

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

May 17, 2025

10:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Vice Chair
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Robert Yundt

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 107

"An Act establishing a violation for hindering the Alaska Sunset Commission; establishing the Alaska Sunset Commission to review, audit, and make recommendations on discontinuation of or changes to state entities; and relating to the powers and duties of the Alaska Sunset Commission."

- MOVED CSSB 107(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 3

Urging the United States Congress to grant American Samoans the ability to serve as commissioned officers in the uniformed services of the United States and the right to vote in federal elections.

- MOVED SR 3 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 17

"An Act relating to retirement benefits and military service."

- MOVED HB 17 OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13 (MLV)

Urging the President of the United States to expand evacuation efforts for applicants with approved Special Immigrant Visas, including resumption of evacuation flights organized by the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts; urging the United States Department of State to secure legal protections and

humanitarian assistance for Special Immigrant Visa applicants; urging the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in the United States Department of Homeland Security to expedite the review of applications for Special Immigrant Visas; and requesting that the United States Secretary of State provide a report to Congress regarding efforts to reinstate evacuation flights for applicants with approved Special Immigrant Visas.

- MOVED CSHJR 13 (MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6 (MLV)
Commemorating the 250th birthday of the United States Marine Corps.

- MOVED CSHCR 6 (MLV) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 107

SHORT TITLE: ALASKA SUNSET COMMISSION

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) HUGHES

02/19/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/19/25	(S)	STA, FIN
03/20/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/20/25	(S)	Heard & Held
03/20/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
05/01/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/01/25	(S)	Heard & Held
05/01/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
05/15/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/15/25	(S)	Heard & Held
05/15/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
05/17/25	(S)	STA AT 10:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SR 3

SHORT TITLE: SAMOAN SERVICE & VOTING RIGHTS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) WIELECHOWSKI

05/09/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/09/25	(S)	STA
05/15/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/15/25	(S)	Heard & Held
05/15/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
05/17/25	(S)	STA AT 10:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HB 17

SHORT TITLE: DISABLED VETERANS: RETIREMENT BENEFITS
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RAUSCHER

01/22/25 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25 (H) MLV, FIN
02/18/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124
02/18/25 (H) Heard & Held
02/18/25 (H) MINUTE(MLV)
02/25/25 (H) MLV AT 11:15 AM BARNES 124
02/25/25 (H) Moved HB 17 Out of Committee
02/25/25 (H) MINUTE(MLV)
02/26/25 (H) MLV RPT 7DP
02/26/25 (H) DP: HALL, FIELDS, SADDLER, GRAY,
ALLARD, NELSON, EISCHEID
03/19/25 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM ADAMS 519
03/19/25 (H) Heard & Held
03/19/25 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
04/07/25 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM ADAMS 519
04/07/25 (H) Moved HB 17 Out of Committee
04/07/25 (H) MINUTE(FIN)
04/09/25 (H) FIN RPT 10DP 1NR
04/09/25 (H) DP: BYNUM, JOHNSON, HANNAN, ALLARD,
TOMASZEWSKI, GALVIN, JIMMIE, STAPP,
FOSTER,
04/09/25 (H) SCHRAGE
04/09/25 (H) NR: JOSEPHSON
04/28/25 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
04/28/25 (H) VERSION: HB 17
04/30/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/30/25 (S) STA, FIN
05/15/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/15/25 (S) Heard & Held
05/15/25 (S) MINUTE(STA)
05/17/25 (S) STA AT 10:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HJR 13

SHORT TITLE: AFGHANS, SP. IMMIGRANT VISAS, ASSISTANCE
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) STAPP

03/21/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/21/25 (H) MLV
04/08/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124
04/08/25 (H) Heard & Held
04/08/25 (H) MINUTE(MLV)
04/15/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124
04/15/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --

04/24/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124
 04/24/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 04/29/25 (H) MLV AT 10:15 AM BARNES 124
 04/29/25 (H) Moved CSHJR 13 (MLV) Out of Committee
 04/29/25 (H) MINUTE (MLV)
 04/30/25 (H) MLV RPT CS (MLV) NEW TITLE 4DP
 04/30/25 (H) DP: HALL, GRAY, FIELDS, EISCHEID
 05/07/25 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 05/07/25 (H) VERSION: CSHJR 13 (MLV)
 05/09/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 05/09/25 (S) STA
 05/15/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
 05/15/25 (S) Heard & Held
 05/15/25 (S) MINUTE (STA)
 05/17/25 (S) STA AT 10:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HCR 6

SHORT TITLE: US MARINE CORPS 250TH BIRTHDAY
 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
 05/06/25 (H) Moved CSHCR 6 (MLV) Out of Committee
 05/06/25 (H) MINUTE (MLV)
 05/07/25 (H) MLV RPT CS (MLV) NEW TITLE 7DP
 05/07/25 (H) DP: GRAY, ALLARD, FIELDS, SADDLER,
 HALL, NELSON, EISCHEID
 05/10/25 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
 05/10/25 (H) VERSION: CSHCR 6 (MLV)
 05/12/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 05/12/25 (S) STA
 05/15/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
 05/15/25 (S) Heard & Held
 05/15/25 (S) MINUTE (STA)
 05/17/25 (S) STA AT 10:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR SHELLY HUGHES
 District M
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 107.

MAXINE LABERGE, Researcher
 Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions about SR 3.

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER

District 29

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 17.

HENRY THOMPSON, Staff

Representative Will Stapp

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a brief overview of HJR 13.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:02:35 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Wielechowski, Gray-Jackson, and Chair Kawasaki.

SB 107-ALASKA SUNSET COMMISSION

[10:03:46 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 107 "An Act establishing a violation for hindering the Alaska Sunset Commission; establishing the Alaska Sunset Commission to review, audit, and make recommendations on discontinuation of or changes to state entities; and relating to the powers and duties of the Alaska Sunset Commission."

On May 15, 2025 the committee adopted a Committee substitute (CS) for SB 107, workorder 34-LS-0111\T.

[10:04:12 AM](#)

SENATOR SHELLY HUGHES, District M, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, as sponsor she provided a brief recap of SB 107. She stated that SB 107 would be a useful part of a broader fiscal plan. Around ten other states—both red and blue use this approach. She stated that SB 107 will ensure Alaskans get the best value for public funds by allowing a deeper, more objective review than typical finance committees can provide. She said this tool could help both governors and legislators craft and finalize the state budget more effectively.

[10:05:42 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[10:05:44 AM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN moved to report CSSB 107 work order 34-LS-0111\T, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[10:06:03 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and CSSB 107(STA) was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

SR 3-SAMOAN SERVICE & VOTING RIGHTS

[10:06:17 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 3 Urging the United States Congress to grant American Samoans the ability to serve as commissioned officers in the uniformed services of the United States and the right to vote in federal elections.

[10:06:30 AM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI summarized SR 3. He stated American Samoa is the only U.S. territory where residents are U.S. nationals, not citizens. The people of American Samoa people serve in the military at high rates and pay taxes but can't vote in federal elections or serve as commissioned officers. He stated that this resolution urges Congress to grant them those rights.

[10:07:55 AM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN asked why Samoans are classified as nationals rather than citizens and whether the government of American Samoa was asked their perspective.

[10:08:35 AM](#)

MAXINE LABERGE, Researcher, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, answered questions about SR 3 and said America Samoa does have representation in congress but they would like to have voting rights.

[10:09:13 AM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI stated that there is broad support in American Samoa for voting rights and serving as commissioned officers. However, there's some debate over whether they want U.S. citizenship instead of national status.

[10:09:57 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[10:10:00 AM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI moved to report SR 3, work order 34-LS0963\N, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[10:10:18 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and SR 3 was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

HB 17-DISABLED VETERANS: RETIREMENT BENEFITS

[10:10:32 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 17 "An Act relating to retirement benefits and military service."

[10:11:01 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER, District 29, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, as sponsor he gave a recap of HB 17. He stated that HB 17 lets 100 percent disabled veterans retire up to five years early. It costs the state nothing and gives vets needed flexibility as their disabilities progress.

[10:12:43 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on HB 17; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[10:13:06 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[10:13:09 AM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN moved to report HB 17, work order 34-LS0233\A, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[10:13:26 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and HB 17 was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

HJR 13-AFGHANS, SP. IMMIGRANT VISAS, ASSISTANCE

[10:13:49 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13(MLV) Urging the President of the United States to expand evacuation efforts for applicants with approved Special Immigrant Visas, including resumption of evacuation

flights organized by the Coordinator for Afghan Relocation Efforts; urging the United States Department of State to secure legal protections and humanitarian assistance for Special Immigrant Visa applicants; urging the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services in the United States Department of Homeland Security to expedite the review of applications for Special Immigrant Visas; and requesting that the United States Secretary of State provide a report to Congress regarding efforts to reinstate evacuation flights for applicants with approved Special Immigrant Visas.

[10:14:22 AM](#)

HENRY THOMPSON, Staff, Representative Will Stapp, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, provided a brief overview of HJR 13. He stated the purpose of HJR 13 is to draw attention to the failure of the Special Immigrant Visa program in bringing Iraqi and Afghan allies to the US and granting them citizenship. It urges the executive branch to act and resolve program challenges.

[10:15:40 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on HJR 13; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[10:15:55 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[10:15:59 AM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN moved to report CSHJR 13(MLV), work order 34-LS0710\G, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[10:16:19 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and CSHJR 13(MLV) was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

HCR 6-US MARINE CORPS 250TH BIRTHDAY

[10:16:36 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 6(MLV) Commemorating the 250th birthday of the United States Marine Corps.

[10:17:56 AM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[10:17:59 AM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN moved to report CSHCR 6 (MLV), work order 34-LS0935\N, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

10:18:17 AM

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and CSHCR 6 (MLV) was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

10:18:56 AM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 10:18 a.m.