

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

February 26, 2008

1:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Jay Ramras

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 44

"An Act relating to information from veterans on the permanent fund dividend application form."

-MOVED CSHB 44(MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11

Supporting federal funding for veterans' health care and urging the United States Congress to ensure adequate funding for veterans' health care.

-MOVED SJR 11 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 44

SHORT TITLE: VETERAN INFO ON PFD APPLICATIONS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) GUTTENBERG, DAHLSTROM, KERTTULA

01/16/07	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/5/07
01/16/07	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/07	(H)	MLV, STA
02/26/08	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

BILL: SJR 11

SHORT TITLE: SUPPORTING U.S. VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) WIELECHOWSKI

05/09/07 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/09/07 (S) HES
02/04/08 (S) HES AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
02/04/08 (S) Moved SJR 11 Out of Committee
02/04/08 (S) MINUTE(HES)
02/06/08 (S) HES RPT 3DP
02/06/08 (S) DP: DAVIS, THOMAS, DYSON
02/11/08 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
02/11/08 (S) VERSION: SJR 11
02/13/08 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/13/08 (H) MLV, HES
02/26/08 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID GUTTENBERG
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 44 as the sponsor.

RIC DAVIDGE, State Council President
Vietnam Veterans of America; Chairman
Alaska Veteran's Foundation, Inc.
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

RON SIEBELS, Representative
Alaska Military Order of the Purple Heart
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

JOHN YOUMANS, Vice President
Alaska Veterans Business Alliance
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

JUAN GUERRERU, Member
Alaska Chapter of the Veterans of Modern Warfare
Eagle River, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

TIM WHEELER, Secretary
Alaska Veterans Business Alliance
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

KEVIN DAVID MCGEE, President
American Federation of Government Employees Local 3028

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

DIANE BENSON

Chugiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Speaking for herself, testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

MAURICE BAILEY, President

Chapter 903

Vietnam Veterans of America

Mat-Su, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

PENNY FIERROS, Community Liaison

Veteran's Aviation Outreach (VAO)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 44 and in support of SJR 11.

DAVE GLENN, Member

Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 903; Pilot

Veteran's Aviation Outreach

Mat-Su, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

TOM BAIRD, Member

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 903; Veterans Aviation Outreach; Military Order of the Purple Heart

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

GEORGE BENNETT SR., Vietnam Veteran

Sitka, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 44 and SJR 11.

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SJR 11 as the sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR BOB ROSES called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at [1:02:32 PM](#). Representatives Kawasaki, Buch, Dahlstrom, Fairclough, and Roses

were present at the call to order. Representative LeDoux arrived as the meeting was in progress.

[1:02:57 PM](#)

HB 44-VETERAN INFO ON PFD APPLICATIONS

[1:02:58 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 44, "An Act relating to information from veterans on the permanent fund dividend application form."

[1:03:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID GUTTENBERG, Alaska State Legislature, speaking as the sponsor of HB 44, informed the committee that the bill is a vehicle that allows the state to reach out to veterans and ensure that they have veteran's services and know what is available to them. He stated that there will be a place on the Alaska permanent fund dividend (PFD) application that will ask if the applicant is a veteran and, if so, of what branch of service. This information will be provided to the Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs (DMVA), and possibly, to other veteran's organizations. Representative Guttenberg assured the committee that providing this information is optional.

[1:05:09 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES asked whether the exact wording of the request for information is known.

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG indicated that the sponsors are leaving the exact wording and layout up to the Permanent Fund Dividend Division (PFDD), Department of Revenue (DOR).

[1:05:44 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES suggested that the wording that requests the branch of service should include the Alaska Territorial Guard; this addition would help to locate members of the Alaska Territorial Guard who have not self-reported.

[1:05:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE Buch asked whether the "push back" for this bill comes from the PFDD for the cost of the new forms.

1:06:33 PM

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG called the committee's attention to the fiscal note from the PFDD that indicated there would be one-time costs for database work and for re-designing the forms; afterward, there would be annual clerical expenses.

1:06:50 PM

CHAIR ROSES opened public testimony.

1:07:07 PM

RIC DAVIDGE, State Council President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Chairman, Alaska Veteran's Foundation, Inc., informed the committee that many veteran's organizations are involved in HB 44. He stated that there are 80,000 veterans in the state, some of whom veteran's organizations are not able to find and to advise of their rights, benefits, and services because of the present federal and state privacy laws that now restrict the release of personal information. However, Alaska has a unique vehicle to reach veterans via the PFD application. From the information supplied by the PFD application, veteran's organizations can obtain current addresses for veterans and contact them about the benefits, particularly medical benefits, that are due them for their sacrifice and service. Mr. Davidge told the committee about Veteran's Aviation Outreach [(VAO)], which is a group of private pilots who look for veterans that may be isolated in villages and rural areas, in need of medical care and other services. The pilots discovered that the level of need was beyond what the volunteer group could meet. Mr. Davidge explained that veteran's organizations in the state searched for a way for the Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs (DMVA) to locate and annually notify veterans of services and benefits. His group also worked with the governor's advisory council on veteran's affairs, legislators, and the DMVA coordinator to address their concerns about how to comply with confidentiality laws. He referred to substitute language that was provided to the committee and suggested that the new language be considered as a committee substitute. Mr. Davidge concluded by saying that, in addition to enabling veterans to benefit from the services that they have earned, the bill will have an enormous positive impact to the economics of the state.

[1:12:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM asked whether the alternative language was in the committee packet.

[1:13:13 PM](#)

MR. DAVIDGE stated that the language was sent on a document titled "HB 44, House Committee Substitute."

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM stated that the committee does not have the document and asked that it be faxed.

[1:14:23 PM](#)

RON SIEBELS, Representative, Alaska Military Order of the Purple Heart, stated that this bill will help veteran's organizations in the more populated areas that have more resources, contact veterans who are living in remote areas. He expressed his strong support for the bill.

[1:15:07 PM](#)

JOHN YOUMANS, Vice President, Alaska Veterans Business Alliance, opined that HB 44 should be passed as soon as possible. He related his experience working with veterans in Anchorage who are not getting the medical care they need.

[1:15:53 PM](#)

JUAN GUERRERU, Member, Alaska Chapter of the Veterans of Modern Warfare, expressed his belief that this is an important bill; there are new veterans coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan and veteran's organizations do not have a way to locate them once they have left the military.

[1:16:32 PM](#)

MR. DAVIDGE expressed his support of the idea of adding the Alaska Territorial Guard to the request for information.

[1:17:04 PM](#)

TIM WHEELER, Secretary, Alaska Veterans Business Alliance, stated that, through his business correspondence, he has met many veterans who are not aware of the different outlets for

veterans available in the state. He opined that this bill will be beneficial to all veterans in the state.

[1:17:29 PM](#)

KEVIN DAVID MCGEE, President, American Federation of Government Employees Local 3028, expressed his support of the bill as a means to communicate information to Alaska's veterans. He observed that there are roughly 80,000 veterans in the state and this is the largest population per capita nationally.

[1:19:08 PM](#)

DIANE BENSON informed the committee that she is the mother of a wounded warrior and a member of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Military Appreciation Committee. Ms. Benson, testifying as an individual, expressed her support of HB 44. She attempted to create a list of Alaskan veterans and related how difficult it is to find veterans and ensure that they receive their benefits and are acknowledged for their service. In fact, her Vietnam War veteran uncle is disillusioned to the point that he does not want to seek services. She said that there is a certain outreach that needs to take place.

[1:20:39 PM](#)

MAURICE BAILEY, President, Chapter 903, Vietnam Veterans of America, stated that he was also a Veteran's Aviation Outreach pilot. He expressed his support for HB 44 and said that it is long overdue.

[1:21:33 PM](#)

PENNY FIERROS, Community Liaison, Veteran's Aviation Outreach, told the committee that she has worked on airbases in the Bush for 13 years and has observed the work that the VAO does. She agreed with previous testimony about the difficulty of reaching veterans who are living in rural areas and supported the work of the VAO.

[1:22:17 PM](#)

DAVE GLENN, Member, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 903; Pilot, Veteran's Aviation Outreach, stated that he has been a pilot for 33 years and can recall many instances of running across misplaced veterans in the Bush. This bill is a step in

the right direction to locate and serve veterans, and he encouraged its passage.

[1:22:57 PM](#)

TOM BAIRD, Member, Vietnam Veterans of America, expressed his full support of the bill.

[1:23:33 PM](#)

GEORGE BENNETT SR., Vietnam Veteran, told the committee that he believes that the bill needs the attention of the legislative process, due to the fact that the state is big and it is hard to contact veterans and put them on the rolls. Mr. Bennett stressed that the bill is very important to veterans in the state and Southeast Alaska.

[1:26:14 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES closed testimony on HB 44 with the reservation that the bill will be taken up again later in the meeting.

[1:26:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked Mr. Davidge whether there has been legal review of the amendment that his organization submitted.

[1:27:54 PM](#)

MR. DAVIDGE explained that his organization removed the items that were of concern to the governor's advisory council and the staff of the DMVA.

[1:28:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked whether Legislative Legal and Research Services, Legislative Affairs Agency, has reviewed the document.

[1:28:22 PM](#)

MR. DAVIDGE said no.

[HB 44 was addressed later in the hearing, when it was ultimately amended and reported from committee.]

SJR 11-SUPPORTING U.S. VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

[Contains discussion of HB 44.]

[1:28:25 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES announced that the next order of business would be SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11, "Supporting federal funding for veterans' health care and urging the United States Congress to ensure adequate funding for veterans' health care."

[1:28:45 PM](#)

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI, Alaska State Legislature, speaking as the sponsor, introduced SJR 11. Senator Wielechowski informed the committee that the resolution urges the U. S. Congress to provide adequate funding for veterans' health care. He paraphrased from the resolution:

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs provides medical care for veterans who have risked their lives to protect the security of the nation; and the department provides a wide range of specialized services to meet the unique needs of veterans, including treatment and care for spinal cord injury, blindness, traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder, amputation injuries, mental health and substance abuse, and conditions requiring long-term care; in addition, the department trains health care personnel, conducts medical research and serves as backup to the U.S. Department of Defense, and supporting communities in times of crisis.

Senator Wielechowski continued to explain that the office of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been consistently underfunded. In fact, the Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) reported that there is a lack of resources and staffing in the office to process veteran's claims. Furthermore, funding lags behind medical inflation and the increased demand for services; in fact, the enrollment demand for services increased 134 percent from FY 1996 to FY 2004. Senator Wielechowski pointed out that the resolution fulfills two purposes: expresses the gratitude of the Alaska State Legislature to veterans for their service; and urges the U.S. Congress to ensure adequate funding for veterans' health care.

[1:31:06 PM](#)

MAURICE BAILEY, President, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 903, stated his support for SJR 11 in order to take care of the veterans.

[1:31:55 PM](#)

PENNY FIERROS, Community Liaison, Veteran's Aviation Outreach (VAO), expressed her belief that it is important to pass SJR 11, along with HB 44, in order to effectively reach veterans and help them achieve their benefits.

[1:32:31 PM](#)

DAVE GLENN, Member, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 903; Pilot, Veteran's Aviation Outreach, expressed his support for SJR 11. He informed the committee that he is a participant in the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) medical system and, although it does the best it can, there is room for improvement.

[1:33:10 PM](#)

TOM BAIRD, Vice President, Vietnam Veterans of America, Chapter 903; Vice President, Veterans Aviation Outreach; Member, Military Order of the Purple Heart, indicated his support for SJR 11 in the hope that the funding for the VA can be made less subjective and more objective and, thereby, make more assured funding.

[1:33:57 PM](#)

GEORGE BENNETT SR., Vietnam Veteran, told of his opportunity to travel to many communities in Southeast. While working with veterans he has found that veterans share the same problems. Although there are hospitals for Native veterans, the drawback is that the veterans often need to go to Seattle or to Anchorage for treatment. Mr. Bennett pointed out that local clinics can not service victims of Agent Orange. He expressed his hope that the bill will address the shortcomings of the health system that serves Native veterans, and all veterans, statewide.

[1:35:41 PM](#)

DIANE BENSON informed the committee that she is a member of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Military Appreciation Committee, but that she is testifying on her own behalf. She further explained that her son was severely wounded in 2005, and that

she spent three and one-half months at Walter Reed Army Medical Center with him. In addition, she has spent a great deal of time communicating with other families of wounded warriors about the special problems that they experience as they make the transition from service into the VA health care system. Ms. Benson noted that she is also in contact with VA officials. She expressed her dismay at the necessity of SJR 11 and commended those involved with its passage. Ms. Benson explained that injuries from the war in Iraq are unique for two reasons: the extent of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and "Iraq infections." Iraq infections are ongoing problems caused by bone fragments contaminated by sand and from Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). She said that the infections warrant continuing health care concerns for veterans and their families. She suggested the addition to SJR 11 of "not limited to" on page 1, line [13], following "including." Her experience shows that it is impossible to list all of the concerns and injuries that are dealt with under the VA health care system. Ms. Benson continued to say that PTSD is not being adequately diagnosed and treated and additional funding will be needed to treat its wide spread effects on veterans. She then reminded the committee that assured funding is [the country's] obligation.

[1:39:55 PM](#)

RIC DAVIDGE, State Council President, Vietnam Veterans of America; Chairman, Alaska Veteran's Foundation, Inc., stated that all veteran's organizations are in agreement that the process to fund veteran's health care needs to be changed. Currently, veteran's health care funding is a component of the Department of Defense construction budget. This process does not provide the VA planners with reliable, sufficient, and timely funding for facilities and medical care. Formula funding for veteran's health care will be based on the number of veterans enrolled and the number of those eligible. At this time, there are seven million veterans enrolled; some receive disability at their discharge from service and some disorders, such as the effects of exposure to Agent Orange, and PTSD, show up after discharge. Mr. Davidge opined that a structured system will take the funding out of partisan control. He continued to say that he is a critic of sending veterans out-of-state for treatment that is available in Alaska, and he re-stated that this bill is of the highest priority to all nine of the national veteran's service organizations.

[1:44:36 PM](#)

JUAN GUERRERU, Member, Alaska Member, Chapter of the Veterans of Modern Warfare; Family Ties Foundation, expressed his belief that this resolution needs to pass as soon as possible to support veterans.

[1:45:06 PM](#)

TIM WHEELER, Secretary, Alaska Veterans Business Alliance, stated that his organization supports the immediate passage of the resolution.

[1:45:22 PM](#)

KEVIN DAVID MCGEE, President, American Federation of Government Employees Local 3028, expressed his support of SJR 11. He noted that the lack of predictability and methodology in the VA Health care process threatens to unravel the accomplishments of the health care system. Mr. McGee stressed that VA health care must be funded on a mandatory system based on the number of enrollees. In 2008, appropriators proposed increased funding, however, politics got in the way once again. Funding delays cause many problems for veterans and for the medical facilities. McGee pointed out that VA hospitals excel in many areas but discretionary funding limits sufficient staffing and purchases of necessary equipment. He re-stated his support of the passage of SJR 11.

[1:49:11 PM](#)

JOHN YOUMANS, Vice President, Alaska Veterans Business Alliance, expressed his organization's support of SJR 11. He related his experience that shows that this bill is greatly needed.

[1:49:36 PM](#)

RON SIEBELS, Representative, Alaska Military Order of the Purple Heart, expressed his support of SJR 11. He opined that this [funding] is owed to the veterans in fairness.

[1:50:13 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES closed public testimony and thanked the veterans and their families for their service.

[1:50:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM asked for the sponsor's reaction to the addition suggested by Diane Benson.

[1:51:27 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI stated that the statement is inclusive by the words "and conditions requiring long-term care." However, he said that he had no objection to the addition by the committee.

[1:51:46 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM agreed.

[1:51:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked how to get veteran's health care to villages and to the rural areas of the state.

[1:52:24 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI responded that the state needs to continue to put pressure on the federal government to fulfill its responsibility to honor promises made to the military.

[1:52:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM moved to report SJR 11, 25-LS0829\E, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. Hearing no opposition, SJR 11 was reported from the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

The committee took an at-ease from 1:52 p.m. to 1:56 p.m.

HB 44-VETERAN INFO ON PFD APPLICATIONS

[CHAIR ROSES turned the gavel over to Representative Dahlstrom.]

[1:56:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM asked for comments from Representative Guttenberg regarding the changes to HB 44 suggested by Mr. Davidge.

[1:57:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG stated that HB 44 requires the collection of veteran's statements by the Department of Revenue on the permanent fund dividend (PFD) application; this information is then provided to the Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs, and possibly to other veteran's organizations. The proposed change prohibits the release of information by the DMVA. He suggested that the question of confidentiality can be addressed by the removal of the word "not" from page 1, line 13, of the bill. Representative Guttenberg opined that this change would require DMVA to determine how to pass the needed information along through regulation.

[1:58:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked whether the sponsor accepted the addition of "American" to line 6, after the words "is a."

[1:59:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG said there was no problem with that addition.

[1:59:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM asked whether the addition of "American" would exclude the application of a soldier who is not a U.S. citizen.

[1:59:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH opined that this does not define a person as an American soldier and anyone would still qualify. She continued to point out that the proposed change also deletes the request for the branch of service and the dates of service.

[2:01:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG confirmed that the branch of service is part of the information released to the veteran's service organizations.

[2:01:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked Mr. Davidge why his suggested change deletes the request for the branch of the service.

[2:01:56 PM](#)

MR. DAVIDGE responded that the highest priority is to identify veterans. He opined that DMVA can determine how to qualify their service.

[2:02:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH stated her belief that the information is voluntary and, if desired, the veteran can leave the branch of service and dates of service blank. However, if the interpretation is that this information is required, she said that she understood the concern [of Mr. Davidge].

[2:03:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG agreed that the additional information is helpful to the organizations, but not required.

[2:03:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked whether the additional information requested is a disincentive for the veteran to indicate his or her service.

[2:04:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG opined that, once a veteran decides to indicate service, he or she will complete the form.

[2:05:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH observed that the additional information will save an initial contact with the veteran.

[2:05:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked whether a veteran of the military, who is not an American citizen, would be considered an American veteran.

[2:07:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM pointed out that only an Alaskan resident would be qualified to submit a PFD application.

[2:07:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX opined that a person does not to be an American citizen to apply for an Alaska PFD.

[2:07:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG said that "Philippine veterans"

[2:07:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM asked representatives of the DMVA and the DOR to testify.

[2:07:56 PM](#)

JERRY BURNETT, Director, Administrative Services Division, Department of Revenue (DOR), clarified that a person does not have to be a citizen of the United States to collect a PFD.

[2:08:17 PM](#)

MCHUGH PIERRE, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Commissioner/Adjutant General, Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs, suggested a change on page 1, line 6, that would add "of the United States military" after the word "veteran."

[2:08:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM re-stated the suggested wording.

[2:09:05 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked whether the U. S. Coast Guard (USCG) is considered to be a branch of the military.

[2:09:18 PM](#)

MR. PIERRE answered that the USCG is part of the U. S. Department of Homeland Security.

[2:09:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX further asked whether USCG members are veterans.

[2:09:38 PM](#)

MR. PIERRE noted that the answer to that question depends on the date that the federal government made the transfer of the USCG from the Department of Transportation to the Department of Homeland Security.

[2:09:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM advised that HB 44 is not the bill to address the issue of whether USCG members are veterans.

[2:10:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX expressed her concern that, if USCG members are veterans, they also need to be contacted. However, the proposed amendment may exclude them.

[2:10:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH opined that "American veteran" will define USCG members, but "United States military" does not. She suggested that leaving "American veteran" reaches the most individuals.

[2:10:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM asked whether the committee will support leaving the language unchanged and asking Mr. Pierre to further examine the language in the next committee of referral, the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

[2:11:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH stated that the language in HB 44 is inclusive. He opined that the proposed change encumbers the state with more information than desired and needs to be clarified by Legislative Legal and Research Services, Legislative Affairs Agency. He expressed his desire to not change the bill and encouraged a legal examination of the language in the [proposed amendment].

[2:12:34 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH pointed out that there is no committee substitute, there is proposed language for an amendment that has been submitted by an organization. She offered a conceptual

amendment for page 1, lines 11 to 12, to delete "not mandatory," and add "voluntary,".

[2:14:01 PM](#)

There being no objection, Conceptual Amendment 1 was adopted.

[2:14:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAHLSTROM referred to the confidentiality issue and questioned the removal of the word "not."

[2:14:47 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH opined that, when the request for information is added to the PFD application, the information becomes not confidential.

[2:15:04 PM](#)

MR. BURNETT informed the committee that all applicant information on the PFD application is confidential, except for the applicant's name. However, information is allowed to be shared with governmental agencies for governmental purposes. Therefore, not requiring the DMVA to keep this information confidential is a departure from current practices.

[2:15:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH surmised that, when the information goes from a state agency to the veteran's organization, it is no longer confidential. She asked whether the recipient of the information can be required to maintain confidentiality.

[2:16:12 PM](#)

MR. PIERRE expressed his belief that the present language mandates that the DMVA deliver the information to the veteran's service organizations. A statement that says the information is confidential, except for that, will cover the questions of whether the information can be passed to any other governmental organization or for another purpose.

[2:16:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH observed that the Legislative Legal and Research Services have suggested that the PFD application is not confidential.

[2:17:21 PM](#)

MR. BURNETT stated that the Permanent Fund Dividend Division (PFDD) is comfortable with this language because the giving of the information is voluntary by statute.

[2:17:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH expressed her agreement.

[2:18:02 PM](#)

MR. PIERRE suggested that the committee discuss the addition of "Alaska Territorial Guard" to page 1, line 6, of the bill.

[2:19:04 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES moved Conceptual Amendment 2; on page 1, line 6, after the word "veteran," add "or Alaska Territorial Guard,".

[2:19:19 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH objected and asked whether members of the Alaska Territorial Guard are veterans; if so, she suggested use of the word "including" instead of "or."

[2:19:39 PM](#)

CHAIR ROSES re-stated that the amendment is, after the word "veteran," insert "including Alaska Territorial Guard,".

[2:20:12 PM](#)

There being no objection, Conceptual Amendment 2 was adopted.

[2:20:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH moved to report HB 44, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. Hearing no objection, CSHB 44(MLV) was reported out of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

2:21:08 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.