

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

April 25, 2019

1:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Chair
Representative Chris Tuck, Vice Chair
Representative Chuck Kopp
Representative Geran Tarr
Representative Steve Thompson
Representative George Rauscher

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Sharon Jackson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6

Expressing support and appreciation for the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HR 6

SHORT TITLE: NAT'L. NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) LINCOLN

03/18/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/18/19	(H)	TRB, MLV
04/09/19	(H)	TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/09/19	(H)	Heard & Held
04/09/19	(H)	MINUTE(TRB)
04/16/19	(H)	TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/16/19	(H)	Moved HR 6 Out of Committee
04/16/19	(H)	MINUTE(TRB)
04/17/19	(H)	TRB RPT 7DP
04/17/19	(H)	DP: VANCE, ORTIZ, EDGMON, TALERICO, KOPP, LINCOLN, ZULKOSKY
04/25/19	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

ELIZABETH FERGUSON, Staff
Representative John Lincoln
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HR 6 on behalf of Representative Lincoln, sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN LINCOLN
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Speaking as the sponsor, answered questions during the hearing of HR 6.

WAYNE DON, Colonel, Chief of Staff
Alaska Army National Guard; Committee Member
National Native American Veterans Memorial
National Museum of the American Indian
Smithsonian Institution
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support and answered questions during the hearing of HR 6.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:01:36 PM](#)

CHAIR GABRIELLE LEDOUX called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Representatives Thompson, Rauscher, Tuck, and LeDoux were present at the call to order. Representatives Tarr and Kopp arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HR 6-NAT'L. NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS MEMORIAL

[1:02:17 PM](#)

CHAIR LEDOUX announced the only order of business would be HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 6, Expressing support and appreciation for the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

[1:03:13 PM](#)

ELIZABETH FERGUSON, Staff, Representative John Lincoln, Alaska State Legislature, paraphrased from the following sponsor statement [original punctuation provided]:

House Resolution 6 (HR6) expresses support and appreciation for the National Native American Veterans Memorial. The memorial will be built in Washington, D.C. on the grounds of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and will be revealed on Veterans Day of 2020. The National Native American Veterans Memorial is the first memorial that recognizes the contributions, service, and sacrifices American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians have made for the cause of peace. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, throughout the history of the United States, American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians have served the armed forces in higher percentages than any other ethnicity. There are currently 31,000 active duty members who are Native American, and 133,000 Native American veterans alive today. In addition to honoring Native American veterans, this memorial gives all Americans the opportunity to learn about the sacrifices, honors of valor, and distinguished services Native Americans have made in the last 250 years.

[1:04:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER asked if other states are [supportive of the memorial].

MS. FERGUSON said the U.S. Congress instructed the Smithsonian Institution to build the memorial and fundraising has been underway for approximately 10 years. She deferred to Colonel Wayne Don for further information.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK clarified the resolution merely expresses support and appreciation and does not call for any particular action on the part of the state.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR asked whether the sponsor would like the resolution to direct that copies of the resolution would be distributed to certain government officials.

MS. FERGUSON acknowledged the sponsor considered introducing a joint resolution, or another type of resolution, but choose to introduce a simple resolution to express gratitude and support. She related testimony hear at a previous hearing suggested copies of the resolution could be used for fundraising purposes, although the sponsor has no plans to distribute copies.

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP recalled previous testimony in support of the resolution and expressed his support for distributing copies to the Alaska congressional delegation.

[1:08:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN LINCOLN, Alaska State Legislature, speaking as the sponsor of HR 6, stated his intent is - subsequent to the passage of the resolution - to share HR 6 with residents in his district, with the Alaska congressional delegation, and with other interested parties.

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CHAIR LEDOUX opened public testimony on HR 6.

[1:09:34 PM](#)

WAYNE DON, Colonel, chief of staff, Alaska Army National Guard, and committee member, National Native American Veterans Memorial, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, informed the committee he is a 25-year member of the U.S. Army and U.S. National Guard and provided a short history of his family's military service. He said he strongly supports the memorial because it represents a deliberate effort to recognize Native Americans who have contributed to military service from the time of the Revolutionary War to the present. Colonel Don explained the U.S. Congress authorized the National Museum of the American Indian to create a veterans memorial to inform Americans of the courageous history of Native Americans' service in the armed forces; in response, the museum established an advisory committee composed of Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawai'ian veterans and their families. Colonel Don provided a short history - beginning in 2015 - of the advisory committee's tasks gathering information and choosing a design for the memorial that would appropriately represent all Native Americans' military service over many years. In 2018, the winning design proposal was the "Warriors' Circle of Honor" by Cheyenne and Arapaho artist and Vietnam War veteran, Harvey Pratt.

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COLONEL DON further explained, although Congress authorized the project, the use of federal funds was prohibited, thus the museum embarked on a fundraising campaign: the total project cost is estimated at \$15 million; the target goal for 2019 is to

raise \$8 million, of which \$7.8 million has been raised; to break ground in September 2019, additional funds are needed. In regard to [Representative Rauscher's] question about other support for the memorial, he said across the country Native American Tribes have pledged support, as well as large private industry donors including Wells Fargo, Bank of America and others. In Alaska, regional and village corporations such as Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Calista Corporation, Doyon Limited, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Sealaska Corporation, Chugach Alaska Corporation, Cook Inlet Region Inc., and Afognak Native Corporation have contributed financial support, and other support is proposed. Further, Alaska Airlines has pledged an honor flight in 2020 to transport Alaska veterans to the unveiling ceremony. In closing, he urged for continued support for HR 6.

CHAIR LEDOUX expressed support for the memorial.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK asked if the monument design incorporates an eternal flame.

COLONEL DON stated there will be lighting but a continuous flame is not planned at this time. He stressed veterans desire a place at the memorial site for reflection and a place to leave remembrances.

[1:17:24 PM](#)

CHAIR LEDOUX, after ascertaining no one further wished to testify, closed public testimony on HR 6.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON asked if there is a Senate companion resolution.

REPRESENTATIVE LINCOLN said no.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMPSON urged members to move HR 6 out of committee.

[1:18:43 PM](#)

CHAIR LEDOUX announced amendments to HR 6 are due 4/29/19; the resolution is scheduled for final hearing on 4/30/19.

[HR 6 was held over.]

[1:18:55 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at [1:18] p.m.