

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

April 16, 2024

1:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 154

"An Act relating to bidder preferences in state procurement."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 373

"An Act relating to the organized and unorganized militia; and relating to deploying the militia of the state into active service in a combat zone."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 154

SHORT TITLE: BIDDER PREF MILITARY CAREER SKILLS PROG

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) WIELECHOWSKI

05/17/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/23	(S)	L&C
03/04/24	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/04/24	(S)	Heard & Held
03/04/24	(S)	MINUTE(L&C)
03/29/24	(S)	L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/29/24	(S)	DP: BJROKMAN, DUNBAR
03/29/24	(S)	NR: MERRICK

03/29/24 (S) FN1: ZERO (ADM)
 04/02/24 (S) RULES TO CALENDAR
 04/02/24 (S) READ THE SECOND TIME
 04/02/24 (S) ADVANCED TO THIRD READING 4/3 CAL
 04/03/24 (S) PASSED Y19 N- E1
 04/03/24 (S) COSPONSOR(S): KAWASKI, TOBIN, GRAY-
 JACKSON, CLAMAN, MYERS
 04/03/24 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 04/03/24 (S) VERSION: SB 154
 04/05/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/05/24 (H) H (MLV)
 04/09/24 (H) MILITARY & VETERANS' AFFAIRS AT 1:00 PM
 GRUENBERG 120
 04/09/24 (H) -- Invited & Public Testimony --
 04/09/24 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/16/24 (H) MILITARY & VETERANS' AFFAIRS AT 1:00 PM
 GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 373

SHORT TITLE: SERVICES OF ARMED FORCES OF THE STATE

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) EASTMAN

02/20/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/20/24 (H) (H) MLV, STA
 02/20/24 (H) (H) REFERRED TO MILITARY & VETERANS
 AFFAIRS
 04/16/24 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

KALEB CALLAHAN, Staff
 Senator Bill Wielechowski
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SB 154 on behalf of Senator Wielechowski, prime sponsor.

ANGELA LAFLAMME, Legislative Liaison
 Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
 Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson
 Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 154.

KYLE KAISER, President and Founder
 Viper Transitions
 Eagle River, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 154.

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As the prime sponsor, answered questions on SB 154.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID EASTMAN
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HB 373.

DARIN GAUB, Lieutenant Colonel, Co-Founder
Restore Liberty
Helena, Montana

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony in support of HB 373.

MICHAEL MAHARREY, National Communications Director
Tenth Amendment Center
Tarpon Springs, Florida

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony in support of HB 373.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:02:33 PM](#)

CHAIR STANLEY WRIGHT called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Representatives Gray, Groh, Rauscher, and Wright were present at the call to order. Representatives Shaw, Saddler, and Carpenter arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 154-BIDDER PREF MILITARY CAREER SKILLS PROG

[1:03:05 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the first order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 154, "An Act relating to bidder preferences in state procurement."

[1:03:54 PM](#)

KALEB CALLAHAN, Staff, Senator Bill Wielechowski, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Senator Wielechowski, prime sponsor, paraphrased the sponsor statement for SB 154 [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

SB 154 establishes a bidder preference of state contracts for veterans and servicemembers.

Alaska's population of veterans is 68,719 (2017, DoVA) as well as 21,407 (2019, Ak Labor Statistics) active-duty personnel, it is estimated that nearly 1/3 of Alaskans are either veterans themselves or have immediate family that are veterans. SB 154 looks to highlight career opportunities for our former service members looking for a new way to serve their community as civilians, as well as add adept employees to the state's workforce.

SB 154 enacts a 2 percent bidder preference not to exceed \$5,000 for procurement contracts. These programs aim to offer civilian work experience through industry training, pre-apprenticeships, registered apprenticeships, or internships for their time while exiting their active service contract.

Eligible entities are those that have employed at least one person enrolled in or recently graduated from, the US Dept. of Defense, SkillBridge, or Army Career Services for servicemembers or spouses.

SB 154 is a win-win for Alaskan businesses and for Alaska's veterans looking to start their new chapter in the civilian workforce.

[1:06:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER pointed to language on page 1, line 11 of the proposed legislation and questioned how the 2 percent preference would be calculated.

MR. CALLAHAN answered that this represents a 2 percent bidder preference. He gave the example of a cap of \$5,000, with a \$1 million contract. He explained that the state would not take \$20,000 from the bid, but it would give the cap of \$5,000. In response to a follow-up question, he stated that the \$5,000 would be taken off the price of the contract. In response to a

follow-up question, he deferred the question to the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA).

[1:09:44 PM](#)

ANGELA LAFLAMME, Legislative Liaison, Department of Military and Veteran Affairs, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, explained the procurement process when preferences are applied. When a bidder claims [veteran] preference, she said, the 2 percent would be taken off the total bid. The bidder with the lower amount after the preference is applied would get the contract, but the contract award would not be reduced. In response to a follow-up question, she confirmed that the preference would not change the amount of the bid offered; therefore, in the example, the \$1 million would still be the amount of the contract, but the contract would be awarded based on the reduced amount of the bid.

[1:11:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY pointed out that, based on [veteran] preference, the state could be paying more than other bidders who do not have the preference.

MS. LAFLAMME responded in agreement. She stated that the preference would not change the award amount, just the ranking of offers.

[1:12:45 PM](#)

MS. LAFLAMME, in response to a question from Representative Saddler, answered that the SkillBridge Program is a U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) voluntary program that businesses can apply for, and this program allows DoD to pay a service member's salary when the member transitions from military service to civilian status. In response to a follow-up question concerning the current percentage of participants, she deferred the question to Kyle Kaiser.

[1:14:09 PM](#)

KYLE KAISER, President and Founder, Viper Transitions, explained that giving an exact percentage would be difficult, as every service member goes through the [Transition Assistance Program], but participation in the program depends on command approval. He stated that for employment opportunities, this would require a process that starts a year out from separation. The member

would then be allowed to attend training to obtain employment skills six months out from separation. He stated that it also depends on the programs and employment opportunities that are available.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER expressed the understanding that Section 2 of SB 154 would allow the 2 percent bidder preference to go to those who are employed by a qualifying entity. To qualify the entity would be an organization that employs someone who has participated in the program. He asked if all service members would qualify for the preference.

MR. KAISER answered that everyone in the military would qualify under the program. He explained that the difference between the SkillBridge Program and the Army Career Skills Program (CSP), is that CSP is the U.S. Army's specific version, and it requires more qualifications. In response to a follow-up question, he stated that every service member leaving service who went through the approved transition program would qualify for the 2 percent bidder preference under CSP and the SkillBridge Program. He affirmed that every military member would qualify through one of the programs.

[1:17:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GROH expressed the understanding that U.S. Air Force members would qualify.

[1:18:11 PM](#)

MR. KAISER, in response to a question from Chair Wright, answered that the SkillBridge Program has been around a number of years, but it has not received very much attention or support.

[1:19:03 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER, concerning the bidder preference qualifications in Section 2, asked Senator Wielechowski whether the intention is to make a preference for veterans who are qualified Alaska bidders.

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI, Alaska State Legislature, answered that the preference applies to any bidder with an employee who has graduated from the DoD transition program within the past two years. He reiterated that this would track the employer.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER inquired whether there are any service members who would not meet these qualifications.

[1:20:48 PM](#)

MR. CALLAHAN expressed the understanding that there are no service members who would not meet the qualifications. He noted that if a business hires a person who has completed the SkillBridge Program, the business has partnered with DoD to offer internships.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER expressed support for service members to obtain employment training after service. He asked why the bill would not directly address companies that hire Alaska veterans in order to qualify for the 2 percent preference.

MR. CALLANHAN responded that a veteran preference already exists, and this is larger than the one offered under SB 154; therefore, the bill would strengthen this "pipeline." He said that the proposed legislation would target those transitioning out of service and becoming veterans. If the business retained the employee, then it would qualify for the already existing 5 percent bidder preference. He added that these preferences do not stack. In response to a follow-up question, he stated that this preference would apply to a business that employs a veteran.

[1:23:15 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT, in response to a question from Representative Gray, stated that a person becomes a veteran the day he/she joins the military.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER commented that he retired from the military in 2018 and did not participate in a career skills program; therefore, not every departing service member would be in a program. He expressed the understanding that the proposed legislation would be promoting only these programs.

[1:25:03 PM](#)

MR. KAISER stated that not every service member goes through such programs, and the goal of the bill would be to create a mechanism to support veteran workforce development and encourage Alaska employers to retain veterans who participated in the program.

[1:26:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked whether the 2 percent preference is already in the state's procurement statutes. He also asked whether the different preference percentages would stack.

MR. CALLAHAN expressed the understanding from Legislative Legal Services that the preference percentages would not stack.

[1:27:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER questioned the situation where a contractor is the only employee.

[1:28:15 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[1:28:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER reiterated his question.

MR. CALLAHAN expressed uncertainty and stated he would follow up with the answer.

[1:29:12 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT opened public testimony on SB 154. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:29:39 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT announced that SB 154 was held over.

[1:29:56 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:29 p.m. to 1:33 p.m.

HB 373-SERVICE OF ARMED FORCES OF THE STATE

[1:33:19 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 373, "An Act relating to the organized and unorganized militia; and relating to deploying the militia of the state into active service in a combat zone."

[1:33:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID EASTMAN, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, paraphrased the sponsor statement for HB 373 [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Bill 373, the Defend the Guard Act, is a necessary step to realign the State of Alaska with the U.S. Constitution. This legislation prevents overseas deployment of the Alaska National Guard into combat without a Congressional declaration of war as required under Article I, § 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

In an era of increasing federal overreach, the temptation to send Alaska National Guardsmen into combat in places like Syria, Gaza and Ukraine must be checked by the legal requirement that these forces be used as intended by the Constitution. The Defend the Guard Act will ensure that the men and women who join our state armed forces have confidence that they will only be ordered into overseas active-duty combat when needed to defend the nation and subsequent to constitutional authorization by Congress.

This requirement ensures fidelity with the United States Constitution while also preserving our state armed forces for their intended function. During peacetime, when the Congress does not declare war, the Alaska National Guard remains available to serve the State of Alaska and, if directed, deploy to any location within the United States. The Defend The Guard Act seeks to reinforce the constitutional relationship between the armed forces of the state and the federal government concerning the overseas deployment of members of the Alaska National Guard. Under House Bill 373, members of the Alaska National Guard may be deployed to active-duty combat in any possession of the United States without limitation. This includes each of the United States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Midway, Wake, Jarvis, Baker, Howland, Navassa, Kingman Reef, Johnston Atoll, Palmyra Atoll, and other U.S. possessions. The ability of the Alaska National Guard

to defend the United States in any of these places is in no way limited by House Bill 373.

Furthermore, passage of the Defend the Guard Act will directly contribute to ending the current nationwide recruitment crisis facing the National Guard. Those who wish to serve the nation by participating in combat operations overseas may pursue enlistment or commissioning in any active-duty service branch. Those who wish to serve our state in peacetime in ways other than active-duty overseas combat, may do so by joining the Alaska National Guard or the Alaska State Defense Force. While service in any portion of our state armed forces may involve combat during time of war, and may involve deployment outside the state for training, national emergency response, and other authorized purposes, use of our state armed forces for overseas combat should be limited to times of war.

The Defend the Guard Act also contributes to encouraging prudent foreign policy guided by the United States Constitution. By requiring a declaration of war for overseas combat deployments of the Alaska National Guard, House Bill 373 requires an additional layer of scrutiny for any overseas deployment likely to put members of the Alaska National Guard at risk of death or serious injury in combat. The deliberative process required by Article I, § 8 encourages policymakers to assess the opportunities as well as the costs and consequences of using Alaska National Guard units to engage in military actions overseas.

[1:35:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GROH noted that some members of the National Guard have been deployed into warzones, and some have been killed or wounded. He asked if the bill sponsor is aware of any lawsuits around guard deployment into warzones.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN referred to Perpich v. Department of Defense, 496 US 334, (1990), which related to overseas guard deployment for training purposes. He stated that the Supreme Court of the United States decided that overseas deployment for training was allowable. In response to a follow-up question concerning any other cases involving combat zones, he expressed uncertainty and deferred the question.

[1:39:03 PM](#)

DARIN GAUB, Lieutenant Colonel, Co-Founder, Restore Liberty, stated that he is unaware of any current cases.

REPRESENTATIVE GROH expressed the opinion that given the legal issues presented by the proposed legislation, a legal opinion from Legislative Legal Services should be sought.

[1:40:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether Alaska National Guard members can be deployed outside of the state for duty that is not in support of an armed conflict or for active service in a combat zone.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN responded in the affirmative. In response to a follow-up question asking for the percentage of Alaska guardsmen that have served under these conditions, he expressed uncertainty.

[1:41:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER questioned whether the proposed legislation would apply to "M-Day" soldiers, the organized militia, and the Active Guard Reserve in Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN replied that if an individual is serving in the Alaska militia, it would apply. He stated that this brings up the legal question of whether an individual is a member of the militia. He deferred to invited testifiers to further answer the question.

[1:42:54 PM](#)

MICHAEL MAHARREY, National Communications Director, Tenth Amendment Center, expressed the understanding that the proposed legislation would apply to any National Guard unit or member, so if the person is not part of the Army or Army Reserves, the bill would apply. He stressed that the purpose would be to stop unconstitutional deployments of the state militia into combat zones.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked whether soldiers within a guard unit would be activated by a presidential order or by a DoD order. He questioned whether the guard would be ordered by the

state militia or the federal government. Furthermore, he questioned whether state law would exceed federal authority.

MR. MAHARREY explained that the point of the proposed bill would be to authorize the governor to not allow the state's guard units to be sent into combat without constitutional justification. He expressed the opinion that for decades the federal government has taken the country into war without proper constitutional justification. He expressed the understanding that the proposed legislation would be an attempt to rein in federal executive overreach. He pointed out that in other states, state militias have been deployed to combat zones; therefore, when a natural disaster or other issue occurs, the units are not available.

[1:46:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER questioned the difference between the Alaska National Guard and the Alaska State Defense Force.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN explained that the state militia consists of the National Guard and the Alaska State Defense Force. He pointed out that every state has a guard force, but only some would have a state defense force. He continued that the guard has a state and federal component, while the defense force has only a state component. In response to a follow-up question on who oversees the [state defense] force, he stated that there is a commander.

[1:47:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY shared that during his experience in the National Guard, people wanted to deploy and were excited about combat deployment. He expressed the understanding that the guard has changed and that the guard deploys often. He suggested that if deployments were taken away, there would be a recruitment problem.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN expressed the understanding that there are people who want to deploy, while others do not. He continued that some are not joining because there is the expectation they will be deployed.

[1:49:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW asked whether the Naval Militia would be under the proposed bill.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN responded that the Naval Militia would fall under the bill; however, this would be considered a different part of the state militia.

[1:49:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked how many times U.S. Congress has declared war in the Twentieth Century.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN answered that it has declared war twice: World War I and World War II. In response to a follow-up question, he expressed the understanding that U.S. Congress has not declared any wars in the Twenty-First Century.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER suggested that the proposed legislation would have prevented the Alaska National Guard from being deployed during the Vietnam War, Korean War, U.S. invasion of Panama, and more.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN expressed agreement and opined that U.S. Congress would have had to make a war declaration in these accounts and then the guard would have been deployed.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER, concerning Section 3 of the proposed legislation, pointed out that there would be a prohibition for an individual to serve concurrently in the Alaska State Defense Force and in the Alaska National Guard. He questioned whether many individuals are concurrently serving.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN answered that this provision would alleviate confusion, as the intent is that these should remain two separate organizations. He discussed the confusion around the defense force and whether it is a part of the guard. He expressed the understanding that the proposed legislation would ensure that these two remain separate, as the defense force exists if the guard is deployed outside of state.

[1:52:40 PM](#)

MR. MAHARREY reiterated that Perpich v. Department of Defense is the court's decision that would limit a governor's discretion on deploying the National Guard for overseas training. He stressed that HB 373 is about reestablishing a constitutional balance in relation to war powers. He expressed the hope that if enough states pass this type of bill, the U.S. Congress would "do its job." He referred to the makers of the Constitution of the

United States, and he suggested that they did not want the question of war to be put on one person, rather the decision should be made in the U.S. Congress, as this is a deliberative body that represents the people. He continued that this is the point behind the proposed legislation, as it would make it more difficult to deploy the guard units without a declaration of war. He urged members to pass HB 373. He concluded by reciting a quote from Daniel Webster concerning the War of 1812 and the issue of federalizing the state's militia. He urged the committee to support the proposed legislation.

[1:56:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW commented that the National Guard is a voluntary organization, and its oath is to defend the Constitution of the United States, not of Alaska. He concurred with comments made by Representatives Gray and Saddler.

[1:57:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked whether it is the sponsor's opinion that the only time the country should exercise military capacity is during a declaration of war.

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN explained that the bill says the only time a National Guard member can be sent overseas for combat is when there is a declaration of war by congress. He stated that the bill would not limit active duty, rather it would reinforce that the role of guardsmen is constitutionally different from that of active military.

[1:59:07 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GAUB shared that he served 28 years in service, ranging from active duty to the National Guard. He explained that he ended his career to "uphold my oath ... and do what was right." After this he started the Restore Liberty organization. He stated that he has commanded up to 3,500 individuals and served the country as a global strategist. He further discussed his qualifications.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GAUB expressed the opinion that HB 373 is not about misunderstanding the structure of the National Guard, and it would not impact this. He argued that this would not move the guard to a state-centered security force, rather it would urge the U.S. Congress to do its duty in accordance with the constitution. He expressed the opinion that the bill is not

unconstitutional; moreover, it would ensure the constitution is followed, as the President should only serve as a wartime commander-in-chief when authorized by Congress. He urged members to vote yes on the proposed legislation.

[2:03:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GROH asked whether there is a difference between this philosophy and binding constitutional laws.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GAUB answered that there are always differences of opinion; however, he argued that the constitution and its plain language has not changed. He noted the Perpich v. Department of Defense did not address the guard going to war, which would have to be declared by Congress. He argued that the constitution should not be subject to people's opinions.

REPRESENTATIVE GROH commented on the importance of obtaining a legal opinion on the proposed legislation.

[2:05:32 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked if there is a difference between deploying active military members and guard members, without a declaration of war from a presidential decision to do so.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GAUB offered that Article 1, Section 8, of the Constitution of the United States deals with all military members, and U.S. Congress must declare war before anyone is deployed. He discussed the problem of sending guard members overseas into conflict zones, as this has occurred for decades, since [the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001]. He suggested that this is keeping the world in a perpetual state of conflict, as all authority has been ceded to the president.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked whether a declaration of war would be the only time the commander in chief of the U.S. Armed Forces should use military force.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GAUB responded that if the country goes into a conflict zone, the people and the states in the U.S. should be able to require their voices be heard in making this assessment. He argued that this is universal in all areas of the military. He continued that what should not be impacted is the right to self-defense, of which the guard is tasked to do.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER reiterated the question, asking whether the President should use military force only when war has been authorized by Congress.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GAUB answered that because of the War Powers Act, the President has a limited timeframe to operate without congressional consent, but to continue any conflict, Congress would need to act.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER questioned whether under the proposed bill, the state could restrict the guard's deployment if the President ordered deployment.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GAUB responded that the guard takes time to move, and in this timeframe most of the guard's willingness would be consumed. He added that most of this timeframe would be covered by the active-duty military.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER noted that there are some active-duty units with a high level of readiness, but most are not able to deploy on a moment's notice. He pointed out that if the President can use the full force of the military only for a short period, and a bill is passed that restricts a state's deployment of its forces, then the state would be blocking any immediate deployment.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL GAUB pointed out that this would be a rare circumstance. He argued that when immediate action is required, the active-duty forces will be deployed, and when Congress authorizes war, the President will be the commander in chief of the U.S. Armed Forces. He stated that without congressional authority, the President should not be able to act beyond this timeframe.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER advised that many aircraft cannot move without reserve refuelers.

[2:12:48 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT opened public testimony on HB 373. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[2:13:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EASTMAN commented that one of the ways to provide defensive operations, which includes the National Guard, would

be to have Congress act quickly to make a declaration of war. He suggested that the country has drifted away from any fast action by Congress. He argued that the proposed bill would make the expectation clear that Congress should proactively act in matters of war. He expressed the opinion that nothing in the legislation would limit the National Guard from protecting the country.

[2:15:20 PM](#)

CHAIR WRIGHT announced that HB 373 was held over.

[2:15:31 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.