

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 16, 2010

9:12 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Linda Menard, Chair
Senator Kevin Meyer, Vice Chair
Senator Hollis French
Senator Joe Paskvan

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Albert Kookesh

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 24

Urging the United States Congress and the United States Department of Agriculture to extend the basic housing allowance exclusion to all military families for purposes of the school nutrition program.

- MOVED HJR 24 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 14

Recognizing October 2010 as Filipino American History Month.

-MOVED SCR 14 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 24

SHORT TITLE: FED. SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM/MILITARY

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RAMRAS

03/13/09	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/13/09	(H)	MLV, STA
03/31/09	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
03/31/09	(H)	Moved Out of Committee
03/31/09	(H)	MINUTE(MLV)
04/01/09	(H)	MLV RPT 4DP
04/01/09	(H)	DP: RAMRAS, LYNN, BUCH, GATTO
04/07/09	(H)	STA RPT 7DP
04/07/09	(H)	DP: GATTO, SEATON, GRUENBERG, WILSON, PETERSEN, JOHNSON, LYNN
04/07/09	(H)	STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

04/07/09 (H) Moved Out of Committee
04/07/09 (H) MINUTE(STA)
02/17/10 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
02/17/10 (H) VERSION: HJR 24
02/18/10 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/18/10 (S) STA
03/16/10 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SCR 14

SHORT TITLE: FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH
SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) EGAN

02/24/10 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/24/10 (S) STA
03/16/10 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE JAY RAMRAS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HJR 24.

DEAN HAMBURG, administrator
School Lunch Program
Kenai Peninsula Borough School District

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 24.

AMY ROUSE, director
Nutrition Services
Fairbanks North Star Borough School District

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HJR 24.

SENATOR DENNIS EGAN
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SCR 14.

ELLERY LUMBAB representing himself
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SCR 14.

RAFAEL CASTANOS, representing himself
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SCR 14.

DANTE REYES, representing himself

Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SCR 14.

ARLENE LUMBAB, board of directors

Filipino Community Inc (FCI)

Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SCR 14.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[9:12:37 AM](#)

CHAIR LINDA MENARD called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:12 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Meyer, French, Paskvan and Menard.

HJR 24-FED. SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM/MILITARY

[9:13:26 AM](#)

CHAIR MENARD announced the first order of business to come before the committee would be HJR 24.

REPRESENTATIVE JAY RAMRAS, sponsor of HJR 24, said he and Senator Paskvan both represent Ft. Wainwright, which has had two active duty deployments of 4,000 men and women in the last three years. Many military families live off base. The current calculation for the reduced breakfast or the free school lunch program takes the off base housing allowance into account in addition to a family's income. Sometimes the computation will pop an enlisted family out of the ability to qualify for a free or reduced lunch program. HJR 24 brings this to the attention of Congress. Other states are interested in this issue as well and Alaska can lead by example.

[9:16:17 AM](#)

He added that he visited Arctic Light Elementary on Ft. Wainwright which is a school that enjoys 100% employment of at least one parent per student by virtue of being on a military base. Over 90 percent of the students qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. This is indicative of the peculiar relationship that the U.S. has with its military: applauding and recognizing service but not rewarding that service monetarily. Other incentives keep the military robust.

CHAIR MENARD said she appreciates how zealous Representative Ramras has been for lunch programs.

SENATOR PASKVAN commented that this is a part of the big problem of too many kids going to school hungry. HJR 24 would help aid one segment of such kids.

[9:18:31 AM](#)

CHAIR MENARD opened public testimony.

DEAN HAMBURG, administrator, school lunch program, Kenai Peninsula Borough School District, and public policy and legislative chair, Alaska School Nutrition Association, said the USDA supplies Alaska with support for almost 10 million school meals each school year. Many students receiving free and reduced meals are children of military families. Presently, funding provided to military families to support off base housing must be counted as income when that family applies for free or reduced price USDA meals. The requirement to report housing income sometimes disqualifies military families from school breakfast and lunch programs. Eliminating the requirement to report the housing allowance as income when applying for free or reduced price meals, would offer appropriate and meaningful support to Alaska military families. HJR 24 acts as a message of to change current application criteria.

[9:21:21 AM](#)

AMY ROUSE, director of nutrition services, Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, said since the military has chosen to privatize base and post housing, all families now receive a Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH). According to USDA guidance, if the family lives on any military installation, their income figure excludes BAH. If the family lives in the private housing market, renting or owning, BAH has to be included in their income calculation. For many families, this is the difference between approval and denial of meal benefits. Ms. Rouse shared a story about a mother asking why her children were denied meal benefits while her friends' children received free meals. Their husbands were the same rank, on the same pay with the same BAH. Her friend's family lives on Ft. Wainwright and her family lives in Fairbanks. Ms. Rouse had to explain the required inclusion of the family's BAH as income when living off base. The mother said this was extremely unfair as post housing was not available when her family moved to Fairbanks.

MS. ROUSE said she often fields questions about why children in one family qualify for free or reduced school meals and others do not. Many military families feel they are being punished for living in the private housing market. Families should be treated

the same and income calculated the same regardless of where the family resides.

[9:24:40 AM](#)

CHAIR MENARD closed public testimony.

SENATOR MEYER moved to report HJR 24 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There being no objection, the motion carried.

At ease from 9:25 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

SCR 14-FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

[9:30:25 AM](#)

CHAIR MENARD announced the next order of business would be SCR 14.

SENATOR EGAN, sponsor of SCR 14, said this resolution designates October 2010 as Filipino American History Month. Filipinos have a rich history and culture in Alaska. The first recorded Filipino in Alaska came by ship in 1788. In early Alaska history, Filipinos worked on whaling ships, in the Alaska-Juneau and Treadwell Gold Mines and in various canneries. The Filipino American community is the largest Asian American group in Alaska with 18,000 people. Alaska has had strong Filipino leadership: the Alaska Legislature had the first Filipino American female legislator in the nation. Thelma Buchholdt came to Alaska in 1951 and served in the House of Representatives from 1974-1982. The intention of SCR 14 is to celebrate and honor the Filipino community in Alaska.

CHAIR MENARD asked if October 2010 a celebration of anything else.

SENATOR EGAN replied that October 18th is Alaska Day.

CHAIR MENARD said having Filipino American Month join ranks with Alaska day is appropriate.

[9:33:56 AM](#)

CHAIR MENARD opened testimony.

ELLERY LUMBAB, originally from the Philippines, representing himself and his family, said his father who is 88 now and fought with American World War II soldiers against the Japanese. He said his family consists of his mom and dad, their 15 children,

their spouses, and 62 grandchildren. He is the artistic director of the Alitaptap Philippine Folkloric Group of the Filipino Community Incorporated (FCI) in Juneau. The FCI is the oldest organized Filipino community in Alaska. Filipinos have contributed a great deal to Alaska working as laborers in the fish canneries and gold mines, in retail and food businesses, and helping to build Alaska's economy since 1788. Today, Filipino teachers, bankers, doctors and nurses, are involved in almost every facet of Alaskan society. Maintaining original Filipino cultures and traditions among younger Filipino Americans in Alaska is important.

[9:36:34 AM](#)

RAFAEL CASTANOS, representing himself, said he was born in Manila. He was one of the student leaders demonstrating in the streets during the Filipino revolution of 1986, kicking out Marcos. In November 2009, the FCI president, Jenny Strickler, told Mr. Castanos that she had attended the Filipino American Historical Society in Anchorage. He explored the possibility of declaring a Filipino American history month. He noted that there are 4 million Filipinos in the U.S. He also noted that he obtained a joint resolution from the City and Borough of Juneau declaring Filipino American history month to be celebrated every October.

[9:39:08 AM](#)

DANTE REYES, representing himself, said his family moved from the Philippines to Juneau in 1996 and he has been here since. He found out about a very organized Filipino organization in Juneau, the FCI, with a program to promote cultures and traditions of the Philippines. If SCR 14 passes, the Filipino association in Juneau is planning to celebrate the month of October and present some shows, dances and other traditions to Alaska.

[9:42:14 AM](#)

ARLENE LUMBAB, board of directors, Filipino Community Inc (FCI), said she comes from one of the central islands of the Philippines. She initially came to America through California and then moved to Juneau three years ago. SCR 14 is an honor to all Filipinos throughout Alaska. FCI in Juneau is the oldest organized Filipino organization, incorporating in 1956, and many founding families reside in Juneau today. Filipinos, it has been said, are the second largest ethnic group in Alaska after Alaska Natives. She urged the passage of SCR 14.

[9:44:30 AM](#)

CHAIR MENARD closed public testimony.

CHAIR MENARD noted that all committee members at the table have signed as co-sponsors of SCR 14.

SENATOR MEYER moved to report SCR 14 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There being no objection, the motion carried.

[9:45:32 AM](#)

CHAIR MENARD, seeing no further business to come before the committee, adjourned the meeting.