

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 25, 2010

9:37 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Lynn, Chair
Representative Paul Seaton, Vice Chair
Representative Carl Gatto
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Max Gruenberg
Representative Pete Petersen

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Peggy Wilson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 43

"An Act adding a second verse to the official Alaska state song."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 43

SHORT TITLE: SECOND VERSE OF ALASKA'S STATE SONG

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MENARD

01/21/09	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/09
01/21/09	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/09	(S)	CRA, STA
01/28/10	(S)	CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
01/28/10	(S)	Moved SB 43 Out of Committee
01/28/10	(S)	MINUTE(CRA)
01/29/10	(S)	CRA RPT 4DP
01/29/10	(S)	DP: OLSON, KOOKESH, MENARD, THOMAS
02/04/10	(S)	CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/04/10	(S)	<Bill Hearing Canceled>
02/09/10	(S)	STA AT 9:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/09/10	(S)	Moved SB 43 Out of Committee
02/09/10	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
02/10/10	(S)	STA RPT 5DP

02/10/10 (S) DP: MENARD, FRENCH, MEYER, PASKVAN,
KOOKESH
03/10/10 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
03/10/10 (S) VERSION: SB 43
03/11/10 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/11/10 (H) STA, JUD
03/25/10 (H) STA AT 9:30 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

MICHAEL ROVITO, Staff
Senator Linda Menard
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SB 43 on behalf of Senator
Menard, sponsor.

CONSTANCE DAVIS
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on SB 43.

LORRAINE HAUSMAN
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 43.

MARIE OLSON
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 43.

CONNIE MUNRO
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 43.

MICALYNE KUNZ McGHEE
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 43.

CAROL A. TREBIAN
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 43.

CAROLYN NOE
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support SB 43.

SENATOR LINDA MENARD
Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As sponsor, testified during the hearing on SB 43.

ACTION NARRATIVE

9:37:00 AM

CHAIR BOB LYNN called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. Representatives Seaton, Gatto, Gruenberg, Petersen, and Lynn were present at the call to order. Representative Johnson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 43-SECOND VERSE OF ALASKA'S STATE SONG

9:37:10 AM

CHAIR LYNN announced that the only order of business was SENATE BILL NO. 43, "An Act adding a second verse to the official Alaska state song."

9:37:37 AM

MICHAEL ROVITO, Staff, Senator Linda Menard, Alaska State Legislature, presented SB 43 on behalf of Senator Menard, sponsor. He said the proposed legislation would add a second verse to the Alaska Flag Song. The second verse was written by Carol Beery Davis in 1987. Mr. Rovito stated that the second verse pays tribute to Alaska Natives, as well as to the designer of the flag, Benny Benson. He noted that this legislation has been introduced in the past, but did not passed both houses.

MR. ROVITO said Senator Albert Kookesh has been quoted as saying about SB 43 the following:

This is a little step, but it recognizes a Native person who designed the Alaska Flag; it recognizes a song that says there will be no bars in our culture - that culture will be elevated.

9:41:10 AM

CONSTANCE DAVIS told the committee that she is the daughter of Carol Beery Davis. She said her mother moved to Alaska at the same time as Marie Drake. Elinor Dusenbury followed a few years later. All three women were friends. Ms. Davis related that Ms. Drake worked as a secretary to the commissioner of the

Department of Education, while her mother, Carol Beery Davis, played the pipe organ for the Palace Theatre for seven years, and then, after "the talkies" came out, "stayed on for 71 years."

MS. DAVIS spoke of the efforts of George A. Parks, a former territorial governor, to establish a state flag for Alaska. A contest was issued for flag designs, which ended March 1, 1927. Ms. Davis relayed that her father was on the committee to choose the flag.

MS. DAVIS said the flag was adopted by the legislature in May. She offered her understanding that an idea was generated to send a small flag and a copy of an act related to the flag around to schools for children to study. Ms. Davis said Ms. Drake did not think children would want to have to memorize an act, so she recommended a jingle instead. She was given the go-ahead to come up with [a verse]. She stated, "I'm sure that Marie, today, would agree that something was left out of that, so I'm glad my mother went ahead and did that verse when approached about it."

[9:44:30 AM](#)

MS. DAVIS said the Alaska Flag became popular in a short period of time. She related that Ms. Dusenbury's first glimpse of the flag and the verse was in a magazine during a trip south, and Ms. Dusenbury was moved to write a song for the verse.

[9:45:28 AM](#)

LORRAINE HAUSMAN testified in opposition to SB 43. She said she grew up in Kodiak and knew Bennie Benson and his daughter Charlotte. She expressed concern that this legislation is "getting ram-rodged through." She said her perception is that a coalition of Native legislators have decided a second verse is needed, where it should come from, that a non-Native would write it, what should be in it, and "what was going to be passed." Ms. Hausman stated, "The song was over 30-40 years old by the time ... [Carol] Beery Davis wrote it. She's not here to speak for herself." She said she checked with her daughter, who has been a teacher for 10 years, and found that [the second verse] is not familiar in all the schools. Ms. Hausman said she thinks more time and input is needed before a decision is made regarding the second verse.

[9:49:15 AM](#)

MARIE OLSON, testifying in support of SB 43, told the committee that she was born in Juneau on November 28, 1924. She said she has spent time in the home of Carol Beery Davis, who taught her to appreciate poetry. She stated that Carol Beery Davis and her husband, who was a photographer, were wonderful people. She indicated that Carol Beery Davis's husband told stories about the Native culture surrounding Auke Lake. Ms. Olson said she supports the second verse, not because she is Native, but because she appreciates what Carol Beery Davis has written. She opined that the written word is more important than feelings, and Carol Beery Davis's words speak from the heart and are about Alaska.

CHAIR LYNN remarked that Alaska, as a state, is so young that there are people still alive who knew the state's pioneers.

[9:51:19 AM](#)

CONNIE MUNRO, testifying in support of SB 43, said she has been in Alaska since 1971, and has been involved in politics as a citizen. She revealed that she is a member of Camp 2, Alaska Native Sisterhood. In response to the previous statements made by [Ms. Hausman], she indicated that many years ago, some legislators discussed the idea of having a contest for a second verse to the Alaska flag song. However, she said they felt that since the first verse, written by Marie Drake, was not derived from a contest, it may be best to "wait until there is a gift from someone who feels that there should be a second verse honoring Alaska Natives." She said Carol Beery Davis wrote a book about the Alaska Flag song, and she provided [the first verse] after considering it for almost a decade. Ms. Munro indicated that [the second verse] rhymes, and she expressed her hope that the committee would support SB 43.

[9:54:12 AM](#)

MICALYNE KUNZ MCGHEE, testifying in support of SB 43, said she serves as the president of the Alaska Native Sisterhood Grand Camp, as well as a member of Gold Belt's Heritage Board. She said "we" love the Alaska Flag song, and [the second verse] exists and needs to be brought forth. She opined that doing so would increase pride in the Native children in the state.

[9:55:46 AM](#)

CAROL A. TREBIAN, testifying in support of SB 43, said the second verse "speaks to the spirit of ... [Carol Beery] Davis's heart that she had for the Native people." Ms. Trebian said Carol Beery Davis was her advocate and her music teacher for about six years. She said in the 1950s there was still a lot of overt racism. She spoke of escaping to Chicago and receiving both moral and financial support from Carol Beery Davis. She said she stuck with music and is a working musician today. Ms. Trebian opined that the second verse is necessary in expressing not only Carol Beery Davis's feelings, but "all of ours - yours, when you really think of it." She said she would like the second verse included, because "it says who we are." She thanked Constance Davis for her mother's influence and for her work in bringing the second verse forward. She talked about the suffering of those affected by racism. She said Carol Beery Davis "had our hearts in her hands" and expressed "that strength of spirit" well in her poetry and in [the second verse].

[9:59:56 AM](#)

MS. TREBIAN, in response to Representative Gatto, said there were no signs of her culture where she looked in Alaska during the 1950s, but that began to change within the six years that she was gone. Then, she said, when she came back a second time after being away 40 years, "everything was back the way I remembered it as a very, very young child." She said as a small child she had to have a gang protect her against "the rest of the people who were half this or that." She said her older siblings suffered worse than she did. She related that her mother had been an advocate for [Native] rights - "the ability to walk down the street without something happening to us." She indicated that racism still exists, but "let's say it went underground." In response to a follow-up question from Representative Gatto, she said Tlingit people have existed forever and still "are." She said she thinks everyone in the world holds some prejudice against others.

[10:06:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO related that his first friend in Alaska was a Native Alaskan man. He stated that some of best friends are from other cultures. He explained that he is sharing this information, because although he does not support the addition of a second verse, he wants to emphasize that his opinion is not based on an animosity toward Natives.

MS. TREBIAN said she thinks Alaska Natives "will certainly appreciate the note."

[10:08:39 AM](#)

CAROLYN NOE, testifying in support of SB 43, said she is a dance leader for a multi-cultural group, was born and raised in Hoonah, Alaska, and was taught to respect her culture. She urged the legislature to pass SB 43. She said, "I feel very strongly about honoring my Native culture and hope that you can do the same." She told the committee that she has always supported both Native people and legislators. She related that she is politically involved. Ms. Noe mentioned For The Rights Of All, which she said is about "our civil rights movement," and she offered to give a copy to any interested members on the committee.

CHAIR LYNN, in response to Representative Petersen, asked Ms. Noe if she would give a copy to his staff.

[10:10:20 AM](#)

SENATOR LINDA MENARD, Alaska State Legislature, as sponsor of SB 43, said she thinks the proposed legislation is important. She indicated that passing the bill out of committee would show respect to the Native community.

REPRESENTATIVE GATTO asked Senator Menard if she thinks it is disrespectful to vote against SB 43.

[10:11:08 AM](#)

SENATOR MENARD stated her belief that she did not frame her remark that way. She reiterated that she thinks it is "very respectful to the Native community to go forward with this."

[10:12:28 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN closed public testimony. He stated his intent to hear the bill again as soon as it could be scheduled.

[10:12:44 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN announced that SB 43 was held over.

[10:13:14 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m.