

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**  
**FEBRUARY 4, 2026**  
**3:44 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Löki Tobin, Chair  
Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair  
Senator Jesse Bjorkman  
Senator Jesse Kiehl  
Senator Robert Yundt

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 4

Recognizing and commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America; encouraging participation in commemorative events; and encouraging educational institutions to enhance civics education.

- MOVED SR 4 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 204

"An Act relating to substitute teaching; and relating to the qualifications of school board members."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SR 4

SHORT TITLE: 250TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED STATES

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) TILTON

01/21/26	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/26	(S)	EDC, STA
02/04/26	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SENATOR CATHY TILTON, District M  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SR 4.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:44:36 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:44 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Stevens, Kiehl, Yundt, and Chair Tobin.

CHAIR TOBIN took a brief at ease at 3:36:27 p.m.

**SR 4-250TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNITED STATES**

[3:46:44 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 4 Recognizing and commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States of America; encouraging participation in commemorative events; and encouraging educational institutions to enhance civics education.

[3:47:13 PM](#)

SENATOR CATHY TILTON, District M, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SR 4 stated that SR 4 is a simple but meaningful resolution that honors the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, which will be commemorated on July 4, 2026. She noted that the anniversary is referred to as the semi quincentennial and provides an opportunity for reflection, celebration, and education about the principles of freedom, democracy, and self-governance.

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SENATOR TILTON briefly outlined the resolution and said the first whereas clause recognizes the Declaration of Independence as proclaiming the birth of a new nation founded on liberty and equality. She said the resolution also acknowledges the growth of the United States to 50 states, with Alaska joining as the 49th state in 1959, and recognizes Alaska's contributions to the nation's defense, economy, and cultural heritage. She added that the anniversary provides an opportunity to reaffirm commitment to the ideals of the Founding Fathers.

SENATOR TILTON explained that the resolving clauses encourage Alaskan communities, organizations, schools and educational institutions to participate in events, programs, and instruction highlighting shared history. She said the resolution urges the integration of civic education and founding principles into curriculum to inspire future generations, which is why the measure was referred to the Education Committee.

SENATOR TILTON emphasized that the resolution does not mandate participation and does not request funding. She said national programs already exist, including America250, which provides educational resources for educators. She described the Our American Story initiative, which allows students from kindergarten through grade 12, as well as adults, to submit written reflections on America's history. She also described the America's Field Trip program, which allows students to submit essays for the opportunity to win prizes, including a trip to Washington, D.C.

SENATOR TILTON noted that the committee packet includes information showing that organizations such as NCSL, CSG, and other legislative organizations are supporting semi quincentennial activities. She concluded that the sponsor statement describes the resolution as commemorative and focused on federalism, civic engagement, and education. She said Senate Resolution 4 unites Alaskans in celebration and strengthens the state's commitment to education as a pillar of democracy.

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SENATOR STEVENS commented that he appreciates the bill and that according to the Institute for Citizens and Scholars only 1 in 3 Americans would pass the citizenship test. Furthermore, Alaska's national ranking in Civics education is among the lowest.

SENATOR TILTON mentioned taking an online Civics test. She opined that younger generations are losing historical knowledge.

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CHAIR TOBIN opened public testimony on SR 4; finding none, she closed public testimony.

[3:53:04 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN solicited a motion.

[3:53:06 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS moved to report SR 4, work order 34-LS1294\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:53:20 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN found no objection and SR 4 was reported from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[3:53:38 PM](#)

At ease.

[3:54:31 PM](#)

CHAIR TOBIN reconvened the meeting.

[3:55:37 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Tobin adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting at 3:55 p.m.