSES called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at [1:03:23 PM](#). Representatives Roses, Buch, Dahlstrom, Fairclough, and Kawasaki were present at the call to order.

HB 210-QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

[1:03:33 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 210, "An Act relating to the appointment and qualifications of the adjutant general."

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REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM, sponsor of HB 210, informed the committee that the bill pertains to the qualifications of the adjutant general of the Alaska National Guard. She noted the increasing importance of the role of the Alaska National Guard and the military in the daily lives of Alaskans. The intent of the bill is to address recent changes in the structure and organization of the Alaska National Guard. Members of the Alaska National Guard, she said, are on duty 24 hours a day defending the country and serving the state during local emergencies. This bill will improve the morale of the troops by ensuring that the adjutant general is adequately qualified to lead them. She encouraged committee members to support HB 210.

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REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH observed that HB 210 raises the officer's rank by adding one star to their rank, but that there is no fiscal impact to the state budget. She said she supported the work of the present adjutant general. Representative Fairclough then asked about the resulting increased cost of additional federal retirement benefits.

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REPRESENTATIVE ROSES stated that he grew up as a military dependent and anytime there is an increase in rank there is also an increase in pay and retirement benefits.

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REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked whether the four star status for Alaska's adjutant general is comparable to the qualifications, requirements, and responsibilities of an officer of equal rank elsewhere in the nation.

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REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM deferred the equal status question to either one of the witnesses. However, she clarified that a lieutenant major is a three star, and page 1, line 5, of HB 210 states that the governor "may" [appoint]; therefore, the governor retains the final decision on the appointment.

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MCHUGH PIERRE, Director of Communications, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Commissioner/Adjutant General, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs' (DMVA), answered Representative Fairclough's question by stating that the increase in rank from two star to three star is authorized only when the National Guard Bureau approves of the change. Mr. Pierre explained that the rank of the National Guard Bureau chief may increase to four star; therefore, all states will be authorized to increase their adjutants general to the rank of three star. Until these changes are recognized by federal statute, however, an increase in rank at the state level is meaningless.

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CHAIR ROSES asked for further questions.

[1:10:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH thanked all those in the military who serve the state and the nation.

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MR. PIERRE informed the committee that six other states have more stringent standards than Alaska and it is important for the troops to know that their adjutant general is highly qualified.

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COLONEL MIKE BRIDGES, Legislative Affairs Chair, Alaska National Guard Officer's Association (ANGOA), stated that he is representing ANGOA and has also submitted written testimony to the committee. He emphasized that the morale of the Alaska National Guard is diminished by the appointment of a non-Alaskan to the position of adjutant general. Brilliant officers who are presently within the ranks of the Alaska National Guard have the military education, combat experience, and homeland emergency response experience necessary to best lead the troops. The Alaska National Guard Officer's Association is supporting this bill to encourage the governor to appoint adjutants general from the highly qualified members of the Alaska National Guard.

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CHAIR ROSES closed public testimony on HB 210.

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REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH moved to report HB 210 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HB 210 was reported out of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

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CHAIR ROSES asked for information on future events.

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MR. PIERRE responded that the Adjutants General Association of the United States (AGAUS) will meet in Anchorage in June, 2007. Fifty-four adjutants general from the fifty states, the District of Columbia and the U. S. territories, will meet to discuss National Guard policies and future planning issues. The legislators will be notified of scheduled activities and will be issued invitations to participate in this event.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.