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CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4(RLS)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE RULES COMMITTEE

Offered: 1/27/25

Referred: Today's Calendar

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES DIBERT, Galvin, Mina, Kopp, Carrick

SENATORS Kawasaki, Wielechowski, Dunbar, Tobin, Kiehl, Gray-Jackson, Claman

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of the Interior, the**
 2 **United States Board on Geographic Names, and the members of the state's delegation in**
 3 **Congress to maintain Denali as the official name for the tallest mountain in North**
 4 **America.**

5 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

6 **WHEREAS** the name Denali is deeply ingrained in the state's culture and identity;
 7 and

8 **WHEREAS** residents of the state believe that the names of the geographic features in
 9 the state should be determined by state residents and representatives; and

10 **WHEREAS** the Athabaskan people and their ancestors have lived in the Interior of
 11 the state for more than 10,000 years; and

12 **WHEREAS** Denali, the traditional Koyukon Athabaskan name, meaning "the high
 13 one," was designated as the official name for North America's tallest mountain in 1975 by the
 14 state; and

15 **WHEREAS**, on June 7, 1913, Walter Harper, a 20-year-old man of Athabaskan

1 descent, became the first person to stand on the summit of the mountain; and

2 **WHEREAS** state lawmakers petitioned the United States Board on Geographic
3 Names to change the mountain's name to "Denali" in 1975, and, in 2015, the United States
4 officially adopted the name Denali for the mountain; and

5 **WHEREAS** residents of the state from all backgrounds and political persuasions
6 embrace Denali as the rightful name for the tallest mountain in North America; and

7 **WHEREAS** residents of the state take pride in the fact that people outside the state
8 also recognize Denali as the mountain's well-established name; and

9 **WHEREAS** both Denali National Park and the mountain are well-known and
10 established landmarks, and changing the mountain's name could cause confusion and
11 negatively affect tourism in the state; and

12 **WHEREAS** there were once hundreds of languages spoken by Alaska Native peoples,
13 many of which are still used by their descendants today; and

14 **WHEREAS** the use of, and names and terms from, Athabaskan languages have a rich
15 legacy in the Interior and Canada; and

16 **WHEREAS** traditional Indigenous names for certain geographic features, places, and
17 communities are commonly used by local, state, and federal government agencies in the state;
18 and

19 **WHEREAS** residents of the state understand that the use of Indigenous names
20 throughout the state reflects the long history, diverse cultures, traditions, and languages of the
21 state's Alaska Native peoples; and

22 **WHEREAS** the Alaska State Legislature supports efforts to recognize the heritage of
23 the state's Alaska Native peoples and the continuing importance of the mountain to Alaska
24 Native culture;

25 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the President
26 of the United States, the United States Secretary of the Interior, and the United States Board
27 on Geographic Names to maintain Denali as the name for the tallest mountain in North
28 America and that action to rename the mountain not be taken; and be it

29 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully urges the
30 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress to advocate on behalf of, and work to preserve,
31 Denali as the name for the tallest mountain in North America.

1 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President
2 of the United States; the Honorable J. D. Vance, Vice President of the United States and
3 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Walter Cruickshank, Acting United States
4 Secretary of the Interior; the Domestic Names Committee, United States Board on
5 Geographic Names; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan,
6 U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nick Begich, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska
7 delegation in Congress.