

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 7, 2012

9:01 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Bill Wielechowski, Chair  
Senator Joe Paskvan, Vice Chair  
Senator Albert Kookesh  
Senator Kevin Meyer  
Senator Cathy Giessel

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 20

Relating to awarding the Alaska Decoration of Honor to certain members of the military.

- MOVED SCR 20 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

Urging the United States Department of Defense to protect military bases and military personnel in the state.

- MOVED CSSJR 14(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11

Urging members of the Alaska delegation in Congress to support efforts by the National Women's History Museum to secure property in Washington, D.C., near the National Mall, as a permanent location for the National Women's History Museum.

- MOVED SJR 11 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 16

Proclaiming May 2012 to be Celiac Disease Awareness Month.

-MOVED SCR 16 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SCR 20

SHORT TITLE: DECORATION OF HONOR  
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) WIELECHOWSKI

02/01/12 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
02/01/12 (S) STA  
02/07/12 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SJR 14

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY PERSONNEL CUTS & BASE CLOSURES  
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) WIELECHOWSKI

02/01/12 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
02/01/12 (S) STA  
02/07/12 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SJR 11

SHORT TITLE: NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM  
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DAVIS

01/17/12 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/17/12 (S) STA  
02/07/12 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SCR 16

SHORT TITLE: CELIAC DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH  
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) GIESSEL

01/17/12 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/17/12 (S) STA  
02/07/12 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

KENDRA KLOSTER, Staff  
Senator Bill Wielechowski  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented SCR 20 on behalf of the sponsor.

LUKE HOPKINS, Mayor  
Fairbanks North Star Borough  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SCR 20 and offered Amendment 1.

C.W. FLOYD, Special Assistant for Military and Veterans Affairs  
Office of Senator Mark Begich

Anchorage, Alaska,

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SCR 20.

JIM PALMER

Office of Senator Lisa Murkowski

Anchorage, Alaska,

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SCR 20.

SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SJR 11.

CELESTE HODGES, Staff

Senator Bettye Davis

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented SJR 11 on behalf of the sponsor.

ANN STONE, Senior Vice President

National Women's History Museum

Alexandria, Virginia

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SJR 11.

ROBIN READ, President and CEO

National Foundation for Women Legislators

Washington, DC

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SJR 11.

TERESA NEENO, Physician

Allergy Asthma and Immunity Center of Alaska

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SCR 16.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[9:01:07 AM](#)

**CHAIR BILL WIELECHOWSKI** called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Giessel, Kookesh, Paskvan, Meyer, and Chair Wielechowski.

#### **SCR 20-DECORATION OF HONOR**

[9:02:27 AM](#)

**CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI** announced that the first order of business would be SCR 20, which would award the Decoration of Honor to 25

individuals that were killed in the line of duty while honorably serving the United States in 2011.

KENDRA KLOSTER, staff, Senator Bill Wielechowski, sponsor, introduced SCR 20. She explained that the resolution honors 25 individuals who were killed in the line of duty while honorably serving our state and country in 2011. The Alaska Decoration of Honor was established in 2007 to award military service members from Alaska, or those who have been deployed while stationed in Alaska, who were killed in action or in support of combat action. The legislature must authorize the award by resolution so the decoration can be presented to the recipients of the survivors.

In 2008, the legislature awarded the medal to 171 individuals dating back to statehood. From 2009 to 2010 an additional 36 were authorized. Passage of SCR 20 will allow the families of these 25 individuals to receive the Alaska Decoration of Honor.

[9:03:50 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI requested information as to how the names were compiled for accuracy purposes.

MS. KLOSTER replied that she worked with Military and Veteran Affairs and Legislative Legal to do so.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to report SCR 20 from committee with individual recommendations. There being no objection, SCR 20 moved from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

#### **SJR 14-MILITARY PERSONNEL CUTS & BASE CLOSURES**

[9:05:36 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced the consideration of SJR 14, which he said highlights the strategic importance of Alaska's bases and military personnel.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for SJR 14, labeled 27-LS1299\M, as the working document.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI objected for discussion purposes.

KENDRA KLOSTER, staff to Senator Bill Wielechowski, sponsor, presented SJR 14. The resolution is a result of the base realignment and closure process in 2005 and a recent possibility of another round of closures in 2013 and 2015. She related that it is important that the legislature show support for Alaska

military bases and personnel. There will also be a cut of \$487 billion over the next 10 years for military bases. The Alaska military force is of great importance to Alaska's economy and strategic location. Thirty-two military installations and more than 23,000 active duty members and 37,000 active duty family members contribute to about 13 percent of the state's economy.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI noted there was one proposed amendment.

[9:07:27 AM](#)

LUKE HOPKINS, Mayor, Fairbanks North Star Borough, thanked the committee for hearing the resolution. He reported on the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) process from 2005 which resulted in pushing back realignment for Eielson Air Force Base. He voiced concern about another BRAC round. He stressed the strategic importance of Eielson Air Force Base in the world theater. He asked the committee to consider this issue and support the resolution.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI agreed that the resolution was of great importance to Fairbanks. He requested information about Mayor Hopkins' proposed amendment.

MAYOR HOPKINS related that he talked to Senator Coghill about language that would highlight the importance of interior Alaska.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI thanked the mayor.

[9:11:21 AM](#)

C.W. FLOYD, Special Assistant for Military and Veterans Affairs, Office of Senator Mark Begich, offered to answer questions on SJR 14.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI requested more information about the BRAC process.

MR. FLOYD explained that BRAC would require Congressional approval. A list of military bases under consideration would be developed and reviewed. In 2005, the BRAC committee came to Alaska to take testimony regarding the reduction of Eielson Base. He noted that currently the Congressional climate does not support domestic BRAC in light of all alternatives.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI asked what affects the 2005 BRAC had on Alaska.

MR. FLOYD replied that it brought out facts and dispelled rumors about costs. Cost savings implications were found to be significant. The strategic importance was highlighted, as well as future development opportunities, especially as related to environmental impacts, unmanned aerial vehicles, and the global reach of the training centers.

[9:18:05 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI asked about Secretary of Defense Panetta's prediction that \$487 billion in military cuts are expected over the next ten years. He wondered how that would affect Alaska.

MR. FLOYD opined that it was too soon to speculate on that issue.

SENATOR PASKVAN recalled heating costs being a concern during the 2005 hearings. He said it was found that there was a leveling of BTU consumption by including air conditioning in cost comparisons of bases.

MR. FLOYD said he assumed it was so, but did not know. He offered to find out.

[9:19:50 AM](#)

JIM PALMER, Senator Lisa Murkowski's Office, agreed that Congress is not in favor of a BRAC process at this time. Any downsizing of the military in Alaska would not be a good idea for America, given the strategic position of Alaska's bases to Asian Pacific theaters. He noted that the governor, the legislature, and the Congressional delegation would be working closely together on this issue. He voiced concern about the possibility of moving F-16's from Eielson to Elmendorf.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI noted widespread support on the legislative level. He asked if moving the F-16's was a precursor for upcoming BRAC rounds.

MR. PALMER said that would be speculation on his part. He pointed out that moving the jets from Eielson would make it easier to put the base in a BRAC situation.

[9:23:29 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI withdrew his objection to adopting the CS for SJR 14. There being no further objection, version M was before the committee.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to adopt Amendment 1:

WHEREAS the northern most U.S. Air Force base in North America is located in central Alaska is home to Red Flag North exercises that provide access to the Joint Pacific Range Complex training space for combined Allied joint training including extensive live weapons fire, live ordinances, and controlled UAV airspace and overland supersonic flight; and

WHEREAS the Pacific Air Bridge is supported by Alaskan Based KC-135 tankers with 24 million gallons of jet fuel storage supplied by a central Alaska refinery via direct pipeline; and

WHEREAS the state of Alaska has invested \$80 million of its own capital funds in the last two years to provide the military exclusive direct ground access to JPARC which is adjacent to a central Alaska Air Force base; and

There being no objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI spoke of the importance of Alaska's strategic location. He said the economic impact of 13 percent is an important factor for retaining military bases in Alaska.

[9:25:27 AM](#)

SENATOR PASKVAN referred to a previous comment on BRAC and the choice of closing domestic and international bases. He stressed that domestic bases should be considered last for a BRAC process because of the tremendous economic impact closing them would have on communities.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to report CSSJR 14, version M, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations. There being no objection, CSSJR 14(STA) moved from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

#### **SJR 11-NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MUSEUM**

[9:27:11 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced the consideration of SJR 11, which calls on the congressional delegation to support efforts to construct a National Women's History Museum in the nation's capital.

SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS, sponsor of SJR 11, thanked the committee for hearing the resolution.

CELESTE HODGES, staff, Senator Bettye Davis, read from the following sponsor statement for SJR 11:

Senate Joint Resolution No. 11 urges members of the Alaska delegation in Congress to support efforts by the National Women's History Museum to secure property in Washington DC near the National Mall as a permanent location for the National Women's History Museum.

Women played and continue to play essential roles in many movements that helped shape the society we value so highly today. Such movements include the Labor Movement, the Women's Suffrage Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, the Women's Rights Movement, and the Environmental Movement. Women have long struggled to gain ground in a society largely dominated by men. Unfortunately, women achievements were marginalized and credit for their work and discoveries went to their male colleagues. Too often women were unsung heroes and their contributions went unnoticed. The displacement of women's history from the consciousness of the general public is indicated by the absence of women's history from K-12 curriculum. The achievements, leadership, courage, strength and love of the women who built America was and is as vital as that of the men whose names we know so well.

In the 1970's, that began to change as a movement to celebrate women's history gained momentum - a momentum we now feel each March during Women's History Month as we pay tribute to the millions of women who sacrificed so much to help create a better society and world.

Since its founding in 1996, the National Women's History Museum Institution, with the support of the National Foundation for women legislators, has been working toward obtaining a permanent site near the National Mall for its building. The construction of a museum that exhibits the rich history of women and their many contributions to society is long overdue. Of the 210 statues in the capitol building, only 9 are of women. Of the 2,400 national historic landmarks in the country, only 5 percent document women's accomplishments. There are museums dedicated to

airplanes, buildings, and postage stamps, but no single location dedicated to celebrating the accomplishments of women, who are over half the country's population.

MS. HODGES urged support of SJR 11.

[9:31:04 AM](#)

ANN STONE, Senior Vice President, National Women's History Museum, Alexandria, Virginia, testified in support of SJR 11. She recalled support for the museum from Alaskans, including Senator Stevens in 1997. She said it is critical to receive support from across the states. In the 90's a survey showed that 80 percent surveyed were in favor of a women's history museum. She spoke of the museum's goal to create a greater partnership between men and women, and to provide greater role models for young girls. She applauded the legislature for considering SJR 11, which asks for the right to be able to purchase land on or near the Mall of Washington, DC.

[9:36:02 AM](#)

ROBIN READ, President and CEO, National Foundation for Women Legislators, Washington, DC, testified in support of SJR 11. She listed the number of states that had already endorsed this legislation. She listed the types of museums already in existence and showed that a women's museum is obviously missing. The Women's History Museum would be the only museum not paid for by taxpayers. She pointed out that Alaska women are timeless pioneers.

SENATOR KOOKESH spoke of his experience with building the American Indian Museum. He wondered if there was any land still available on the Mall.

MS. READ commented that the Hispanic Museum, which will be located on the Mal, was just approved. She deferred to Ms. Stone to discuss available land.

[9:39:52 AM](#)

MS. STONE noted that there are a couple of options for sites. It could be a purchase or a 99-year lease. It will be a revenue positive bill. She described a site on 12th and Independence; other sites are pending.

SENATOR KOOKESH appreciated the group's efforts to find property for the museum.

MS. READ said she appreciated the Native American Museum.

SENATOR DAVIS encouraged passage of the resolution.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to report SJR 11, version A, out of committee with individual recommendations. There being no objection, SJR 11 was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

### **SCR 16-CELIAC DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH**

[9:43:44 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced that SCR 16 was before the committee, a resolution which designates May 2012 as Celiac Disease Awareness Month.

SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL, sponsor of SCR 16, introduced the bill. She informed the committee about gluten and celiac disease, which is caused by a reaction to gluten. It is estimated that over 5,000 Alaskans are affected by gluten intolerance. She listed foods in which gluten is contained.

SENATOR GIESSEL listed the symptoms of celiac disease which is genetic and has no known cure. Once identified, a person must eat a strict gluten-free diet.

[9:45:20 AM](#)

TERESA NEENO, Physician, Allergy Asthma and Immunity Center of Alaska, testified in support of SCR 16. She explained that an increased awareness of the symptoms of celiac disease should help decrease the time it usually takes to diagnose the disease, which can be from 5 to 10 years. She addressed the care for celiac disease.

SENATOR PASKVAN referred to page 2, line 25, the term "misdiagnosis" and asked for clarity.

DR. NEENO explained that the public has a great deal of misinformation related to food allergies and intolerances. The symptoms of celiac disease are vague and it is difficult to correlate the symptoms with the disease and the consumption of wheat. It is an autoimmune disease and therefore there are GI tract issues.

[9:49:55 AM](#)

SENATOR PASKVAN wanted clarification of "misdiagnosis."

DR. NEENO explained that the symptoms can be confusing.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI asked how a person is tested for the disease.

DR. NEENO said that a blood test is required. A genetic study can also be done.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI asked if there was an increase in the number of cases.

DR. NEENO said not necessarily. She shared that 1 in 133 in the U.S. have been identified to have the disease; in Alaska, less have been identified.

SENATOR PASKVAN asked what the cost of the blood test is and if it is covered by insurance.

DR. NEENO did not know the cost, but thought it was covered by insurance as part of a diagnostic workup.

[9:53:10 AM](#)

SENATOR MEYER asked how information about the disease is made available. He also wanted to know what foods can be eaten.

SENATOR GIESSEL said that people do not generally know about this disease. There is a need for dispersing information. The point of the resolution is to increase awareness.

SENATOR GIESSEL addressed the question about what foods can be eaten. She stressed that processed foods are bad. Whole foods and raw foods are ok, as is protein. Very few grains can be consumed. Parents have a hard time providing food for children with the disease.

SENATOR MEYER suggested keying the food pyramid with a notice about celiac disease.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI commented that rice and potatoes would be fine to eat.

SENATOR PASKVAN agreed that public awareness was an important issue. He applied the national statistics of 1 out of 133 having celiac disease to a school setting and emphasized the need to heighten awareness in schools. He mentioned the cost of \$5,000 to \$12,000 per year due to celiac disease and suggested early diagnosis.

9:58:51 AM

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to report SCR 16, version M, from committee with individual recommendations. There being no objections, SCR 16 was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

9:59:25 AM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Wielechowski adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 9:59 p.m.