

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

April 1, 2025

10:18 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Ted Eischeid, Chair  
Representative Andrew Gray  
Representative Carolyn Hall  
Representative Zack Fields

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Dan Saddler  
Representative David Nelson  
Representative Jamie Allard

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10

Encouraging the United States Congress to award Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War the Congressional Gold Medal.

- HEARD & HELD

PRESENTATION(S) USS TED STEVENS

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SJR 10

SHORT TITLE: HMONG VETERANS; CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) WIELECHOWSKI

02/20/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/20/25	(S)	STA
02/25/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/25/25	(S)	Heard & Held
02/25/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/04/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/04/25	(S)	Moved SJR 10 Out of Committee
03/04/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/05/25	(S)	STA RPT 5DP
03/05/25	(S)	DP: KAWASAKI, WIELECHOWSKI, GRAY- JACKSON, BJORKMAN, YUNDT

03/17/25 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)  
03/17/25 (S) VERSION: SJR 10  
03/21/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/21/25 (H) MLV  
04/01/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124

#### **WITNESS REGISTER**

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented SJR 10 to the committee.

JOSHUA MCHOES, Staff  
Senator Bill Wielechowski  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** On behalf of Senator Wielechowski, prime sponsor, gave a PowerPoint presentation on SJR 10.

MAY RAMIREZ-XIONG, CEO & Co-Founder  
H.E.A.R.T Inc.  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony on SJR 10.

LILY STEVENS BECKER, Secretary  
USS Ted Stevens Commissioning Committee  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a presentation titled " a presentation titled "USS Ted Stevens".

CAPTAIN MARY KATEY HAYS, Prospective Commanding Officer  
USS Ted Stevens Commissioning Committee  
Pascagoula, Mississippi

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a presentation, titled "USS Ted Stevens."

CHERIE CURRY, President  
USS Ted Stevens Commissioning Committee  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a presentation, titled "USS Ted Stevens."

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[10:18:04 AM](#)

**CHAIR EISCHEID** called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 10:18 a.m. Representatives Fields, Gray, Hall, and Eischeid were present at the call to order.

**SJR 10-HMONG VETERANS; CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL**

[10:18:52 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the first order of business would be SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 10, "Encouraging the United States Congress to award Hmong veterans of the Vietnam War the Congressional Gold Medal."

[10:19:30 AM](#)

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI, Alaska State Legislature, As prime sponsor, presented SJR 10 to the committee. He gave a brief overview of the history of the Hmong people's role in aiding United States soldiers in Laos and Vietnam. He explained that the proposed Senate resolution would urge congress to award the congressional gold medal to Hmong veterans.

[10:21:04 AM](#)

JOSHUA MCHOES, STAFF, Senator Bill Wielechowski, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Senator Bill Wielechowski, prime sponsor, gave a PowerPoint presentation on SJR 10 [hard copy included in the committee file]. He began on slide 2, which gave a brief history of Hmong veterans and moved to slide 3, which described the Hmong people's culture and role fighting alongside the U.S. in the Vietnam war. He skipped to slide 5, which emphasized the brutal conditions that the Hmong people were subjected to after the U.S. withdrawal in Vietnam and moved through slides 6-7, which described the Hmong people's integration and recognition within the United States. He continued to slide 8, which outlined the historic effort to grant the congressional gold medal to the Hmong people and skipped to slides 10-11, which explained what the congressional gold medal is and how it can be awarded. He concluded the presentation on slide 12, which urged the committee's support of SJR 10.

[10:27:30 AM](#)

MAY RAMIREZ-XIONG, CEO & Co-Founder, H.E.A.R.T Inc., gave invited testimony on SJR 10. She shared to the committee that she is the daughter of a Hmong colonel veteran of the Vietnam War and said that she was testifying before the committee to "amplify the voices that cannot speak for themselves." She explained that SJR 10 would honor the sacrifices and the wider role that the Hmong role have played in supporting the U.S. throughout their history.

### **PRESENTATION(S) USS Ted Stevens**

[10:31:17 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the final order of business would be the USS Ted Stevens presentation.

[10:32:18 AM](#)

LILY STEVENS BECKER, Secretary, USS Ted Stevens Commissioning Committee, co-offered a presentation, titled "USS Ted Stevens." She began the presentation on slide 2, which described Ted Steven's personality and his relationship to Alaska and moved through slides 3-5, which displayed images of artists' renditions of Ted Stevens throughout Alaska. She moved through slides 6-10, which highlighted a series of ceremonial milestones of the USS Ted Stevens.

[10:37:01 AM](#)

CAPTAIN MARY KATEY HAYS, Prospective Commanding Officer, USS Ted Stevens Commissioning Committee, co-offered a presentation, titled "USS Ted Stevens." She picked up the presentation on slide 13, which highlighted the current location of the U.S.S. Ted Stevens and moved to slide 14, which listed a few "ceremonial milestones" of the prospective ship. She continued through slides 15-16, which displayed pictures of the ship's christening celebrations and moved to slide 18 which explained what a Navy commissioning is.

[10:41:48 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID asked for more context with regards to Ted Steven's fixation on eating healthy.

MS. STEVENS BECKER explained that Ted Stevens was often up to date on the latest health trends and was obsessive about physical wellness and taking care of his body.

[10:43:36 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID commented that he stopped and sat down on the statue of Ted Stevens at the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport on his way to Juneau and remarked his appreciation for the former senator's character and work in Alaska.

[10:45:34 AM](#)

CHERIE CURRY, President, USS Ted Stevens Commissioning Committee, co-offered a presentation, titled "USS Ted Stevens." She resumed the presentation on slide 19, which described the USS Ted Stevens commissioning committee's work and moved through slides 20-21, which highlighted key stakeholders in the commissioning of the USS Ted Stevens. She continued to slide 22, which outlined the structure of the USS Ted Stevens board of directors and moved to slide 23, which detailed the various executive committees that are pertinent to the construction and commissioning of the USS Ted Stevens. She moved through slides 24-31, which displayed a series of photos captured during the commissioning committee's visit to Alaska in 2024. She continued through slides 32-33, which detailed the events that will occur during the USS Ted Stevens commissioning week for both the public and the crew of the ship and concluded the presentation on slide 34.

[10:53:42 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL asked if there has been an economic analysis has been performed on the prospective impact of the USS Ted Steven's commissioning week and asked if there was an estimate of the cost of the commissioning week for the ship.

MS. CURRY answered that the USS Ted Stevens commissioning committee would pursue an economic study once the locations of the celebrations in Alaska were determined. She said that the current estimate for the cost of the commissioning week is around \$1 million.

[10:55:30 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID asked what it was like to be present at the christening ceremony for the USS Ted Stevens.

MS. STEVENS BECKER said that it was an "incredible experience" and said that she was awestruck at the ship and the christening ceremony.

[10:57:52 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID thanked the invited testifiers and delivered committee announcements.

[10:58:22 AM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.