

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

April 17, 2015

9:03 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Bill Stoltze, Chair  
Senator John Coghill, Vice Chair  
Senator Charlie Huggins  
Senator Bill Wielechowski

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Lesil McGuire

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 6 (MLV)

"An Act relating to a voluntary preference for veterans by private employers."

- MOVED CSHB 6 (MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 6

SHORT TITLE: PRIV EMPLOYER VOLUNTARY VET PREFERENCE

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TUCK

01/21/15	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/15
01/21/15	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/15	(H)	MLV, L&C
03/19/15	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 120
03/19/15	(H)	Moved CSHB 6(MLV) Out of Committee
03/19/15	(H)	MINUTE(MLV)
03/20/15	(H)	MLV RPT CS(MLV) NT 6DP
03/20/15	(H)	DP: GRUENBERG, LEDOUX, COLVER, HUGHES, TUCK, HERRON
04/10/15	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/10/15	(H)	Moved CSHB 6(MLV) Out of Committee
04/10/15	(H)	MINUTE(L&C)
04/11/15	(H)	L&C RPT CS(MLV) NT 6DP
04/11/15	(H)	DP: LEDOUX, TILTON, HUGHES, KITO, JOSEPHSON, OLSON
04/14/15	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
04/14/15	(H)	VERSION: CSHB 6(MLV)

04/15/15 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
04/15/15 (S) STA  
04/17/15 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TUCK  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of HB 6.

MARK SAN SOUCI, Northwest Regional Liaison  
Military Community and Family Policy  
Readiness and Force Management  
United States Department of Defense (DOD)  
Tacoma, Washington

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided comments during discussion of HB 6, and asked the committee to move the bill through the process.

RUSSELL POUNDS  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided comments during discussion of HB 6.

RUSSELL BALL  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided comments during discussion of HB 6.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

9:03:32 AM

**CHAIR BILL STOLTZE**, at 9:03 a.m., reconvened and formally adjourned the April 16, 2015, Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting that was recessed to a call of the chair. He then called the April 17, 2015, Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Wielechowski, Coghill, Huggins, and Chair Stoltze.

**HB 6-PRIV EMPLOYER VOLUNTARY VET PREFERENCE**

9:04:52 AM

CHAIR STOLTZE announced that the only order of business would be CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 6(MLV), "An Act relating to a voluntary preference for veterans by private employers."

[9:05:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TUCK, Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of HB 6, explained that the bill would allow private employers to grant an employment preference to veterans. He offered his understanding that federal law provides that states may allow such a preference to be granted by private employers as long as they are not being mandated to grant it, and that currently 17 states allow private employers to grant such a preference. Alaska has done a lot for veterans, and HB 6 would constitute an additional step in that direction.

[9:08:25 AM](#)

MARK SAN SOUCI, Northwest Regional Liaison, Military Community and Family Policy, Readiness and Force Management, United States Department of Defense (DOD), asked the committee to move HB 6 through the process. He said the DOD feels that private employers are the ones best suited to determine which skill sets are needed in the positions they are hiring for, and offered his belief that HB 6 - providing private employers with the option of granting an employment preference to veterans - would help private employers make such determinations. He noted that the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) has addressed the issue of employment preferences for veterans, and advocates - via its military and veterans' affairs task force - for providing for such in state law. To correct an earlier statement, he indicated that more than 17 states now allow private employers to grant an employment preference to veterans. He offered his understanding that information from the United States Department of Labor's (DOL's) Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates that the unemployment rate for veterans compared to other populations is higher; predicted that many more veterans are going to be moving to Alaska in the foreseeable future; and referenced statistics he said came from the DOD's Defense Manpower Data Center to illustrate the latter point.

[9:11:15 AM](#)

RUSSELL POUNDS - remarking that he is a small business owner and noting that both his father and brother are veterans and that he's met a lot of military personnel from Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) that have expressed interest in staying in Alaska - relayed his appreciation of HB 6 and what he called the opportunity to hire veterans.

[9:13:12 AM](#)

RUSSELL BALL, remarking that he is a small business owner, said he's had many veterans work for him and he finds them to be

outstanding employees in the majority of cases. He expressed concern about the unemployment rate of veterans, shared his belief that passage of HB 6 would encourage veterans to apply for private-sector jobs, and indicated that he would be choosing to grant an employment preference to veterans.

CHAIR STOLTZE, after ascertaining that no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 6.

[9:16:01 AM](#)

SENATOR COGHILL moved to report CSHB 6(MLV) from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There being no objection, CSHB 6(MLV) moved from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

[9:16:40 AM](#)

The Senate State Affairs Standing Committee was recessed at 9:16 a.m. to a call of the chair. [The meeting was not reconvened this day.]