

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

March 5, 2013

1:07 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Pete Higgins
Representative Lora Reinbold
Representative Max Gruenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Co-Chair
Representative Shelley Hughes
Representative Dan Saddler

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5
Relating to awarding the Alaska Decoration of Honor to certain members of the military.

- MOVED HCR 5 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HCR 5
SHORT TITLE: DECORATION OF HONOR
SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) SADDLER

02/27/13	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/27/13	(H)	MLV
03/05/13	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 120

WITNESS REGISTER

KIM SKIPPER, Staff
Representative Dan Saddler
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HCR 5 on behalf of Representative Saddler, sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:07:41 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR NEAL FOSTER called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. Representatives Reinbold, Gruenberg, Higgins, and Foster were present at the call to order.

HCR 5-DECORATION OF HONOR

[1:08:20 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FOSTER announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 5, Relating to awarding the Alaska Decoration of Honor to certain members of the military.

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KIM SKIPPER, staff to Representative Dan Saddler, Alaska State Legislature, informed the committee HCR 5 awards the Alaska Decoration of Honor to nine military service members killed in the line of duty between 1/1/12 and 12/31/12. The Alaska Decoration of Honor was established in 2007 by the legislature to posthumously honor individuals - from Alaska or deployed while stationed in Alaska - who were killed in action or in support of combat action. This medal is presented to the families of the service members. The legislature must authorize the award by resolution and has done so since 2008. Dating back to statehood, 232 men and women have been awarded the Declaration of Honor. House Concurrent Resolution 5 will award another nine service members with the Alaska Decoration of Honor and authorize their families to receive this decoration on behalf of their loved ones who sacrificed for our state and country. She said the cost of freedom is borne by men and women who risk and sometimes lose their lives in service. The recipients in 2012 are as follows: Dustin P. Napier, Jeffrey L. White, Jr., Thomas K. Fogarty, Brian L. Walker, Richard L. McNulty, Vincent J. Ellis, Nathan T. Davis, Carl E. Hammar, and Ethan J. Martin.

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REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG stated statute requires that the legislature pass a concurrent resolution to award the honor. He asked whether there are any other awards that require a concurrent resolution, because it seems to be an unnecessary step; in fact, if the Legislative Affairs Agency could issue the award, the award would not be delayed by a year. He suggested

streamlining the process of the resolution by deleting AS 26.05.342(c).

MS. SKIPPER was unsure of any other awards. She said she would look into a possible change.

REPRESENTATIVE HIGGINS asked if the state militia is included in the list of service organizations.

MS. SKIPPER was unsure; however, the award covers service back to statehood, which includes the Korean War.

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD asked whether the branch of service is identified.

MS. SKIPPER said she did not know whether there would be a decoration ceremony as the last one was held in 2007. Letters will be sent to family members with the medals.

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REPRESENTATIVE HIGGINS clarified the Alaska Territorial Guard served in World War II and became the Alaska State Defense Force before statehood. He said he would like to honor any eligible members of those services.

MS. SKIPPER offered to refer this suggestion to the sponsor.

CO-CHAIR FOSTER expressed his belief that the passage of a concurrent resolution gives members of the legislature an opportunity to respect and recognize the recipients.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG suggested that after the awards are issued to families, the awards would be recorded in a concurrent resolution. He expressed his concern about the wait for the families and noted the therapeutic effect of closure.

MS. SKIPPER advised that locating the families can be difficult.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG agreed, adding that a longer wait exacerbates this situation.

[1:19:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD restated her question about recognition for the branch of service that recipients served, and suggested that a memorial in the Capitol would be appropriate.

MS. SKIPPER took note of her suggestion.

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The committee took an at-ease from 1:20 p.m. to 1:22 p.m.

[1:22:42 PM](#)

MS. SKIPPER explained that in order for the Alaska Decoration of Honor to be awarded this year the resolution must pass both bodies and be signed by the governor this session.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG withdrew his request.

[1:23:28 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FOSTER, upon determining that no one wished to testify, closed public testimony.

[1:23:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REINBOLD moved to report HCR 5 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HCR 5 was reported out of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[1:24:18 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:24 p.m.