

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE RULES STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 27, 2025  
8:55 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair  
Representative Chuck Kopp, Vice Chair  
Representative Bryce Edgmon  
Representative Calvin Schrage  
Representative Mia Costello  
Representative Cathy Tilton  
Representative Sarah Vance

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Opposing efforts to change the name of the tallest mountain in North America from Denali to Mt. McKinley, and supporting efforts to recognize the heritage and continuing importance of the mountain and of Alaska Native peoples.

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4

Urging the President of the United States and the United States Secretary of the Interior to maintain Denali as the official name for the tallest mountain in North America.

- MOVED CSHJR 4(RLS) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HJR 3

SHORT TITLE: RES. TO MAINTAIN DENALI AS OFFICIAL NAME

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) CARRICK

01/22/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(H)	RLS
01/27/25	(H)	RLS AT 8:30 AM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HJR 4

SHORT TITLE: RES. TO MAINTAIN DENALI AS OFFICIAL NAME  
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) DIBERT

01/22/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/22/25 (H) RLS  
01/27/25 (H) RLS AT 8:30 AM GRUENBERG 120

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE ASHLEY CARRICK  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HJR 3.

REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE DIBERT  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HJR 4.

MATT GRUENING, Staff  
Representative Louise Stutes  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** On behalf of Representative Stutes and the House Rules Standing Committee, explained the changes from the original bill version of HJR 4 to Version G.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:55:57 AM](#)

**CHAIR LOUISE STUTES** called the House Rules Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:55 a.m. Representatives Edgmon, Costello, Schrage, Kopp, and Stutes were present at the call to order. Representatives Vance and Tilton arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**HJR 3-RES. TO MAINTAIN DENALI AS OFFICIAL NAME**  
**HJR 4-RES. TO MAINTAIN DENALI AS OFFICIAL NAME**

[8:56:54 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3, Opposing efforts to change the name of the tallest mountain in North America from Denali to Mt. McKinley, and supporting efforts to recognize the heritage and continuing importance of the mountain and of Alaska Native

peoples and HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4, Urging the President of the United States and the United States Secretary of the Interior to maintain Denali as the official name for the tallest mountain in North America.

CHAIR STUTES stated that this is not a political issue, rather it is about honoring Alaska's Native culture and heritage, as well as "our right to determine, as Alaskans, what is best for us." She stated that [the federal executive order to change the name of Denali to Mount McKinley] is a federal overreach, which is something [the State of Alaska] has always resisted. She noted that the proposed resolutions "do not carry the force of law" but "represent an expression of the opinion of this legislature." She concluded by sharing her belief that the proposed resolutions would send a critical message to Alaska's federal partners, the Lower 48, and the congressional delegation.

[8:58:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ASHLEY CARRICK, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HJR 3. She stated that June 7, 1913, was the day that Athabascan Walter Harper, at the age of 20, became the first person to stand on the summit of Denali, the highest peak in North America. She said it was this legacy that inspired her to sponsor HJR 3, to affirm the name Denali. She then noted that in late May 2019, her father stood on the summit of Denali at age 50. She stated, "Denali is far greater than the accomplishments of man." She noted that the name Denali translates to English as "The Great One." She asked the committee to support [HJR 3 and HJR 4]. She offered her understanding that "a vast majority of Alaskans support and affirm the name of Denali." She asked the committee to join her in "respecting the deep heritage and cultural importance Denali" and "affirming its name."

[9:01:00 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that HJR 3 was held over.

**HJR 4-RES. TO MAINTAIN DENALI AS OFFICIAL NAME**

[9:01:05 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced that the next order of business would be a continuation of HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 4, Urging the President of the United States and the United States Secretary

of the Interior to maintain Denali as the official name for the tallest mountain in North America.

[9:01:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MAXINE DIBERT, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, gave a sponsor statement for HJR 4 [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Good morning, Madam Chair and members of the House Rules Committee. I am Representative Maxine Dibert, and I'm here today to ask for your support on House Joint Resolution 4, which seeks to maintain the name Denali.

There is something truly special about seeing Mount Denali in our home state. Even a brief glimpse of the highest peak in North America fills Alaskans with a sense of pride. The towering giant, in all its glory, stands as a symbol of our state's majesty. Denali has been known by its true name for thousands of years, and that name is Denali. It's not just a name—it's a symbol of history, culture, and respect. The name comes from the Koyukon Athabascan language, meaning "The Tall One."

As many of you know, this process has not been easy. It took nearly four decades after the Alaska State Legislature's 1975 resolution for the federal government to officially recognize the name Denali. That long wait was a testament to the perseverance and strength of the people of Alaska, who continued to advocate for the name that felt most authentic to their identity. Finally, in 2015, after years of effort, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names officially recognized Denali. This decision was widely celebrated by Alaskans and reflected the recognition of the mountain's cultural significance—not only to Native communities, but to all Alaskans.

I urge you, members of the House Rules Committee, to support House Joint Resolution 4. Denali is more than just a mountain. It represents Alaska's history, culture, and people. Changing the name back to Mount McKinley would be a disservice to all those who have fought to preserve the name Denali and to the Native communities who have called this land home for thousands of years.

Let's keep the name Denali—the name that has always reflected the grandeur of the tallest peak in North America, the name that connects us to our past, and the name that honors our future. Thank you.

[9:04:05 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES announced the committee would bring forth a committee substitute.

[9:04:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) to HJR 4, Version 34-LS0339\G, Bullard, 1/25/25, as a working document. There being no objection, Version G was before the committee.

[9:04:46 AM](#)

MATT GRUENING, Staff, Representative Louise Stutes, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Stutes and the House Rules Standing Committee, explained the changes from the original bill version to Version G by highlighting a sponsor statement [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Page 1, lines 2-4 of version G: The title was amended to reflect the addition of new "resolve" language on Page 2, lines 26-27, as well as lines 29-32.

Page 1, lines 4-5 of version N: Deleted "whereas" language from the previous version.

Page 1, line 15 through Page 2, line 1 of version G: Added the following language: "WHEREAS on June 7, 1913, Walter Harper, a 20-year-old man of Athabaskan descent, became the first person to stand on the summit of the mountain." Page 2, lines 19-24 of version N: Deleted "whereas" language from the previous version. Page 2, lines 22-24 of version G: Added the following language "WHEREAS the Alaska State Legislature supports efforts to recognize the heritage of the state's Alaska Native peoples and the continuing importance of the mountain to Alaska Native culture." Page 2, lines 26-27 of version G: Added the "United States Board on Geographic Names" to the list of entities in the resolution's request. Page 2, lines

29-31 of version G: Added additional "resolve" language requesting Alaska's congressional delegation to advocate on behalf of, and work to preserve, Denali as the official name for the tallest mountain in North America. Page 3, lines 1-7 of version G: Replaced previous reference to "United States Secretary of the Interior" with the "Honorable Walter Cruickshank, Acting United States Secretary of the Interior" for cleanup purposes. Added the following to the list of individuals and entities copied on the resolution: the "Domestic Names Committee," the "United States Board on Geographic Names," the "Honorable Lisa Murkowski," the "Honorable Dan Sullivan," and the "Honorable Nick Begich."

[9:07:46 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES ascertained that there were no questions or amendments for HJR 4, Version G.

[9:08:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE EDGMON offered a comment in support of HJR 4. He remarked that the distinction of the Denali name "in many respects preceded the 1975 decision throughout the Native community" and "throughout Alaska as a whole." She opined that "time is of the essence" to send this message to the congressional delegation and anyone involved "in this decision" that [the Alaska State Legislature] is acting on behalf of all Alaskans. He proffered that the name Denali has become an Alaska landmark and courses through the business community, through the state's vernacular, and is "a part of who we are." He indicated that as a history buff, it is of interest to him why President McKinley's name was even considered in the 1890s. Representative Edgmon concluded that he thinks HJR 4 is appropriate and he appreciates the sponsor bringing it forward, and he urged the committee to act quickly and decisively to keep the name intact.

[9:09:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved to report CSHJR 4, Version 34-LS0339\G, Bullard, 1/25/25, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

[9:09:54 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES asked for a roll call vote but voided the roll. She announced that there being no objection, CSHJR 4(RLS) was reported out of the House Rules Standing Committee.

9:10:38 AM

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Rules Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.