

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 2, 2019

1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Shelley Hughes, Chair  
Senator Mike Shower, Vice Chair  
Senator David Wilson  
Senator Jesse Kiehl

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Peter Micciche

**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  
 03/21/19 (H) Moved HB 34 Out of Committee  
 03/21/19 (H) MINUTE(TRA)  
 03/22/19 (H) TRA RPT 7DP  
 03/22/19 (H) DP: STORY, RASMUSSEN, DRUMMOND, CLAMAN,  
 TALERICO, WOOL, STUTES  
 03/27/19 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)  
 03/27/19 (H) VERSION: HB 34  
 03/29/19 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
 03/29/19 (S) TRA  
 04/02/19 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

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  
 03/21/19 (H) Moved HB 88 Out of Committee  
 03/21/19 (H) MINUTE(TRA)  
 03/22/19 (H) TRA RPT 7DP  
 03/22/19 (H) DP: STORY, RASMUSSEN, DRUMMOND, CLAMAN,  
 TALERICO, WOOL, STUTES  
 03/27/19 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)  
 03/27/19 (H) VERSION: HB 88  
 03/29/19 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
 03/29/19 (S) TRA  
 04/02/19 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO

Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Speaking as sponsor, introduced HB 34 and HB 88.

JULIE MORRIS, Staff

Representative Talerico  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided supporting information about HB 34.

DAVE STANCLIFF, representing self

Tok, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 34.

THOMAS STUDLER, Staff  
Representative Dave Talerico  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided supporting information about HB 88.

RODIMUS MERCADO, Intern  
Senator John Coghill  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Stated support for HB 34 and HB 88.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

1:30:00 PM

**CHAIR SHELLEY HUGHES** called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kiehl and Chair Hughes. Senator Shower arrived soon thereafter.

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

1:30:49 PM

**CHAIR HUGHES** announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 34 "An Act naming the Scott Johnson Memorial Bridge."

She reminded the members that they heard the companion bill, SB 4, sponsored by Senator Coghill.

1:31:16 PM

**REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO**, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, sponsor of HB 34, introduced the bill speaking to the following sponsor statement:

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

[1:32:54 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER joined the committee.

REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO highlighted that the packets contain signature pages from community members who support this bill.

CHAIR HUGHES asked if Trooper Johnson's widow was aware of the petitions expressing community support. She noted that when the committee heard the companion bill, Mrs. Johnson expressed reservations about the effort unless there was broad community support.

[1:34:20 PM](#)

JULIE MORRIS, Staff, Representative Talerico, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, clarified that Mrs. Johnson is aware of the petitions and the support the community has exhibited. She credited Dave Stancliff and his wife for distributing the petitions and gathering signatures.

[1:34:59 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGHES opened public testimony on HB 34.

[1:35:24 PM](#)

DAVE STANCLIFF, representing self, Tok, testified in support of HB 34. He said you can never tell how people will react to a petition, but when this one was circulated around Tok nearly one-tenth of the population quickly signed. He noted how

emotional this has been for Scott's parents and said he wanted everyone to know how supportive the community is and "how wonderful it will be when we finally dedicate that bridge to a great Alaskan."

CHAIR HUGHES thanked him for gathering the signatures as a way to honor Scott Johnson's widow.

[1:37:35 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGHES found no further comments and closed public testimony. Finding no discussion, she asked the will of the committee.

[1:37:54 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER moved to report HB 34, work order 31-LS0313\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note(s).

CHAIR HUGHES announced that without objection, HB 34 moved from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

[1:38:12 PM](#)

At ease

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

[1:39:40 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGHES reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 88 "An Act naming the Trooper Gabe Rich Memorial Bridge."

[1:39:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, sponsor of HB 88, introduced the bill paraphrasing the following sponsor statement:

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.

He highlighted that his peers spoke very highly of Trooper Rich, which speaks volumes about his character.

CHAIR HUGHES ask Mr. Studler if he had anything to add.

[1:42:14 PM](#)

THOMAS STUDLER, Staff, Representative Dave Talerico, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, said he fully supports this effort and he knows that the family solicited signatures on a petition to support the renaming. In a matter of days they received more than 125 signatures.

CHAIR HUGHES related that the committee spoke extensively about both Scott Johnson and Gabe Rich when they heard the companion bills.

[1:43:16 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGHES opened public testimony on HB 88.

[1:43:34 PM](#)

RODIMUS MERCADO, Intern, Senator John Coghill, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, said he worked on the companion bills and it was an honor to hear the stories about both Trooper Gabe Rich and Trooper Scott Johnson. He will think of them every May 1st

and he hopes everyone who sees the names on these bridges will have the same experience.

CHAIR HUGHES asked if there has been any conversation about having the bill signing on the fifth anniversary.

MR. MERCADO said he hadn't heard anything about the signing, and he might not be there when it happens, but he will be there in spirit.

CHAIR HUGHES commented that regardless of when the bill is signed, she's sure that May 1 will be a day of remembrance.

[1:46:11 PM](#)

CHAIR HUGHES closed public testimony on HB 88. Finding no further discussion, she asked the will of the committee.

[1:46:21 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER moved to report HB 88, work order 31-LS0658\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note(s).

CHAIR HUGHES stated that without objection, HB 88 moved from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

SENATOR WILSON thanked Representative Talerico and Senator Coghill for their due diligence.

[1:47:30 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Hughes adjourned the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting at 1:47 pm.