

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 21, 2013

9:06 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Fred Dyson, Chair
Senator Cathy Giessel, Vice Chair
Senator John Coghill
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Bill Wielechowski

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 67(MLV)

"An Act establishing March 29 of each year as Vietnam Veterans Day; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 67(MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 36

"An Act relating to missing vulnerable adult prompt response and notification plans."

- MOVED SSSB 36 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 67

SHORT TITLE: VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) THOMPSON

01/16/13	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/13	(H)	MLV
02/07/13	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 120
02/07/13	(H)	Moved CSHB 67(MLV) Out of Committee
02/07/13	(H)	MINUTE(MLV)
02/08/13	(H)	MLV RPT CS(MLV) NT 7DP
02/08/13	(H)	DP: GRUENBERG, SADDLER, HIGGINS, REINBOLD, HUGHES, FOSTER, LEDOUX
02/13/13	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
02/13/13	(H)	VERSION: CSHB 67(MLV)

02/15/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/15/13 (S) STA
02/21/13 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 36

SHORT TITLE: MISSING VULNERABLE ADULT RESPONSE PLAN
SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) ELLIS

01/25/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/25/13 (S) STA, JUD
02/08/13 (S) SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE INTRODUCED-REFERRALS
02/08/13 (S) STA, JUD
02/21/13 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of CSHB 67(MLV).

NATHAN ZENCEY, staff

Senator Johnny Ellis
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced CSHB 67(MLV) on behalf of the sponsor.

SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SSSB 36.

MICHAEL VANVLEET, Social Work Intern

Warrior Transition Unit
Soldier and Family Assistance
Fort Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support SSSB 36.

PATRICK CUNNINGHAM, Board Member

Alzheimer's Research
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support SSSB 36.

DULCE NOBRE, Executive Director

Alzheimer's Resource Agency of Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support SSSB 36.

ACTION NARRATIVE

9:06:03 AM

CHAIR FRED DYSON called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Giessel and Stedman, and Chair Dyson. Senators Wielechowski and Coghill arrived shortly thereafter.

HB 67-VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

9:06:10 AM

CHAIR DYSON announced that the first order of business would be HB 67 [CSHB 67(MLV) was before the committee.]

REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON, sponsor of CSHB 67(MLV), noted that the bill is an Act that establishes March 29th of each year as Vietnam Veterans Day. He read the following sponsor statement:

In 2012, the United States Senate and the President designated March 29, as Vietnam Veterans Day. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the withdrawal of U.S. combat and combat-support units from Vietnam.

On March 29, 1973, all U.S. troops withdrew from Vietnam, marking an end of the 10 year United States military involvement. Upon their return, Vietnam Veterans were not greeted with parades or triumphant speeches such as the ones delivered at the end of each of the World Wars. Instead, Vietnam veterans returned home to silence, and in some cases, to abuse for having served their country during a controversial war.

House Bill 67 would dedicate March 29th of each year as Vietnam Veterans Day in Alaska to commemorate the military service of American men and women in Vietnam. The day may be observed by suitable observances and exercises by civic groups and the public.

I want to thank the committee for hearing HB 67 today.

CHAIR DYSON asked if the vote was unanimous in the House.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON said it was.

CHAIR DYSON understood that there was extensive testimony at that time.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON said there was. Several Vietnam Veterans testified. He shared his own experience in the army during the Vietnam era.

CHAIR DYSON asked if anyone wished to testify. No one wished to testify.

CHAIR DYSON asked if there was any negative testimony regarding the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON said there was none.

SENATOR GIESSEL moved to report CS for HB 67, labeled 28-LS0308\U, from committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, CSHB 67(MLV) was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

[9:10:40 AM](#)

At ease

SB 36-MISSING VULNERABLE ADULT RESPONSE PLAN

[9:22:14 AM](#)

CHAIR DYSON reconvened the meeting and announced the hearing of SB 36. [SSSB 36 was before the committee.] Present were Senators Coghill, Wielechowski, Stedman, and Chair Dyson.

SENATOR COGHILL moved to adopt SSSB 36, labeled 28-LS0338\N, as the working document before the committee. There was no objection.

NATHAN ZENCEY, staff, Senator Johnny Ellis, sponsor of SB 36, thanked the committee for hearing SSSB 36. He noted that a similar version of the bill passed the Senate last year 20 to zero. He read the following sponsor statement:

This bill would ensure that the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs works together with the Department of Public Safety to develop plans for state and local law enforcement to quickly notify the media, the public, and other law enforcement agencies when a vulnerable adult goes missing. A Silver Alert program

here in Alaska, we believe, would establish clear and consistent lines of communication and develop efficient procedures for citizens, law enforcement, and media outlets to follow in this situation.

We believe the preparation in this bill will ensure we maintain an efficient system for activating rapid searches and media alerts for a senior citizen with Alzheimer's disease or dementia, or an adult with mental disabilities when they are missing, even when law enforcement agencies may be burdened by high response demands in other areas or if they may lose experienced officers to retirement or turnover.

Thirty-eight other states have established Silver Alerts or even more extensive missing persons response programs. Despite this, Alaska has still not taken the opportunity to design a dedicated response and notification program for our senior citizens and disabled adults when they go missing. We believe that due to the rapidly growing senior population here, it is imperative that we establish this program to allow our seniors and disabled adults to continue to live and retire here, which they are increasingly choosing to do alongside their families and children.

We have seen what this program can do in other states. Just this past August, the Mississippi Highway Patrol, which operates the Silver Alert in Mississippi, praises their Silver Alert program for helping them save just three lives in a month.

SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS, sponsor of SB 36, thanked the committee for hearing the bill.

CHAIR DYSON asked Senator Ellis if he had seen Senator Coghill's amendment.

SENATOR ELLIS said no.

[9:26:36 AM](#)

At ease

[9:28:00 AM](#)

CHAIR DYSON asked if there was any negative testimony.

SENATOR ELLIS said there was no opposition. There is bi-partisan support and strong interest group support across the state. There was some question about the definition of "vulnerable adult" which will be addressed. He said that 30 other states have this program in place and it is time for Alaska to do so, too.

CHAIR DYSON opened public testimony.

SENATOR COGHILL voiced no opposition to the bill.

[9:29:39 AM](#)

CHAIR DYSON reported his conversation with Lieutenant Dial from the Division of Public Safety who stated that the division's handling of Silver Alert calls would not impact their budget. He stated that Lieutenant Dial has no problems with their zero fiscal note.

SENATOR ELLIS noted that he has also spoken with Lieutenant Dial. He said he plans to work with Senator Coghill to clarify the definition concerns.

[9:30:49 AM](#)

MICHAEL VANVLEET, Social Work Intern, Warrior Transition Unit, Soldier and Family Assistance, testified in support of SSSB 36. He related that the individuals in the Warrior Transition Unit would qualify for, and benefit by, the Silver Alert.

[9:33:20 AM](#)

PATRICK CUNNINGHAM, Board Member, Alzheimer's Research, testified in support of SSSB 36. He maintained that the Silver Alert will be of benefit to many Alaskans.

[9:35:06 AM](#)

DULCE NOBRE, Executive Director, Alzheimer's Resource Agency of Alaska, testified in support of SSSB 36. She related that wandering behavior is common for Alzheimer's patients and those with dementia. Nationwide, statistics show that of those individuals who wander, only one-third survives if they are not found within 24 hours. In Alaska wandering can be fatal due to extreme weather. She spoke in strong support of SSSB 36.

[9:36:50 AM](#)

CHAIR DYSON asked who pays for the unit that the senior will carry.

SENATOR ELLIS clarified that it is a phone alert system, not a device.

9:37:33 AM

SENATOR STEDMAN moved to report SSSB 36, version N, from committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal notes. There being no objection, SSSB 36 was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

CHAIR DYSON commented that most people have to deal with this issue. He thanked people for their work on this issue.

9:38:36 AM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Dyson adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee at 9:38 a.m.