

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 21, 2019

2:10 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Louise Stutes, Co-Chair  
Representative Adam Wool, Co-Chair  
Representative Matt Claman  
Representative Harriet Drummond  
Representative Andi Story  
Representative Dave Talerico  
Representative Sara Rasmussen

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 34

"An Act naming the Scott Johnson Memorial Bridge."

- MOVED HB 34 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 88

"An Act naming the Trooper Gabe Rich Memorial Bridge."

- MOVED HB 88 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 34

SHORT TITLE: NAMING SCOTT JOHNSON MEMORIAL BRIDGE

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TALERICO

02/20/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/20/19	(H)	STA, TRA
02/28/19	(H)	STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/28/19	(H)	Heard & Held
02/28/19	(H)	MINUTE(STA)
03/07/19	(H)	STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/07/19	(H)	Moved HB 34 Out of Committee
03/07/19	(H)	MINUTE(STA)
03/08/19	(H)	STA RPT 6DP

03/08/19 (H) DP: VANCE, LEDOUX, SHAW, STORY, KREISS-  
TOMKINS, FIELDS  
03/21/19 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 88

SHORT TITLE: NAMING TROOPER GABE RICH MEMORIAL BRIDGE  
SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TALERICO

03/08/19 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/08/19 (H) TRA  
03/21/19 (H) TRA AT 1:30 PM BARNES 124

#### **WITNESS REGISTER**

CAPTAIN RONALD WALL, Commander  
Detachment D  
Alaska State Troopers  
Department of Public Safety (DPS)  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 88.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[2:10:10 PM](#)

**CO-CHAIR ADAM WOOL** called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Representatives Rasmussen, Talerico, Story, Wool, and Stutes were present at the call to order. Representative Drummond and Claman arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **HB 34-NAMING SCOTT JOHNSON MEMORIAL BRIDGE**

[2:10:46 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 34, "An Act naming the Scott Johnson Memorial Bridge."

[2:11:14 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 2:11 p.m. to 2:12 p.m.

[2:12:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO, as prime sponsor, presented HB 34. He paraphrased the sponsor statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The legislation amends Alaska Statute 35.40 by naming bridge number 506 over the Tok River at mile 1309 of the Alaska Highway to be named the Scott Johnson Memorial Bridge.

Scott was a person who led from the front. He set very high standards for himself. After graduating his recruit class as valedictorian, he was assigned to Fairbanks patrol. Scott became involved with the Special Emergency Response Team (S.E.R.T.) for 19 years and held positions of perimeter team leader, entry team leader and acting team leader. He was a K-9 handler, instructor and coordinator. In addition, Scott trained at least 33 dual purpose and/or drug detection canine teams throughout Alaska. He also worked in the Alaska Bureau of Investigation and at the age of 36 was promoted to sergeant. Scott oversaw patrol shift and later transferred to the Alaska Bureau of Alcohol and Drug Enforcement. Scott earned at least 43 letters of commendation, including two commendations for honorable service during his career.

Scott Johnson was an Alaska State Trooper killed in the line of duty on May 1, 2014. He had served the State of Alaska 23 years.

Let this be a lasting memorial to a man who gave his life in the line of duty to the citizens of the State of Alaska.

[2:14:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said she had heard compelling testimony as a member of the House State Affairs Standing Committee, when HB 34 was heard by that committee. She emphasized her support of HB 34.

CO-CHAIR WOOL shared that he also heard the moving testimony from many people when HB 34 was heard by the House State Affairs Standing Committee, and he stated his full support of the proposed legislation.

[2:14:45 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CLAMAN inquired as to the size and style of the bridge.

[2:14:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO shared that it is on the east side of Tok, crosses the Tanana River, and is newly constructed, spanning approximately 200 feet. He said there would be rest areas on each end of the bridge.

[2:15:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RASMUSSEN related that both her father-in-law and brother-in-law are first responders, and she emphasized the respect she has for what they do. She said she thinks the recognition given under HB 34 is well-deserved, and she said she would support the bill.

[2:16:19 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR STUTES echoed the statements made by her fellow legislators and shared that she has the utmost respect for first responders. She emphasized she is in full support of HB 34.

[2:16:54 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL opened public testimony on HB 34. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[2:17:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DRUMMOND opined that HB 34 is a wonderful idea and fitting memorial to [the late Trooper Johnson]. She said she had driven across the bridge, as would anyone driving back from Juneau to other parts of the state, and she speculated that it is substantially longer than 200 feet. She said she would be pleased to drive past the bridge once it has been named.

[2:18:23 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR STUTES moved to report HB 34 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HB 34 was reported out of the House Transportation Standing Committee.

[2:18:33 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 2:18 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.

**HB 88-NAMING TROOPER GABE RICH MEMORIAL BRIDGE**

[2:20:13 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 88, "An Act naming the Trooper Gabe Rich Memorial Bridge."

[2:20:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO, as prime sponsor, presented HB 88. He paraphrased the sponsor statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The legislation amends Alaska Statute 35.40 by naming bridge number 392 over the Chatanika River at mile 38.8 of the Steese Highway to be named the Trooper Gabe Rich Memorial Bridge.

On May 1, 2014, Gabriel "Gabe" Lenox Rich, gave his life while answering the call of duty in Tanana. Gabe attended Lathrop High School, graduating in 2006. He attended Montana State University and the University of Alaska Anchorage before pursuing his lifelong dream of entering the ranks of law enforcement. After graduating from the Fairbanks Police Academy in 2007, he went to work for the North Pole Police department until being accepted by the Alaska State Troopers in 2011. Of all of his achievements, the greatest of these soon followed when he became a father.

Integrity was the foundation of his career as a trooper, and love was his foundation at home. As a father and spouse, you couldn't have asked for a more dedicated and compassionate man. In his career, Gabe was dependable, kind and had an innate ability to bring comfort in difficult situations. He loved his work and those he worked with.

Gabe Rich was an Alaska State Trooper killed in the line of duty on May 1, 2014. He had served the State of Alaska over 7 years.

Let this be a lasting memorial to a man who gave his life in the line of duty to the citizens of the State of Alaska.

[2:22:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY shared her appreciation for the showing of public support for the honor that would be bestowed through HB 88.

[2:22:52 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL expressed his gratitude to have the proposed legislation before the House Transportation Standing Committee. He characterized it as both sad and good.

[2:23:12 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL opened public testimony on HB 88.

[2:23:34 PM](#)

CAPTAIN RONALD WALL, Commander, Detachment D, Alaska State Troopers, Department of Public Safety (DPS), stated that the late Trooper Rich had had a great impact on the organization. He said Trooper Rich worked on the control unit and rural unit, and he had planned to transfer to Southeast, Alaska. Captain Wall called the quality of work done by Trooper Rich outstanding, and he said he brought joy and happiness into every contact. He characterized Trooper Rich as someone who had been "a joy to be around" and "a terrific employee." Captain Wall stated that the proposed bridge would honor him.

[2:25:18 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL noted that the widows of the slain troopers had worked with the legislature in the past year to increase death benefits for the families of slain troopers.

[2:25:43 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL closed public testimony on HB 88.

[2:25:50 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR STUTES moved to report HB 88 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal

note. There being no objection, HB 88 was reported out of the House Transportation Standing Committee.

2:27:35 PM

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:28 p.m.