

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 3, 2009

9:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Kevin Meyer, Vice Chair
Senator Hollis French
Senator Albert Kookesh
Senator Joe Paskvan

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Linda Menard, Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 58

"An Act establishing February 2 of each year as Marmot Day; and providing for an effective date."

MOVED SB 58 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 12

Relating to the Ground-based Midcourse Defense System.

MOVED HJR 12 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 94

"An Act relating to employment in certain facilities maintained by the United States Antarctic Program as allowable absences from the state for purposes of eligibility for permanent fund dividends; and providing for an effective date."

SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 58

SHORT TITLE: MARMOT DAY

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MENARD

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|----------|-----|---------------------------------|
| 01/21/09 | (S) | PREFILE RELEASED 1/16/09 |
| 01/21/09 | (S) | READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS |
| 01/21/09 | (S) | STA, RES |
| 03/03/09 | (S) | STA AT 9:00 AM BELTZ 211 |

BILL: HJR 12

SHORT TITLE: GROUND-BASED MIDCOURSE DEFENSE SYSTEM

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) DAHLSTROM

02/02/09 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/02/09 (H) MLV, STA
02/10/09 (H) MLV AT 1:30 PM BARNES 124
02/10/09 (H) Moved Out of Committee
02/10/09 (H) MINUTE(MLV)
02/11/09 (H) MLV RPT 5DP
02/11/09 (H) DP: OLSON, LYNN, BUCH, RAMRAS, GATTO
02/16/09 (H) STA REFERRAL WAIVED
02/18/09 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
02/18/09 (H) VERSION: HJR 12
02/19/09 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/19/09 (S) STA
02/19/09 (H) STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/19/09 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
03/03/09 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BELTZ 211

WITNESS REGISTER

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

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SB 58.

CHUCK HEATH
Wasilla, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in favor of SB 58.

LAURA PIERRE, Staff
to Representative Nancy Dahlstrom
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HJR 12.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[9:03:59 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR KEVIN MEYER called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Senators French, Paskvan, and Meyer were present at the call to order. Senator Kookesh arrived soon thereafter. Chair Menard was excused.

SB 58-MARMOT DAY

[9:03:59 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR MEYER announced the consideration of SB 58.

MICHAEL ROVITO, Staff to Senator Linda Menard, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of SB 58, said the bill is about local hire and would establish February 2 of each year as Marmot Day. It was first introduced 20 years ago by Senator Curt Menard when he was in the Alaska legislature, and his wife, Senator Linda Menard, reintroduced it. She looked toward the marmot to represent local hire. It is an abundant animal in Alaska, especially in the Hatcher Pass area. Marmot Day can be observed by schools, the zoo, or anyone else. There has been a lot of support from the Mat-Su school district and the Anchorage Zoo. He spoke of educational opportunities for students and a layer of Alaska pride. A marmot is a big rodent that is unique to mountainous habitat. The hoary marmot's range extends from Washington to Alaska where "we certainly have no shortage."

MR. ROVITO said some newspapers say it isn't a serious bill, "but I don't think you have to always have a serious bill." A Wasilla man said, "The more we can do to imbue our community with a depth of history, the more the Mat-Su ... becomes somewhere where we can be proud to live." Mr. Rovito said that is the whole idea of this bill. There are no groundhogs in Alaska, "so groundhog day doesn't work out so well."

[9:08:25 AM](#)

MR. ROVITO said eight students at Polaris school in Anchorage sent a fax supporting the bill.

CHUCK HEATH, Wasilla, said he was calling from the Menard's house, and he noted that Curt Menard just died today. Mr. Heath suggested changing the bill to make Marmot Day on March 3, the day of his death. People laughed at Curt Menard when he introduced this bill, "but why not have this marmot day. The kids all want it." Adults want it too. He works in the schools and the kids support the bill.

[9:11:19 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR MEYER said changing the date sounds good to him.

SENATOR FRENCH said the suggestion is touching, but he doesn't want to undermine the sponsor. The bill goes to another committee, so in honor of the late Senator Menard, the committee should move the bill forward and hold off on the change until Senator Linda Menard has had a chance to reflect.

[9:12:58 AM](#)

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to report SB 58 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There being no objection, SB 58 passed out of committee.

The committee took a brief at-ease.

HJR 12-GROUND-BASED MIDCOURSE DEFENSE SYSTEM

[9:15:14 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR MEYER announced the consideration of HJR 12.

LAURA PIERRE, Staff to Representative Nancy Dahlstrom, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of HJR 12, said this resolution that would urge Congress to continue to support and fund the ground-based midcourse defense system. The program brings \$250 million to the state annually, and it provides for 700 jobs including 200 guard member jobs. There has been talk that the new administration will not renew this program. This defense system has been successfully tested in shooting down a test launch in midcourse. The bill has additional cosponsors. She gave the committee an article about the threat from North Korea on launching a missile attack on the United States. The system would be able to shoot it down. All three members of Alaska's congressional delegation support the system and encourage continued funding.

[9:17:16 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR MEYER noted that the bill doesn't go to a further committee. It looks fine to him.

SENATOR FRENCH said he visited Fort Greely with Representative Dahlstrom a few years ago, and it was impressive. It is a fascinating installation with dedicated people. It a great thing and a worthwhile visit. The handout is interesting, and he quoted a North Korean speaking about South Korea: "If the puppet warmongers infringe on our inviolable dignity, even a bit, we will not only punish the provokers but reduce their stronghold to debris." It speaks to the belligerence of North Korea and the need to maintain a defense to its missile system.

SENATOR FRENCH moved to report HJR 12 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There being no objection, HJR 12 moved out of committee.

[9:19:16 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Vice Chair Meyer adjourned the meeting at 9:19 am.

