

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

May 11, 2019

10:29 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Chair
Senator Chris Birch, Vice Chair
Senator Mia Costello
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19 (TRB)
Urging the United States Congress to fully fund the United States Census Bureau for the 2020 Census; urging the governor to prioritize an accurate count for the 2020 Census; and urging local governments to establish local complete count commissions.

- MOVED CSHJR 19 (TRB) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 19

SHORT TITLE: SUPPORT 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS

SPONSOR(S): TRIBAL AFFAIRS

04/24/19	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/24/19	(H)	TRB, CRA
04/25/19	(H)	TRB AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
04/25/19	(H)	Moved CSHJR 19 (TRB) Out of Committee
04/25/19	(H)	MINUTE (TRB)
04/26/19	(H)	TRB RPT CS (TRB) 6DP
04/26/19	(H)	DP: VANCE, ORTIZ, LINCOLN, KOPP, TALERICO, ZULKOSKY
05/07/19	(H)	CRA RPT CS (TRB) 5DP 2NR
05/07/19	(H)	DP: CLAMAN, KREISS-TOMKINS, THOMPSON, DRUMMOND, HANNAN
05/07/19	(H)	NR: JACKSON, REVAK

05/07/19 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
05/07/19 (H) Moved CSHJR 19 (TRB) Out of Committee
05/07/19 (H) MINUTE (CRA)
05/09/19 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
05/09/19 (H) VERSION: CSHJR 19 (TRB)
05/10/19 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/10/19 (S) CRA
05/11/19 (S) CRA AT 10:30 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE TIFFANY ZULKOSKY
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HJR 19.

DR. MARK WALSH, Vice President of Public Policy
Foraker Group;
Staff to the Alaska Census Working Group
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered a question related to the 2020
Census during the hearing on HJR 19.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:29:46 AM](#)

CHAIR CLICK BISHOP called the Senate Community and Regional
Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 10:29 a.m.
Present at the call to order were Senators Hoffman, Costello,
Gray-Jackson, Birch, and Chair Bishop.

HJR 19-SUPPORT 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS

[10:30:23 AM](#)

CHAIR BISHOP announced the consideration of House Joint
Resolution 19 (HJR 19).

[CSHJR 19 (TRB) was before the committee.]

He noted that on February 26, 2019 the committee had an in-depth
overview of the 2020 Decennial Census.

[10:31:00 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TIFFANY ZULKOSKY, Alaska State Legislature,
Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of HJR 19, explained that the resolution

was sponsored by the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs to urge Congress to fully fund the U.S. Census Bureau for the 2020 Census, encourage the governor to prioritize an accurate count through an active complete-count commission, and urge local governments to prepare for and engage in the 2020 Census through establishment of local complete-count commissions.

She explained that as required in Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution, the Census aims to count every resident in the country at the location where they live as a basis for sharing resources and determining political representation.

She detailed that the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs had a hearing on April 23, 2019 to talk about the importance of the 2020 Decennial Census and what the Census means to Alaska. Depending on federally established formulas tied to Census data, Alaska receives \$3.2 billion in federal funding each year across 70 programs. In a time of state and local budget constraints, maintaining the amount of federal investment is crucial to Alaska's economy, communities, and programs.

She detailed that organizations across public, private, and nonprofit sectors rely on funding allocations determined by the Census information illustrating the importance of accurate count data. Every uncounted Alaskan results in an annual loss of approximately \$3,000 in federal funding intended for the state over a 10-year period. The loss of federal funding for an uncounted Alaskan results in reduced essential services like health, housing, road repairs, and education. Undercounting compounds harm to local and state budget gaps, and improper enforcement of voting and civil rights laws. Census data must be accurate and everything done to ensure that Alaskans are ready to be counted.

She explained that in partnership with the Alaska Census Working Group, a public-private partnership of local organizations, the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs sponsored HJR 19 to highlight the importance of the Decennial Census. HJR 19 urges the federal delegation to fully fund the 2020 Census, encourages the state to prioritize outreach, and invites local governments to engage in the census count. With significant geographic language and connectivity barriers, Alaska is one of the most difficult states in the country to count. The difficulty of counting Alaskans is even greater in the 2020 Census with the U.S. Census Bureau decision to eliminate both the notification mailing to post office boxes and translation support materials

into Alaska Native languages and the transition to mostly online response.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY said with the U.S. Census Bureau is launching its count in her home district in Toksook Bay on January 21, 2020, and it is vital that Alaska's leadership at all levels of government and organizations across the state prioritize an accurate count before starting conversations about how the data will be used. Because the 2020 Decennial Census is so important to every community, citizen, and organization in Alaska, the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs sponsored the introduction of HJR 19 and unanimously moved it out of committee. The resolution also had strong bi-partisan support in passage on the House floor.

10:35:20 AM

SENATOR BIRCH asked if there has been thought about having a lottery to see who gets to be the first person counted in the United States in Toksook Bay.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY replied that she was not sure how the decision will be made. She said her intent is to be in Toksook Bay when the 2020 Census count starts.

SENATOR BIRCH noted that Alaska has a large military population where many retain their residency while living elsewhere due to the permanent fund program. He asked how a person is counted when they are a resident in one state but live elsewhere.

REPRESENTATIVE ZULKOSKY answered that she believes that Alaskans receive their census information at their place of residence and she did not know if their mail is forwarded.

CHAIR BISHOP asked Dr. Walsh if he had any information to add.

10:37:45 AM

DR. MARK WALSH, Vice President of Public Policy, Foraker Group, and Staff to the Alaska Census Working Group, Fairbanks, Alaska, replied that the experts have told him that Alaska is still considered an overseas posting so census material is sent to the person's home post, meaning where they came from. The likelihood is many military personnel will be counted in their home state, not Alaska.

CHAIR BISHOP opined that he would like to see Senator Hoffman in Toksook Bay to represent his home district as well when the 2020 Census starts. He noted that when he was commissioner of the

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, he attended the start of the 2010 Census in Noorvik. He noted that Noorvik made the start of the 2010 Census into an event that was rolled out in a big way.

10:39:30 AM

CHAIR BISHOP closed public testimony on HJR 19.

10:39:43 AM

SENATOR BIRCH moved to report CSHJR 19(TRB), work order 31-LS0738\S, from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note.

CHAIR BISHOP found no objection and CSHJR 19(TRB) moved from the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee.

10:40:20 AM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Bishop adjourned the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 10:40 a.m.