

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

May 2, 2023

12:36 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative George Rauscher
Representative Dan Saddler

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 158

"An Act relating to the Joint Armed Services Committee; relating to judge advocates; relating to military facility zones; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 158

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY; UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

SPONSOR(S): MILITARY & VETERANS' AFFAIRS

04/12/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/12/23	(H)	MLV
04/27/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
04/27/23	(H)	<Bill Hearing Canceled>
05/02/23	(H)	MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

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

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 158, on behalf of Representative Wright, prime sponsor.

TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison
U.S. Department of Defense
Seattle, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered invited testimony during the hearing on HB 158.

CHRISTOPHER CASTLE, Lieutenant Commander
Clear Space Force Station
Anderson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered invited testimony during the hearing on HB 158.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:05:16 PM](#)

CHAIR STANLEY WRIGHT called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 12:36 p.m. Representatives Shaw, Carpenter, Groh, Gray, and Wright were present at the call to order.

HB 158-MILITARY; UNITED STATES SPACE FORCE

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CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 158, "An Act relating to the Joint Armed Services Committee; relating to judge advocates; relating to military facility zones; and providing for an effective date."

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FORREST WOLFE, Staff, Representative Stanley Wright, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 158, on behalf of Representative Wright, prime sponsor. He said HB 158 seeks to add the U.S. Space Force (USSF) to places in Alaska Statute where other military branches are listed. This bill was brought forward as a suggestion from the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). He presented the sectional analysis [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1: Adds the United States Space Force to AS 24.20.650(b) which establishes the membership makeup of the Joint Armed Services Committee.

Section 2: Adds the United States Space Force to AS 26.05.385(d) which outlines who may serve as a judge advocate under the code of military justice.

Section 3: Adds the United States Space Force to AS 26.30.900(3) under the definitions section of Chapter 30 Military Facility Zones.

Section 4: The effective date is immediate.

CHAIR WRIGHT introduced invited testifier, Tammie Perreault.

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TAMMIE PERREAULT, Northwest Regional Liaison, U.S. Department of Defense, said her office supports policies that positively impact military families. She expressed the department's support of HB 158, and its hopes that Alaska becomes one of the first states to adopt legislation on the issue. She referenced Title 10, which includes the USSF as a part of the military, and she affirmed that changing state law to mirror this federal code would ensure that members and veterans of the military will be treated equally across all branches. She emphasized the importance of the USSF and described Alaska's role in national security as "on the cutting edge." Recognizing the USSF in Alaska Statutes would allow better support of state regiments.

CHAIR WRIGHT invited questions from committee members.

CHAIR WRIGHT asked whether there is a current or future need for a USSF national guard.

MS. PERREAULT maintained that the answer is part of an ongoing conversation and deferred the question to the National Guard or Alaska National Guard, if present.

CHAIR WRIGHT thanked Ms. Perreault and introduced the next invited testifier, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Castle.

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CHRISTOPHER CASTLE, Lieutenant Commander, Clear Space Force Station, expressed his passion for space and military operations therein, including operations currently going on in Alaska. He provided a brief summary of the history of the USSF as the newest branch of the U.S military. It was established within the U.S. Air Force and has two main functions: to maintain

freedom of operation for the U.S. in, from, and to space; and to provide prompt and sustained space operations. He acknowledged a common question, "Why was the creation of this new branch necessary?" Space touches most aspects of Americans' civil way of life, he answered. He used the importance of global positioning system (GPS) timing and space satellites as examples. As for military, he reported that space provides an asymmetric advantage for troops and detailed some of the benefits of space support in military operations. Space was once seen as a benign environment where objects we put into orbit would not be touched, however, he posited that this is no longer the case. He spoke about the potential of other countries developing capabilities that would the degrade the advantages [the United States] currently has in space. Alaska comes into play due to its excellent strategic location, he explained, which makes it a wonderful place for space infrastructure. He referenced the Clear Space Force station in the state, which has already provided the military with several functions, including missile warning and defense and space domain awareness. New radar systems for missile detection have been put into place here, he reported, which contribute to the billions of dollars of equipment and national security missions already being carried out by the USSF in Alaska, and he indicated that there was huge potential for further growth in equipment, units, and missions within the state. He reiterated his support for HB 158.

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CHAIR WRIGHT announced that HB 158 was held over.

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ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 1:17 p.m.