

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

May 4, 2023

3:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Kelly Merrick

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Matt Claman, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 141

"An Act establishing June 9 of each year as Don Young Day."

- HEARD AND HELD

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3 (JUD) am
Encouraging Congress to pass the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act
or a similar bill.

- HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 23

"An Act establishing the month of October as Filipino American
History Month."

- MOVED HB 23 OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 26 (TRB)

"An Act relating to the official languages of the State of
Alaska; renaming the Alaska Native Language Preservation and
Advisory Council as the Council for Alaska Native Languages; and
relating to the Council for Alaska Native Languages."

- PENDING REFERRAL

SENATE BILL NO. 108

"An Act relating to and prohibiting discrimination based on
sexual orientation or gender identity or expression."

- PENDING REFERRAL

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 141

SHORT TITLE: ESTABLISHING DON YOUNG DAY

SPONSOR(s): RULES

03/27/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/27/23 (H) STA
04/11/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
04/11/23 (H) Moved HB 141 Out of Committee
04/11/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
04/14/23 (H) STA RPT 7DP
04/14/23 (H) DP: STORY, ALLARD, ARMSTRONG,
C.JOHNSON, CARPENTER, WRIGHT, SHAW
04/20/23 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
04/20/23 (H) VERSION: HB 141
04/21/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/21/23 (S) STA
05/04/23 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HJR 3

SHORT TITLE: CONCEALED HANDGUN RECIPROCITY B/W STATES

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RAUSCHER

02/01/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/01/23 (H) JUD, STA
02/10/23 (H) JUD AT 1:30 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/10/23 (H) Heard & Held
02/10/23 (H) MINUTE(JUD)
02/17/23 (H) JUD AT 1:30 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/17/23 (H) Moved CSHJR 3(JUD) Out of Committee
02/17/23 (H) MINUTE(JUD)
02/20/23 (H) JUD RPT CS(JUD) 3DP 4NR
02/20/23 (H) DP: C.JOHNSON, GROH, VANCE
02/20/23 (H) NR: CARPENTER, EASTMAN, GRAY, ALLARD
02/28/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/28/23 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard
03/02/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/02/23 (H) Heard & Held
03/02/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
03/14/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/14/23 (H) Moved CSHJR 3(JUD) Out of Committee
03/14/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
03/17/23 (H) STA RPT CS(JUD) 5DP 1AM

03/17/23 (H) DP: ALLARD, WRIGHT, C.JOHNSON,
 CARPENTER, SHAW
 03/17/23 (H) AM: STORY
 04/14/23 (H) DIVIDE THE AMENDMENT PASSED Y24 N15 E1
 04/19/23 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 04/19/23 (H) VERSION: CSHJR 3 (JUD) AM
 04/21/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/21/23 (S) STA, JUD
 05/04/23 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HB 23

SHORT TITLE: FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) MINA

01/19/23 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23
 01/19/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 01/19/23 (H) STA
 02/28/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
 02/28/23 (H) Heard & Held
 02/28/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
 03/14/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
 03/14/23 (H) Moved HB 23 Out of Committee
 03/14/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
 03/17/23 (H) STA RPT 6DP
 03/17/23 (H) DP: STORY, WRIGHT, C.JOHNSON,
 CARPENTER, ALLARD, SHAW
 03/31/23 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 03/31/23 (H) VERSION: HB 23
 04/03/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 04/03/23 (S) STA
 05/04/23 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE CRAIG JOHNSON, District 10
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 141.

DENEEN TUCK, Staff
 Representative Craig Johnson
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 141 on behalf of the sponsor.

ANNE WALTON-YOUNG, representing self
 Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation in full support of HB 141.

RYAN MCKEE, Staff
Representative George Rauscher
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HJR 3 on behalf of the sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE GENEVIEVE MINA, District 19
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 23

JOSH BRANSTETTER, representing self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 23.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:31:59 PM](#)

CHAIR SCOTT KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:31` p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Wielechowski, Merrick, and Chair Kawasaki. Senator Bjorkman arrived immediately thereafter.

HB 141-ESTABLISHING DON YOUNG DAY

[3:33:28 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 141 "An Act establishing June 9 of each year as Don Young Day."

[3:33:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRAIG JOHNSON, District 10, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of HB 141, stated that this legislation establishes Don Young Day in perpetuity. He said it seemed appropriate to honor this man who served his state so long on the date of his birth.

[3:35:12 PM](#)

DENEEN TUCK, Staff, Representative Craig Johnson, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, introduced HB 141 on behalf of the sponsor. She read the following prepared testimony into the record:

Congressman Donald Edwin Young:

Born June 9, 1933, in Sutter County, Meridian, California to Russell Lawhead "Cy" Young and Arlene Young-Harris. Congressman Young was the second of three sons.

Congressman Young attended Yuba College and earned his associate degree in education in 1952. He went on to earn his bachelor's degree in 1958 from Chico State College.

After a stint in the U.S. Army, serving in the 41st Battalion from 1955 to 1957. Although raised in California at the age of 26, (1959) Congressman Young moved to Alaska,

Over the first few years of his life in Alaska, Congressman Young worked in different careers, sailing (River Boat Captain), trapping, construction and becoming a teacher. While living in Fort Yukon Congressman Young was elected Mayor in 1964.

After two years of serving as Mayor, Congressman Young ran for the Alaska House of Representatives (1967-1971) and won his seat. He said he "loved" the job before he "got ambitious" and ran for the Alaska Senate, he served in the Alaska Senate (1970-1973). (Fun fact, Rep. Edgmon, District 37 currently sits in the seat Congressman Young sat in while serving in the Alaska House of Representatives and Senator Kaufman, District F currently sits where Congressman Young sat while serving in the Alaska State Senate)

Congressman Young first ran for the House of Representatives in 1972. He ran against Nick Begich, who disappeared and was presumed dead in a plane crash, but still won the race. Congressman Young had to run to fill his vacant seat in a special election, which he won in March 1973, and became our Congressman in the House of Representatives. He was sworn into the United States House of Representatives on March 14, 1973. He credited his victory to his leadership of the fight for the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline System.

[3:37:49 PM](#)

Two hours after being sworn into the United States House of Representatives he found himself leading the

historic battle for the approval of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Often, Congressman Young would cite this as the single most important achievement in his career. He stated that "Next to statehood itself, the most historical legislation passed that affected every Alaskan then, now, and in the future, was the passage of the pipeline legislation."

That same year, his colleagues honored him as the "Freshman Congressman of the Year." He went on to gain a key appointment on the then Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee where he pushed through the 200-mile fishing limit critical to Alaska's fishing industry. He fought against federal control of lands and resources to which Alaskans are rightfully entitled - a battle he continued with the same vigor until the time of his passing.

In 1997, Congressman Young passed by a 419 to 1 vote, the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act, which sets guidelines and priority uses within our nation's 550-plus wildlife refuges.

In 2017, Congressman Young was rated by Georgetown University's McCourt School on Public Policy as one of the most bipartisan members of Congress for the 115th and 116th Congresses. In December 2017, Congressman Young became Dean of the House (member with the longest unbroken record of service).

Starting the 116th Congress, Congressman Young was the longest serving House member. Due to his (and Senator Stevens') long tenure in the House, Alaska was considered to have had clout in national politics far beyond its small population. Congressman Young was often called "Alaska's third senator".

Congressman Young was also the most senior U.S. Representative and the last member who had been in office since the 1970s. He was the second-highest ranking Republican on the Natural Resources and Transportation Committee and the Infrastructure committees.

Congressman Young was also the only licensed mariner in Congress during his tenure.

Congressman Young proudly served as the "Congressman for All Alaska" and loved his role as the only Alaskan Representative in Congress. Renewed by the challenges and goals of the 117th Congress and his committee positions, Congressman Young continued to champion legislation and funding for programs benefiting Alaska and the nation. (In your packet you should have a copy of Congressman Young's timeline and accomplishments). His vision remained the same - to provide citizens with the opportunity for a better life not just for today, but also for tomorrow and the future.

[3:40:57 PM](#)

March 5, 2019, (two years prior to his death) Congressman Young became the oldest and longest-tenured member of Congress and the longest-serving Republican in Congressional history. He remained Alaska's sole Congressman and was re-elected 24 times. He was in his 25th term and 49th year in Congress.

In April 2022, the House passed two bills sponsored by the late Congressman Young. The bills dubbed the Alaska Salmon Research Task Force Act (introduced in December 2021) and Congressman Young's Alaska Native Health Care Land Transfers Act (introduced in January 2022)- both passed by voice vote. Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-Ariz) on the House floor said the legislation is "a perfect example of how Young fought for what is best for Alaska." He also stated that "I believe the bill is a fitting tribute to our departed friend. It elevates Alaskan voices, especially Native Alaskans, and it brings stakeholders together to build consensus and find a practical solution to this pressing issue in our 49th state."

Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-Ore) stated that Congressman Young was discussing the need for the bill the day before he died. He went on to state that he thought it was "more than appropriate" that the bill was being renamed after the late congressman.

Republican Minority leader Kevin McCarthy, stated, "There is no other person in this body that's been loved, feared, and respected as much as Congressman Young".

He was laid in state in the U.S. Capitol's National Statuary Hall on March 29, 2022, before his memorial service. He was the 43rd person to have this honor since 1852.

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Since his death, the House of Representatives passed a bill (with no opposition) in December 2021, that renamed Mount Cerberus, an active volcano on Semisopochnoi (pronounced Semi-so-poch-noi) Island Mount Young. Mount Young stands 5,351 feet tall in the Chilkat Mountain Range on the boundary of Glacier Bay National Monument. U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski and U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan intentionally chose a volcano, stating that "As we were looking for something that might be fitting, we looked not only at mountains, but we looked at mountains that continue to blow their top to this very day." Congressman Young has been paid further homage; having the measure also renaming the federal building in Fairbanks and the Job Corps Center in Palmer to reflect the Congressman Young name in his memory.

President Joe Biden made a statement on Congressman Young's passing, in part stating "There is no doubt that few legislators have left a greater mark on their state. Congressman Young's legacy lives on the infrastructure projects he delighted in steering across Alaska. In the opportunities he advanced for his constituents. In the enhanced protections for Native tribes, he championed. His legacy will continue in the America he loved."

Congressman Young told the New York Times in 2020 when asked how long he planned to serve, replying, "God will decide that, or the voters."

Congressman Young passed away while on a flight home to Alaska on March 18, 2022. He was 88 years old.

3:44:22 PM

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if there were questions for the sponsor.

SENATOR MERRICK thanked the sponsor, stated support for the bill, and declared a conflict of interest because Don Young was a close family friend and she had served on his staff.

[3:45:01 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI turned to invited testimony.

[3:45:27 PM](#)

ANNE WALTON-YOUNG, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified by invitation on HB 141. She stated that she was Don Young's widow and she thought this was a lovely commemorative honoring her husband. She relayed that she had no idea how far the idea of honoring her husband could or would go. She was delighted to learn that June 9, her husband's birthday, had been selected to memorialize him. She spoke about the overwhelming and heartwarming expressions of support.

MS. WALTON-YOUNG opined that with her husband's passing, the state of Alaska lost its number one lifetime champion. His unparalleled commitment and love for Alaska defined him. She continued that there will never be another person who can or would give as much as her husband gave to the state of Alaska. She said HB 141 has her complete backing and she'll happily participate in and attend all celebratory events that are possible. She shared that June 9 is not only her sweetheart's birthday, it is also their wedding anniversary. It has always been and will continue to be a happy day. She thanked the sponsor and the committee for their time and consideration in establishing June 9 as Don Young Day.

[3:50:01 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI extended condolences on behalf of the committee and spoke of his fond memories of Congressman Young. He opined that it was fitting to honor his legacy.

[3:50:45 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked the sponsor if he had further comments.

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON referenced Senator Merrick's comment and opined that if everyone who had a conflict were to declare it, nobody would be able to vote.

CHAIR KAWASAKI held HB 141 in committee.

HJR 3-CONCEALED HANDGUN RECIPROCITY B/W STATES

[3:51:30 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3(JUD) am Encouraging Congress to pass the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act or a similar bill.

[3:51:59 PM](#)

RYAN MCKEE, Staff, Representative George Rauscher, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented HJR 3 on behalf of the sponsor. He read the sponsor statement.

House Joint Resolution 3 would encourage Congress to amend the federal criminal code to allow an individual who is qualified to carry or possess a concealed handgun in one state to be allowed to also carry or possess a concealed handgun in another state that also allows individuals to carry concealed firearms.

This Resolution would also request that Congress enact the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act (H.R. 38) from the 117th Congress, or a similar bill.

MR. MCKEE clarified that HJR 3 would allow for handgun reciprocity throughout the US, but individuals visiting states as a nonresident would still have to follow the laws in that state.

CHAIR KAWASAKI noted who was available to answer questions.

CHAIR KAWASAKI noted that Alaska has a requirement to prove shooting proficiency to receive a concealed carry permit. He asked what the procedure would be if a state didn't have a similar requirement for accuracy.

MR. MCKEE said Alaska doesn't require a permit to carry a concealed handgun but one is available. An Alaskan would need that permit if they wanted to carry a concealed handgun in another state.

[3:55:38 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no further questions. He held HJR 3 in committee for future consideration.

HB 23-FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

[3:56:10 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 23 "An Act establishing the month of October as Filipino American History Month."

[3:56:21 PM](#)

At ease

[3:57:55 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI reconvened the meeting. He noted that HB 3 was the companion bill to SB 30, which the committee previously heard.

[3:58:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GENEVIEVE MINA, District 19, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of HB 23 stated that she wanted to speak about Filipinos, their history, their contributions nationally and to the state, and the reasons for recognizing Filipino American history month in state statute. Her family immigrated from the Philippines to Alaska in the '80s and '90s and she was honored to introduce the bill.

She said Filipinos are one of if not the largest immigrant group in Alaska. She enjoys history but didn't know too much about her own origins. She quoted the national hero Jose Rizal who said, "Know history, know self. No history, no self." She spoke of the substantial impact that Filipinos have had in Alaska. As the largest Asian American Pacific Islander group, they have made contributions working as cannery workers, in healthcare, labor advocacy, small businesses, community leaders, and much more. This history isn't reflected when Alaska history and American history is discussed. She said there's an invisibility that needs to be brought into the light.

REPRESENTATIVE MINA recognized some Filipino contributions. Nationally, Filipinos were the first Asian group to set foot in America. The earliest record was on October 18, 1587. Filipinos have also made a substantial contribution to the through the military, community and labor organizing, and the economy. She highlighted three examples:

First, during WWII 250,000 Filipino soldiers served in the Far East under the command of General Douglas MacArthur. They became recognized as US nationals but were not given the same rights, privileges, and pensions as US veterans. It wasn't until 2010 when Congress officially recognized these Filipino veterans and accorded them these rights. She shared that her grandfather was a Filipino guerilla fighter in WWII.

Second, the 1965 Delano Grape Strike was started by Filipino farmworkers. Many people are familiar with the Latino labor leader Cesar Chavez, but what many people don't know is that it was started by Larry Itliong who was a Filipino labor leader in Delano, California. He was also an "Alaskeros," which is a Filipino migrant worker who travels to Alaska to work in

canneries seasonally. She shared that her father was one of these workers 10 years after the grape strike.

Third, Filipinos who were trained in American nursing helped to fill the US nursing shortage in the 1950s. The 1965 Immigration Act resulted in a significant increase of Filipino nurses moving to the US. She shared that her mom is one of these nurses

[4:03:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA discussed the rich history of Filipino Americans in Alaska. The first recorded contact was in 1788; American whaling ships brought Filipinos to Alaska; and many Filipinos have built families with indigenous groups who have faced similar racial discrimination in this state.

She recounted the reasons for recognizing Filipino American History Month (FAHM) in state statute. She explained that it started in October 1992 when the Filipino American Historical Society chose October because that was the month that Filipinos were first recorded in the US; it's the birth month of labor leader Larry Itliong; it's a great way to recognize the many contributions of Filipinos in the state; and it provides solidarity among the diverse groups in Alaska. It is similar to recognizing Black History Month and Alaska Native Heritage Month in state statute.

[4:04:44 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI noted that the committee heard the companion bill from Senator Gray-Jackson earlier in the session.

[4:05:06 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on HB 23.

[4:05:20 PM](#)

JOSH BRANSTETTER, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, stated that he wanted to reinforce how powerful HB 23 is for the Filipino community. He has lived in Alaska since the '90s when his dad was stationed at Adak. His best memories of his Filipino heritage were during that time. He wasn't very proud of his culture when he was young because Filipinos weren't in the spotlight and he didn't know how he fit in. Today, he is very proud to be a Filipino and a lot of that has to do with people like Representative Mina. He noted that the committee heard a bill earlier about honoring the late Congressman Young and he feels that is very important. He opined that it is also important to honor the many individuals who are not often in the

spotlight but have added to the nation's history for 235 years. He urged the committee to pass HB 23.

[4:08:38 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI closed public testimony on HB 23.

He thanked the sponsor for bring the bill forward and solicited a motion.

[4:09:11 PM](#)

SENATOR MERRICK moved to report HB 23, work order 33-LS0263\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[4:09:31 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and HB 23 was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

[4:10:48 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 4:10 p.m.