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**FISCAL NOTE**

**STATE OF ALASKA  
1992 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**BILL NO.** SB-470

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Department Affected: NA  
 Title: Alaska Flag Day - July 9 BRU: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Component: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor: Senate HESS  
 Requestor: Rodey / State Affairs COMPONENT SERIAL NO. 

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**EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)**

OPERATING	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	0					

<b>CAPITAL</b>	0					
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<b>REVENUE FUND SOURCE:</b>	0					
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**FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)**

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER FUND SOURCE:						
<b>TOTAL</b>	0					

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

Estimate of current year impact: None

**ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)**

Prepared By: M. Gifford Phone: 465-4522  
 Division: Senate State Affairs Committee Date: 4/14/92  
 Approved by Senator Pat Rodey, Chair *Pat Rodey*  
 Agency: Alaska State Legislature Date: 4/14/92

## Benny Benson and The Alaska Flag

John Ben (Benny) Benson, designer of the Alaska flag, was born on October 12, 1913, at Chignik, Alaska. His mother was of Aleut-Russian descent and his father was a Swedish fisherman. In 1916, at the age of three, Benny came to the Jesse Lee Home, following his mother's death from pneumonia. He lived at Jesse Lee, first in Unalaska, and later in Seward, until 1932.

Benny's opportunity to design the flag came following Governor Parks' visit to Washington, D.C. There the Governor discovered Alaska was the sole territory or state without a flag. On his return home, the Governor met with several organizations to remedy the situation. The resulting contest to find a suitable territorial flag, sponsored by the American Legion, was held in the Spring of 1927. Benny's simple but elegant design, the unanimous choice of all judges, won first place, and was later adopted as official state flag. When a telegram arrived at school announcing the news, Benny, who never did get used to being in the limelight, was speechless and unable to utter a word. Modesty remained one of Benny's most notable traits.

Benny's described his flag as follows: "The blue is for Alaska's sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaskan flower. The North Star stands for Alaska, which someday will be the most northerly star in our Country's flag. The Dipper is for the Great Bear, signifying strength."

Some years later, Benny met Marie Drake, who wrote Alaska's Flag Song to explain Benny's design to school children. Marie Drake described Benny's design as "beautiful, simple, and meaningful." Her words were subsequently set to music and became the state song.

### Alaska's Flag, Words by Marie Drake

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue -  
Alaska's flag, May it mean to you  
The blue of the sea, the evening sky  
The mountain lakes, and the flow'rs nearby;  
The gold of the early sourdough's dreams,  
The precious gold of the hills and streams;  
The brilliant stars in the northern sky  
The "Bear" - the "Dipper" - and,  
                  shining high,  
The great North Star with its steady light.  
Over land and sea a beacon bright,  
Alaska's flag - to Alaskans dear,  
The simple flag of a last frontier.

Benny was awarded a gold watch, with his winning flag design reproduced on the case. Benny later received a \$1,000 scholarship to attend Hemphill Diesel School in Seattle, and \$2,500 from the Alaska State Legislature.

The original flag, now displayed at the Alaska State Historical Museum in Juneau along with Benny's watch, was first unfurled and flown at the Jesse Lee Home Campus in Seward, on July 9, 1927. Benny had the honor of raising the flag when it was flown at the dedication. On a number of occasions, Benny served as an ambassador of goodwill for the State of Alaska.

ACS credits the following known authors (and some unknown) for their assistance from pieces found in ACS historical files: The Anchorage Times; Phyllis D. Carlson; Greater Anchorage Incorporated; Velma Moos Potter.