

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

March 23, 2010

1:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative John Harris
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Jay Ramras
Representative Robert L. "Bob" Buch
Representative Scott Kawasaki

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Carl Gatto, Chair
Representative Tammie Wilson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 53

Urging the United States Congress to pass H.R. 1034, designating the Honor and Remember Flag as an official symbol to recognize and honor members of the armed forces of the United States who died in the line of duty.

- MOVED HJR 53 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 53

SHORT TITLE: HONOR AND REMEMBER FLAG

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF MILITARY & VETERANS' AFFAIRS

03/10/10	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/10/10	(H)	MLV
03/16/10	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/16/10	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
03/23/10	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

KAREN SAWYER, Staff
Representative Carl Gatto
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HJR 53 on behalf of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs, sponsor.

DAVE CASWELL, Member
Alaska State Chapter
Honor and Remember, Inc.
Sterling, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HJR 53.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:05:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS, acting chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Present at the call to order were Representatives Harris, Lynn, Ramras, Buch, and Kawasaki.

HJR 53-HONOR AND REMEMBER FLAG

[1:05:45 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 53, Urging the United States Congress to pass H.R. 1034, designating the Honor and Remember Flag as an official symbol to recognize and honor members of the armed forces of the United States who died in the line of duty.

[1:06:47 PM](#)

KAREN SAWYER, Staff, Representative Carl Gatto, Alaska State Legislature, informed the committee that the Honor and Remember Flag was conceived by the father of a serviceman who died in Iraq in 2005. She said families who have lost loved ones want to know that their sacrifice is not in vain, and that the nation would never forget; however, there is not a universally recognized symbol that acknowledges the American servicemen and women who will never come home. Although the American flag stands for freedom and what the country fights for, it is not an emblem to honor those who have fallen. The Honor and Remember Flag recognizes all individuals who died in service from the time of the birth of the nation; therefore, the flag honors all of those who defend the Constitution, the American flag, and our freedom. By flying the Honor and Remember Flag, the families and servicemen will know their contribution to freedom will never be forgotten. Ms. Sawyer displayed a picture of the flag. The intention of Honor and Remember, Inc. is to personalize a

flag as a gift to each family across the country. In addition, on special occasions wherever an American flag is flown, this flag would fly beneath it.

[1:10:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN asked whether this flag would take the place of the American flag over the casket.

[1:10:29 PM](#)

MS. SAWYER said no, the Honor and Remember Flag would be presented to the family at an appropriate occasion, and would be flown in public areas when authorized by local law.

[1:10:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN noted that the American flag placed over the casket is given to the family.

[1:11:10 PM](#)

DAVE CASWELL, Member, Alaska State Chapter, Honor and Remember, Inc., thanked the committee for hearing the resolution. He reiterated that the American flag stands for what we believe—the unity of our people, and the diversity of our nation—and is a symbol of what servicemen and women fight for, rather than an emblem to honor those fallen. He described the meaning of the colors and symbols on the American flag and said, "The dead honor the flag, the flag does not honor the dead." In fact, in the 200-year history of the U.S., there has never been a symbol to recognize the sacrifice of the 1.6 million servicemen and women who have died in military service to the country. Mr. Caswell noted that the fallen are remembered only three times per year, but they deserve more, thus the need for this national campaign. The Honor and Remember Flag will not take the place of the American flag that is given to the family as a gift for the service provided by deceased veterans or others. The Honor and Remember Flag was specifically designed and intended for the sole purpose of helping to heal the family members who have lost a loved one. The Honor and Remember, Inc., organization is a non-profit organization that operates by tax-deductible donations and sponsorships.

[1:17:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH asked how many states have enjoined in this effort.

[1:17:24 PM](#)

MR. CASWELL said there are Honor and Remember, Inc. chapters in Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, and Alaska. In further response to Representative Buch, he said he was unsure of a requirement that the flags are manufactured in the U.S.; however, the flags are currently manufactured in Virginia.

[1:19:34 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BUCH opined that to honor Americans, there is a need to mandate the manufacture of flags and symbols in the U.S.

[1:20:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS asked for the present status of the resolution in Congress.

[1:21:24 PM](#)

MR. CASWELL said the resolution is in a subcommittee.

[1:21:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HARRIS expressed his concern that Congress has put this resolution in a subcommittee.

[1:22:59 PM](#)

MR. CASWELL advised that emails have been sent to members of Congress and sponsors of the resolution urging the movement of H.R. 1034 from subcommittee.

[1:23:29 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN moved to report HJR 53, 26-LS1579\R, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HJR 53 was reported from House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:23 p.m.