

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

May 6, 2025

10:17 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Ted Eischeid, Chair
Representative Andrew Gray
Representative Carolyn Hall
Representative Zack Fields
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Jamie Allard
Representative David Nelson

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps.

- MOVED CSHCR 6 (MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20

Encouraging the United States Congress to establish hiring goals for apprentices and veteran apprentices.

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 21

Encouraging the United States Congress to designate 2025 as the Year of the Soldier.

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HCR 6

SHORT TITLE: US MARINE CORPS 250TH ANNIVERSARY

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) UNDERWOOD

04/30/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/30/25	(H)	MLV
05/06/25	(H)	MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HJR 20

SHORT TITLE: HIRING OF APPRENTICES/VETERANS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) NELSON

04/14/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/14/25 (H) MLV, L&C
05/06/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HJR 21

SHORT TITLE: 2025 YEAR OF THE SOLDIER

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) NELSON

04/22/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/22/25 (H) MLV, STA
05/06/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE JUBILEE UNDERWOOD

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HCR 6 to the committee.

BUDDY WHIT, Staff

Representative Jubilee Underwood

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Jubilee Underwood, prime sponsor, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the committee.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID NELSON

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HJR 20 to the committee.

BOGDAN GILMUTDINOV, Staff

Representative David Nelson

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative David Nelson, prime sponsor, presented HJR 20 to the committee.

KYLE KAISER, President & Founder

Viper Transmissions
No address provided

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony on HJR 20.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID NELSON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HJR 20 to the committee.

BERNARD AOTO
Former Member, U.S. Army
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony on HJR 21.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:17:30 AM](#)

CHAIR TED EISCHEID called the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs meeting to order at 10:17 a.m. Representatives Fields, Hall, Nelson, Gray, and Eischeid were present at the call to order. Representatives Allard and Saddler arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HCR 6-US MARINE CORPS 250TH ANNIVERSARY

[10:18:51 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6, Commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the United States Marine Corps.

[10:19:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JUBILEE UNDERWOOD, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HCR 6 to the committee. She paraphrased the sponsor statement for HCR 6 [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Concurrent Resolution 6 commemorates the 250th anniversary of the United States Marine Corps, to be observed on November 10, 2025, and recognizes the long and honorable history of the United States Marines Corps, and the Corps' contribution to the protection of freedom and liberty for our nation and

the world. Established on November 10, 1775, at Tun Tavern in Philadelphia, the Marine Corps has distinguished itself as a premier military force, embodying the core values of honor, courage, and commitment. This resolution calls upon Alaskans and all Americans to honor this historic milestone and celebrate the Marine Corps' extraordinary legacy of service and sacrifice. The United States Marine Corps has been instrumental in shaping the nation's history, demonstrating exceptional leadership, resilience, and valor in every major conflict, from the Revolutionary War to the Global War on Terrorism. Through iconic battles such as Trenton, Saipan, Iwo Jima, Inchon, Fallujah and Ramadi, Marines have showcased their adaptability and unwavering dedication to safeguarding national security. The motto Semper Fidelis reflects their enduring loyalty, inspiring generations to serve with distinction. This resolution pays tribute to the Marines and Navy corpsmen who made the ultimate sacrifice, and recognizes the men and women currently serving who uphold this storied tradition. It encourages Alaskan communities to acknowledge the contributions of local Marines and to foster collaboration with the Marine Corps to promote civic pride and mutual support. By commemorating this anniversary, the resolution seeks to strengthen the bonds of camaraderie between the Marine Corps and the people of Alaska. Representative Underwood respectfully urges colleagues to support this resolution to ensure the United States Marine Corps' remarkable history and ongoing contributions are duly recognized and celebrated across Alaska and the nation.

[10:22:07 AM](#)

BUDDY WHIT, Staff, Representative Jubilee Underwood, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Underwood, prime sponsor of HCR 6, gave a PowerPoint presentation [hard copy included in the committee file]. He began on slide 1, which described what the United States Marine Corps (USMC) is, and moved through slides 2-3, which gave a brief overview of the history of the USMC. He moved to slide 4, which outlined the mission of the USMC, and continued to slide 5, which emphasized that "every marine is a rifleman." He skipped to slide 8, which

highlighted the importance of the difference in using the word "birthday" instead of "anniversary" with regards to celebrating the USMC founding date, and he moved through slides 9-10, which detailed the USMC birthday celebrations. He concluded the presentation on slides 11-12.

[10:29:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON asked Mr. Whit about his time in the USMC. He noted that the United States Congress attempted to dissolve the USMC after World War II, but it was retained due to its outstanding performance.

MR. WHIT answered that he was an enlisted soldier that was trained as a rigger and participated in the USMC reserves after his time in active duty service.

[10:31:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Representative Underwood if there is a national desire to pass similar resolutions in other states and asked about the USMC presence in Alaska.

MR. WHIT replied that there is no nationwide push to celebrate the 250th birthday of the USMC by state legislatures and explained that the majority of the marines in Alaska are a part of a military police detachment.

[10:34:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY noted that even though his focus had been with the U.S. Army, he recognized the importance of the 250th birthday of the USMC, and he asked when women began serving in USMC.

MR. WHIT said that he did not know but would follow up with an answer.

[10:36:15 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID opened public testimony on HCR 6. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[10:36:46 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID moved to adopt Conceptual Amendment 1 to HCR 6, which read as follows:

Page 2, line 2:
Delete "Corps'"
Insert "Corps's"

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER objected, then withdrew his objection. There being no further objection, Conceptual Amendment 1 to HCR 6 was adopted.

[10:37:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRAY moved to report HCR 6, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHCR 6 (MLV) was reported from the House Special Committee on Military and Veterans' Affairs.

[10:40:05 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 10:37 a.m. to 10:40 a.m.

HJR 20-HIRING OF APPRENTICES/VETERANS

[10:40:23 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 20, Encouraging the United States Congress to establish hiring goals for apprentices and veteran apprentices.

[10:40:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID NELSON, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HJR 20 to the committee. He paraphrased the sponsor statement to HJR 20 [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Joint Resolution 20 urges the United States Congress to establish hiring goals for apprentices and veteran apprentices for U.S. Department of Defense construction projects. United States veterans and their families face immeasurable risks and sacrifices during their service to our country.

Members of our armed forces are put through the most rigorous training in the world. This ensures that all individuals that pass through it come out well-educated, highly trained, and strongly motivated. They learn discipline and a number of skills which make them highly valuable in the workforce.

In 2024, 65% of the unemployed veterans were age 18-54, meaning that the majority of unemployed veterans are in their prime working age. Veterans face many challenges when transitioning back into civilian life. Some of these challenges can be made easier by requiring hiring goals for certain Department of Defense projects. HJR 20 would encourage the U.S. Congress to establish a goal for the hiring of veterans who participate in qualified apprenticeship or postsecondary programs. This goal should be no less than 10 percent of the total workforce employed in the performance of the project.

Department of Defense construction projects offer a prime opportunity for veterans to further their careers while providing the DOD with qualified, mature, and motivated employees. It is our duty to take care of those who stood ready to defend this country.

[10:42:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked how the bill sponsor obtained the 10 percent number with regards to veteran unemployment.

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON answered that the 10 percent figure in the proposed legislation represented a goal, not a requirement that the state would have to meet.

[10:44:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD asked if the goal of HJR 20 was to bring the veteran unemployment rate up from 4.6 percent.

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON explained that HJR 20 would be urging the United States Congress to establish the 10-percent goal explained earlier.

[10:46:06 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID asked if there is any information regarding the ratio of journeymen to apprenticeship.

[10:47:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS answered that apprenticeship to journeymen ratios are uniformly one-to-one across the entire country.

[10:47:40 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked Representative Nelson how he best saw U.S. Congress solving the issue of veteran unemployment.

[10:48:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL asked if there are any specific numbers related to the unemployment rates of Alaska veterans.

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON replied that he would follow up with information after the committee meeting.

[10:51:57 AM](#)

KYLE KAISER, President & Founder, Viper Transmissions, gave invited testimony on HJR 20. He spoke to the importance and positive impact that a construction apprenticeship had on both his and other servicemembers' lives after exiting the military and encouraged the committee's support of HJR 20.

[10:57:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER commented that he is proud to be a co-sponsor of HJR 20.

[HJR 20 was held over].

HJR 21-2025 YEAR OF THE SOLDIER

[10:58:35 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 21, Encouraging the United States Congress to designate 2025 as the Year of the Soldier.

[10:59:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID NELSON, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HJR 20 to the committee. He paraphrased the sponsor statement to HJR 20 [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Joint Resolution 21 encourages Congress to designate 2025 as the Year of the Soldier. This designation honors the unwavering dedication, courage, and sacrifice of the men and women who serve in the United States Army. Since the US Army was founded on June 14th, 1775, our soldiers have stood as guardians of freedom, defending our nation and its ideals both at home and abroad.

Throughout our history, American soldiers have answered the call to serve with valor and commitment. From the Revolutionary War to present-day missions, they have faced adversity with resilience and have upheld the highest standards of military excellence. Their contributions have been instrumental in securing peace, providing humanitarian aid, and promoting stability around the world.

Designating 2025 as the "Year of the Soldier" provides an opportunity for our nation to collectively recognize and celebrate the invaluable role that soldiers play in safeguarding our freedoms. This designation encourages educational initiatives, community events, and public ceremonies that highlight their service and sacrifices. Moreover, it serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility to support soldiers and their families, ensuring they receive the care and recognition they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to support this resolution and join in honoring the bravery and dedication of our soldiers. Let us celebrate the 250th Birthday of the United States Army by reaffirming our commitment to those who have given so much in the service to our country.

[11:01:56 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if the 250th anniversary for the United States Army would be more fun than the one for the United States Marine Corps.

[11:02:59 AM](#)

BERNARD AOTO, Former Member, U.S. Army, gave invited testimony on HJR 21. He shared his background in serving with the United States Army and explained that the proposed legislation would be seen as a great honor for those who have served in the U.S. Army.

[11:04:39 AM](#)

CHAIR EISCHEID shared his appreciation for the proposed resolution.

REPRESENTATIVE NELSON added that it is "well known" that the first female army veteran was Deborah Samson, a woman who fought in the Revolutionary War.

[HJR 21 was held over.]

[11:06:26 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Military & Veteran's Affairs meeting was adjourned at 11:06 a.m.