

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

March 2, 2023

1:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Stanley Wright, Chair
Representative Laddie Shaw
Representative Ben Carpenter
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Cliff Groh
Representative Andrew Gray

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative George Rauscher

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4

Honoring the Alaska-Korea relationship; and celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea, the 70th anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement, and the 120th anniversary of the first Korean immigration to the United States.

- MOVED HJR 4 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 76

"An Act relating to pay for the Alaska State Defense Force; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 76 (MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HJR 4

SHORT TITLE: HONORING THE ALASKA-KOREA RELATIONSHIP

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) MINA

02/08/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/08/23	(H)	MLV, STA
02/28/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/28/23	(H)	Heard & Held
02/28/23	(H)	MINUTE (MLV)
03/02/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 76

SHORT TITLE: PAY FOR AK DEFENSE FORCE

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

02/15/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/15/23	(H)	MLV
02/28/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/28/23	(H)	Heard & Held
02/28/23	(H)	MINUTE(MLV)
03/01/23	(H)	FIN REFERRAL ADDED AFTER MLV
03/01/23	(H)	BILL REPRINTED
03/02/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

FORREST WOLFE, Staff
Representative Stanley Wright
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented Amendment 1 to HJR 4 on behalf of Representative Wright, prime sponsor.

CRAIG CHRISTENSEN, Deputy Commissioner
Office of the Commissioner
Alaska Department Military and Veterans' Affairs
Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 76.

BOB ERNISSE, Director
Division of Administrative Services
Alaska Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs
Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing HB 76.

ACTION NARRATIVE

1:01:04 PM

CHAIR STANLEY WRIGHT called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. Representatives Shaw, Groh, Gray, and Wright were present at the call to order. Representatives Carpenter and Saddler joined the meeting in progress.

HJR 4-HONORING THE ALASKA-KOREA RELATIONSHIP

[1:01:45 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4, Honoring the Alaska-Korea relationship; and celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Mutual Defense Treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea, the 70th anniversary of the Korean Armistice Agreement, and the 120th anniversary of the first Korean immigration to the United States.

[1:02:32 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW moved to report HJR 4 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HJR 4 was reported out of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[1:02:47 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:02 p.m. to 1:05 p.m.

HB 76-PAY FOR AK DEFENSE FORCE

[1:05:05 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 76, "An Act relating to pay for the Alaska State Defense Force; and providing for an effective date."

CHAIR WRIGHT indicated that there would need to be an update to the title of the bill by adding "allowances", as recommended by a drafter from Legislative Legal Services. He said that a copy of the amendment was distributed to committee members.

[1:06:12 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT moved to adopt Amendment 1, labeled 33-GH1579\A.1, Radford, 2/28/23, which read:

Page 1, line 1, following "pay":
Insert "and allowances"

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW objected for the purpose of discussion.

[1:06:27 PM](#)

FORREST WOLFE, Staff, Representative Stanley Wright, Alaska State Legislature, introduced Amendment 1 to HB 76 on behalf of Representative Wright, prime sponsor. He stated that since the bill deals with the substantive issues of pay and allowances, and there are statutory guidance and definitions for such terms, Legislative Legal Services advised that the amendment is needed in order for the title of the bill to reflect the legislation's substance.

[1:07:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked what the definition of "allowances" is in this context.

[1:07:35 PM](#)

MR. WOLFE offered his understanding that the changes relate to housing stipends, or per diem.

[1:07:53 PM](#)

CRAIG CHRISTENSEN, Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner, Alaska Department Military and Veterans' Affairs, answered that active-duty members have a base pay scale. In addition to active-duty base pay, he said, there are "allowances" such as subsistence and basic housing. He said that typically active-duty military see a lump sum in their paychecks.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER questioned if the language in the amendment was for housing in addition to pay, and whether it would affect the fiscal note.

MR. CHRISTENSEN responded that Amendment 1 would not change the fiscal note. He said the military pay scale is broken down to basic allowance for subsistence and basic allowance for pay. He explained that the military continues to use a specific pay scale by statute and is also using that pay scale for housing costs and food costs.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER focused attention on page 1, lines 8 and 9, of HB 76. He paraphrased that the bill orders that organized militia and Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF) would be paid based on the same conditions as state officials and employees. He asked if ASDF pay allowances would be indexed to state workers or active-duty military.

MR. CHRISTENSEN responded by pointing members to the section of HB 76 above the lines in question on page 1 that address pay, whereas the section below it pertains to allowances. He said that the sentence to be changed addresses both pay and allowances. He said that when HB 76 was drafted, the bill should have been only addressing "allowances" in the paragraph and addressing "pay" in the previous paragraph.

[1:11:32 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:11 p.m. to 1:13 p.m.

[1:13:55 PM](#)

BOB ERNISSE, Director, Division of Administrative Services, Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs, explained that the allowance related statutes refer to active-duty members receiving them; an example is per diem. In response to a follow-up question, he confirmed that the member would receive the same allowances as a state employee.

[1:14:30 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 1:14 p.m.

[1:15:11 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Shaw, Groh, Gray, Saddler, and Wright voted in favor of Amendment 1. Therefore, Amendment 1 was adopted by a vote of 5-0.

[1:16:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER said he supports the bill, as amended, and ASDF; he offered his concern regarding ASDF and the potential for that department to evolve into the National Guard. He said that his intent was to not start the process of providing more pay and benefits that would ordinarily go to the National Guard. He opined that ASDF is a very good organization, has a good mission, and fills an important niche.

[1:17:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW moved to report HB 76, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 76(MLV) was

reported out of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[1:17:31 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 1:17 p.m.

[1:17:46 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT reiterated that CSHB 76 (MLV) was reported out of the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[1:18:08 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:18 p.m. to 1:19 p.m.

[1:19:48 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT advised members of the next meetings of the committee.

[1:20:14 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military & Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.