

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 15, 2017
8:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Shelley Hughes, Chair
Senator Gary Stevens
Senator Cathy Giessel
Senator Tom Begich

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator John Coghill

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 3
Proclaiming February 2017 as Black History Month.

- MOVED SR 3 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SR 3

SHORT TITLE: FEBRUARY 2017: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) BEGICH

02/01/17	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/01/17	(S)	EDC, STA
02/15/17	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR TOM BEGICH
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SR 3.

CELESTE HODGE GROWDEN, Executive Director
Shiloh Community Development
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SR 3.

ED WESLEY, Former President
NAACP-Anchorage
Chair
Black History Month Committee
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SR 3.

CALVIN WILLIAMS, Political Action Chair
NAACP
Chair
John S. Parks Name Panel
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SR 3.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:00:54 AM](#)

CHAIR SHELLEY HUGHES called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Giessel, Begich, and Chair Hughes. Senator Stevens arrived shortly thereafter.

SR 3-FEBRUARY 2017: BLACK HISTORY MONTH

CHAIR HUGHES announced that the only order of business would be SR 3.

SENATOR TOM BEGICH, Sponsor, Alaska State Legislature, presented SR 3. He paraphrased from the following sponsor statement:

In 1926, Dr. Carter G. Woodson established a Negro History Week to coincide with the birth week shared by President Abraham Lincoln and abolitionist leader Fredrick Douglass. It was Fredrick Douglass who observed that it is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men, which makes it appropriate that the Senate Education Committee would be the first committee of referral for this resolution honoring Black History Month.

In 1976, then-President Gerald R. Ford expanded February to Black History Month in honor of the nation's bicentennial. He reinforced the idea that African Americans and the role they played in history are not forgotten. The "whereas" clauses in the resolution cite some of those examples, such as the honoring of Company L, 24th Infantry, which was the

African American company which helped build the Alaskan Highway.

SENATOR BEGICH reported that last night the Anchorage Assembly dedicated their transit center to John S. Parks, a long-time Black activist. He encouraged support of the resolution.

[8:04:08 AM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL recommended a National Geographic video on YouTube on the building of the Alaska Highway by African Americans.

CHAIR HUGHES asked Senator Begich to provide the video link to the committee.

SENATOR BEGICH agreed to do so.

[8:05:07 AM](#)

CELESTE HODGE GROWDEN, Executive Director, Shiloh Community Development, Inc. (SCD), testified in support of SR 3. She said the main goal of SCD is to empower youth, minorities, and the disadvantaged to improve lives. Their goal is to enhance the quality of life of those less fortunate by providing transitional assistance, economic and educational opportunities, job search support, health education, prevention and wellness programs, and youth mentorship. SCD's major emphasis is to develop and promote programs that advance minorities, youth, and the disadvantaged in health, education, justice, and economic development. She thanked Senator Begich for sponsoring SR 3 and urged passage of SR 3.

CHAIR HUGHES thanked Ms. Growden and congratulated her on receiving an honor at the Anchorage Assembly meeting.

[8:06:41 AM](#)

ED WESLEY, Former President, NAACP-Anchorage, Chair, Black History Month Committee, testified in support of SR 3. He pointed out that it is unfortunate that there is a separate category for Black history. He stressed that the omission of Black history from American History books takes place due to those who want to keep that history from being included. Over 50 percent of comforts and conveniences enjoyed today come from African American inventions.

[8:09:19 AM](#)

CALVIN WILLIAMS, Political Action Chair, NAACP, Chair, John S. Parks Name Panel, testified in support of SR 3. He noted that

Anchorage's transit center was named after Mr. Parks, who was a carpenter with little education and yet able to do great things for Alaska and his community. He pointed out that much of history has been lost because of lack of a place to house the information. He thanked the committee for its efforts and suggested having a permanent housing place for historical documents.

[8:12:13 AM](#)

CHAIR HUGHES opened public testimony. Seeing no testifiers, she closed public testimony.

SENATOR BEGICH noted that colleagues in the Senate have been recognizing the important contributions of national and Alaskan African Americans.

CHAIR HUGHES voiced appreciation for SR 3. She asked for the will of the committee.

SENATOR GIESSEL moved to report SR 3, version 30-LS0418\D, from committee with individual recommendations. There being no objection, the motion carried.

[8:14:01 AM](#)

At ease

[8:15:04 AM](#)

CHAIR HUGHES brought the committee back to order and made announcements.

[8:15:46 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Hughes adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee at 8:15 a.m.