

**HB**

**239**

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date Referred: March 8, 1995

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: March 23, 1995

The STATE AFFAIRS Committee considered:

HB 239

HOUSE BILL NO. 239

DRAGONFLY AS STATE INSECT

"An Act declaring the dragonfly as the official state insect."

recommends it be replaced with the following committee substitute CS HB 239 (STA)  the same title  a new title

additional referral to \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

attached amendment(s)

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S): (Dept) \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVES PREVIOUS: (Dept/Date) \_\_\_\_\_

fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

zero fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

zero fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNING WITH RECOMMENDATIONS	DP	DNP	NR	AM
<i>Jeannette James</i>	✓			
<i>Brian P. Fortye</i>	✓			
<i>Joseph R. [unclear]</i>	✓			
<i>Carol K. Robinson</i>	✓			
<i>Ed Willis</i>	✓			
<i>Dale D. [unclear]</i>	✓			

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE *Jeannette James*

9-LS0861C  
Bannister  
3/17/95

**CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 239(STA)**  
**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**  
**NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

**BY THE HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Offered:  
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVE NICHOLIA

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 "An Act declaring the four spot skimmer dragonfly as the official state insect."

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 \* Section 1. AS 44.09 is amended by adding a new section to read:

4           Sec. 44.09.130. STATE INSECT. The four spot skimmer dragonfly is the  
5           official state insect.

House District 36

Marena

McLean

Melkaket

Amuk

Anvik

Arctic Village

Beaver

Bettles

Bloch Creek

Canyon Village

Central

Chalkyitsik

Chicken

Chistochina

Chitina

Chuathbaluk

Circle

Circle Hot Springs

Coldfoot

Copper Center

Copperville

Crooked Creek

Dot Lake

Dry Creek

Eagle

Eagle Village

Evansville

Fort Yukon

Gakona

Galena

Grayling

Gulkana

Healy Lake

Holy Cross

Hughes

Huslia

Katag

Koyukuk

Line Village

Livengood

Lake Minchumina

Lower Kalskag

Manley

Marshall

McCarthy

McGrath

Medfra

Mentasta

Minto

Nabesna

Senana

Nikolai

Northway

Nulato

Pilot Station

Rampart

Red Devil

Ruby

Russian Mission

Shageluk

Slana

Sleetmote

Stevens Village

Stony River

Takotna

Tanacross

Tanana

Telida

Tetlin

Tok

Tuluksak

Tyonek

Upper Kalskag

Venetie

Wiseman

# Representative Irene K. Nicholia

State Capitol • Juneau, Alaska 99801

Phone: 465-4527 FAX: 465-2294

Resources  
Community and Regional Affairs  
International Trade and Tourism

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Representative Jeannette James, Chair  
House State Affairs Committee

FROM: Representative Irene Nicholia *Irene*

DATE: March 13, 1995

RE: Scheduling of HB 239

I would like to request a hearing on House Bill 239, declaring the dragonfly as the official state insect, in the House State Affairs Committee.

This project began in 1992 as an inquiry into the legislative process. The group of students from Aniak, Alaska have put in a great deal of time and effort into nominating, polling, and tallying the results from students across the state. The final step in this process is lobbying for legislative approval.

This team of junior lobbyists has been working diligently to raise enough funds to come to Juneau during the week of April 10th. I am sure they would appreciate being able to observe the House State Affairs Committee deliberate this issue. Please take this time frame into consideration when scheduling HB 239.

Thank you.

- Alatna
- Alcan
- Alakaket
- Aniak
- Anvik
- Arctic Village
- Beaver
- Bettles
- Birch Creek
- Canyon Village
- Central
- Chalkyitsik
- Chicken
- Chistochina
- Chitina
- Chuathbaluk
- Circle
- Circle Hot Springs
- Coldfoot
- Copper Center
- Copperville
- Cracked Creek
- Dot Lake
- Dry Creek
- Eagle
- Eagle Village
- Evansville
- Fort Yukon
- Gakona
- Galena
- Grayling
- Gulkana
- Healy Lake
- Holy Cross
- Hughes
- Hustla
- Katag
- Koyukuk
- Lime Village
- Livengood
- Lake Minchumina
- Lower Kalskag
- Manley
- Marshall
- McCarthy
- McGrath
- Medfra
- Mentasta
- Minto
- Nabesna
- Nenana
- Nikolai
- Northway
- Nulato
- Pilot Station
- Rampart
- Red Devil
- Ruby
- Russian Mission
- Shageluk
- Slana
- Sleetmute
- Stevens Village
- Stony River
- Takotna
- Tanacross
- Tanana
- Telida
- Tetlin
- Tok
- Tulksak
- Tyonek
- Upper Kalskag
- Venette
- Wiseman

# Representative Irene K. Nicholia

State Capitol • Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Phone: 465-4527 FAX: 465-2294

## House Bill 239

*Resources  
Community and Regional Affairs  
International Trade and Tourism*

### SPONSOR STATEMENT

House Bill 239 amends AS 44.09 to designate the dragonfly as the official state insect. This suggestion was first brought to the attention of the legislature by a group of students from Aniak, Alaska.

The students from Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School began requesting nominations for the official state insect in 1992. Along with the nomination for the dragonfly--sponsored by both the Auntie Mary Nicoli students and the students at Marie Drake School in Juneau--were nominations for the Unmarked Slender Mosquito, the Mourning Cloak Butterfly, and the Bumble Bee. When the nomination process had come to a close, ballots were sent to every public school in the state. The results of the election were as follows:

- Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly--3941 votes
- Unmarked Slender Mosquito--3073 votes
- Mourning Cloak Butterfly--2990 votes
- Bumble Bee--1492 votes

Thus, the Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly won the nomination with an 868 vote margin.

Many Alaskans may feel that the mosquito would be a more appropriate candidate for state insect, given the overwhelmingly large population of mosquitos that inhabits our state during the summer months. However, upon further consideration of the matter, the dragonfly seems a more logical choice. First, the Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly is one of the many predators of the mosquito--those of us who have spent many hours in the Alaskan wilderness can appreciate the importance of this fact. Not only does the dragonfly help with the population control of the states most annoying pest, it is one of the largest insects in this, the largest state. Third, the dragonfly's ability to hover and fly forward and backward reminds us of the skillful maneuvering of the bush pilots in Alaska. Last of all, two large compound eyes allow the dragonfly to reflect the many facets of Alaskan life and the diversity that exists within our state.

All of these factors make the dragonfly the most appropriate candidate for the category of official state insect. Please consider the recommendation of our young people and vote the Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly into this most worthy position.

I strongly urge you to support this measure.

# Voice of The Times

## Dragonfly will make a nifty state bug

By PAUL JENKINS

Ya gotta hate it when a pesky liberal does something right. It ain't natural. The this bug deal kicking around in the Senate Resources Committee. At first, it appeared Sen. Georgianna Lincoln was just begging for trouble when she introduced SB97, a measure to make a dragonfly the state insect.

There's tort reform to worry about. There's the looming fiscal crisis. If that's not enough, there's the term limits fracas. And Ms. Lincoln, a Democrat from Rampart, wants to waste time on adopting a state insect? This is the best Democrats can do? A bug bill?

Then, ya find out she's doing it because something like 11,496 school kids from all over Alaska voted to make the four spot skimmer dragonfly the state's official insect. Through oversight or design, Alaska at present finds itself without an official bug, unless you count the Anchorage Daily News.

I submit that no state worth a hoot should be without a real bug on its roster of official stuff. Several states lists grasses, dogs, horses, even nuts. Arizona even has official neckwear, the bolo tie. The only things Alaska can pony up for a list is a flower, a tree, a bird, a song, a gem, a marine mammal, a fossil, a mineral and a sport. But no bug. It ain't respectable.



Jenkins

Apparently, kids in schools across the state thought so, too. During a special election that started in 1992, kids sent their votes for a state bug to the Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School in Aniak for tabulation. The Aniak school and the Auke Bay School in Juneau nominated the four spot skimmer dragonfly that eventually tallied 3,941 votes. The unmarked slender mosquito, received 3,073; the mourning cloak butterfly, 2,990, and the bumblebee, 1,492.

Frankly, I'd have gone with the mosquito, which lost by a lousy 868 votes. There, probably ought to be an Alaska Public Offices Commission investigation or a recount supervised by the Division of Elections, like every other election in this state. But, hey, the kids apparently wanted the results sometime this year and without the ensuing lawsuits.



In the long run, I suppose, the dragonfly should work out well as a state insect. It can hover, then move forward and backwards, like a lot of our politicians. Additionally, it's strong. It's fast. It's a hunter. It's capable of amazing aerobatics. And it eats mosquitoes. Anything that eats mosquitoes is good. Of course, anything that eats more mosquitoes is even better.

The kids at Aniak sent the vote tallies along to Lincoln, who introduced her legislation in the Senate. They say they hope the bill will "fly" through the Legislature. The Aniak kids, fifth- through eighth-graders calling themselves the Dragonfly Lobby Team, have raised money to visit Juneau in early April, when the measure is scheduled to come up.

And it should pass. Lawmakers should put aside their partisan differences and do the right thing, or risk ticking off herds of kids with fax machines, telephones and computers. Besides, Alaska needs to take its rightful place among sovereign states with official bugs. We will be the only state with a dragonfly. We will have a bug and Texas won't. And we will be the first state to adopt an official bug in the 1990s.

To date, there are something like 17 states with official insects. Most of their bugs, I gotta tell ya, are wimpy. Of the 17, 13 went with honeybees or ladybugs, showing a certain lack of imagination even

if honeybees and ladybugs do good work.

Arkansas, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin all went with the honeybee. All adopted the bee between 1973 and 1985, indicating more than a decade of hard lobbying by bee lovers. And, for the record, Utah's state emblem is a beehive.

Delaware, Massachusetts, New York and Ohio went with the ladybug, and they all did it between 1974 and 1989. Connecticut picked the praying mantis in 1977; Illinois, the monarch butterfly in 1975; and Maryland, the Baltimore checkspot butterfly in 1973.

Then, there's New Mexico, where men are men and the official vegetable is chili and frijol. I'm not kidding. The official cookie, by the way, is something called a bizcochito. Its official bug is the Tarantula Hawk Wasp, adopted in 1989. Impressive. I don't know what these critters do, but, just based on the name, I believe I'd buy one a bizcochito and call it "sir" if I got close.

That aside, when Lincoln's bug bill is a done deal, kids all over the state who took part in the voting will see that people, working together actually can make something happen.

And all in all, even if they passed over the venerable mosquito, that ain't so bad.

Paul Jenkins is an editor of The Anchorage Times.

DRAGONFLY LOBBY TEAM  
Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School  
P.O. Box 26  
Aniak, AK 99557

Representative Irene Nicholia  
State Capital  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Nicholia:

We are the members of the Dragonfly Lobby Team from Aniak, Alaska. There are eight students on our team, ranging from fifth to eighth grades. Our insect team coach is Ruth Bradford and our science teacher is Larry Bradford. We have worked on this project, along with many other students, since 1992 when we requested nominations, to the present, in our quest for an official state insect for Alaska. As you can see from the enclosed information, we were as busy as mosquitoes, and as determined as dragonflies to work out every detail. Now that the votes are in, we are asking your help in bringing the Four Spot Dragonfly before the State Congress for a vote.

The eight members of our lobby team, coach, and chaperone are planning a trip to Juneau in April or May to lobby for the proposed dragonfly. The members of the team have earned money to pay for the trip and are looking forward to seeing our legislators at work. It is our hope that we could present our proposal to a committee, or watch as it is presented on the floor. We need your help in determining a realistic timeline.

We sincerely appreciate your support.

Sincerely yours;

*Ruth Bradford*  
Ruth Bradford, DLT Coach  
*Larry Bradford*  
Larry Bradford, Science Teacher

*Melanie Mattes*, *Dana Siehl*, *Claudia Aluia, Chaperone*, *Andreas Fursty*,  
*Bruck Clift*, *Derek Aluia*, *Rachael Brooks*,  
*Deede Bush*, *Rainy Dink*

enc: Adopt A State Insect  
Student comments  
cc: Senator Georgeanna Lincoln  
Representative Gene Kubina

## **Let's Adopt A State Insect!**

Have you ever been walking beside a stream or lake and had a streamlined, olive and yellow creature dart up to you, pause in mid-air checking you out with its bulgy eyes, then go into reverse and disappear into the willows? What was it? A miniature helicopter? No. A science fiction character? No. The answer is the Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly, the insect that 3,941 students in schools from the Aleutians to the North Slope voted as their choice to become the official state insect of Alaska. The dragonfly was nominated by Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School in Aniak and Auke Bay School in Juneau in the spring of 1993.

Ballots were sent to every public school in the state and the votes came pouring in during the school year of 1993-94. The students of Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School counted and tallied the votes, locating each responding school on a map of Alaska and marking the town or village with a dot. The vote was:

Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly- 3941

Unmarked Slender Mosquito- 3073

Mourning Cloak Butterfly- 2990

Bumble Bee- 1492

Election results showed that students in city schools tended to vote for the mosquito, perhaps because people in urban areas are more impressed by the importance of the mosquito in the food chain, and are not bothered by the pests as much as those living in rural areas. Elementary, junior high, and high school students voted decidedly with a margin of 868 votes for the dragonfly, which preys upon the pesky mosquito. The election returns reflect enthusiastic participation by students all over the state.

The Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly is an excellent choice for the largest state in America. Its four membranous wings span 2 and 3/4 to 3 and 1/8 inches. It has the ability to hover and fly forward and backward, just like the helicopters that maneuver in and out of otherwise inaccessible areas of bush Alaska.

The body of the Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly is olive brown with a yellow stripe on each side and a yellow stripe on the leading edge of each wing. The colors represent the long nights of Alaskan winters. The yellow stripes are like the searching headlights of vehicles, and the sure promise of the returning sun over the spring horizon. The face is yellow with two large compound eyes, with which the dragonfly sees kaleidoscopic images, reminding us of the many facets of Alaskan history and culture. From the beginning of its life, the dragonfly is a symbol of strength. The male guards the female from other males while the female rests on a twig or leaf then drops her eggs one at a time into or close to the water. The larvae prey upon water insects, tadpoles, or even small fish. They make lightning fast jabs with their lower lip in order to enjoy a tasty meal.

According to Dr. Mark Oswood, Professor of Aquatic Biology at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, "The dragonfly is an elegant organism. Its beauty puts it right in there with butterflies. It is an incredible aerial acrobat. It probably lives more than one year in the larvae stage and spends the winter in the frozen mud. It emerges as an adult during the second summer."

The fact that adult dragonflies have chewing mouth parts and feed on other flying insects like mosquitoes is perhaps the main reason for the dragonfly's victory over the Slender Unmarked Mosquito. It is a born hunter, a true Alaskan.

No matter how large or small the village or city or the geographical location of the school, students found a new interest in the importance of insects to life as it is in Alaska. They campaigned in their schools, studied the pros and cons of each nominee, and carried out the democratic process by expressing their choice with a vote. 11,496 students across the state are now waiting to see the final result of that election. It is now up to our legislators: Senator Georgeanna Lincoln, Representative Irene Nicholia, and Representative Gene Kubina to present the bill in the House and Senate.

Eight students have been chosen to go to Juneau in April to lobby for the Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly. They are currently earning their way by making and selling delicious baked goodies and raffling a variety of crafts and items that have been donated.

Can students make a difference in government? Yes! Can students make things happen in the real world? Yes! And we will soon have the Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly adopted as the official Alaska state insect to prove that students can make changes using true Alaskan diligence!

**LET'S ADOPT THE FOUR SPOT SKIMMER DRAGONFLY FOR ALASKA!**

## COMMENTS MADE BY STUDENTS ABOUT THE ELECTION

Fred Ipalook Elementary, Barrow: The 5th grade surveyed the whole school to get our total vote.

Chiniak School: Our kids are mostly afraid of bumblebees. Dragonflies are common on our beaches.

Blackwell School, Anvik: Thank you for sharing with us.

Campbell Elementary, Anchorage: We enjoyed participating.

Andreafski High School and Elicarvicuar Elementary, St. Mary's: We enjoyed this project. The students in grades 5 and 6 campaigned for the four different insects. They made a presentation to grades Kindergarten through grade four.

Sand Point School, Sandpoint: We had a nice election. 88% of the student body voted. We made slogans: Vote for the bumble bee, just remember where your honey comes from!  
Vote for someone you know, vote for the mosquito!

Glacier Valley Student Council: We held a school vote. Thank you for making us a part of your project.

Port Protection School: I think the Dragonfly should be the state insect because it has compound eyes to see far and it can fly all sorts of directions and can hover. My personal reason is because it eats small insects like mosquitoes. Mosquitoes bug me a lot. Anthony Dallas.

Beluga School, Beluga: Thank you for letting us participate.

Main Elementary, Kodiak: We had almost 100% participation and our students are very excited to find out the results.

Valdez High School: Thanks for letting us have input.

### Cooper Landing student notes:

I like the dragonfly because they are useful and look neat. Austin

I chose the 4 Spot dragonfly because they eat the nasty bugs and are pretty. Terrin H.

Dragonflies keep the insect population down and they do not hurt people. Jeremy Ellis

**Aniak Schools: Comments by the Dragonfly Lobby Team members:**

The dragonfly has been around since prehistoric times. They outlived the dinosaurs which shows that Alaska has a history of more than just snow and ice.

by Bruck Clift, 7th grade

The dragonfly is quite unique because it is colorful and larger than most flying insects. Unfortunately there are not enough to destroy all the mosquitoes in rural Alaska!

by Rainy Diehl, 8th grade

I voted for the dragonfly because I don't like mosquitoes. During the summer Alaska is a beautiful place to be. It would be even better with FEWER MOSQUITOES!

by Dana Diehl, 6th grade

I fly high, I'm a Four Spot Skimmer Dragonfly,  
Watch me soar through the sky,  
I represent Alaska, cause I'm an awesome guy.  
I'll eat mosquitoes, 'til the day I die.

by Deidre Bush, 8th grade

I like the mosquito but it is a pest,  
All it does is bite you.  
I like the dragonfly  
It eats the pests.  
Dragonflies represent Alaska the best.

by Rachael Boelens, 7th grade

The dragonfly is long, slender, and graceful. It eats mosquitoes and was the choice of most Alaskan students. I believe the dragonfly deserves to be our state insect.

by Andrea Gusty, 6th grade

Winter in Alaska is COLD. Any insect as big and beautiful as the dragonfly that can survive Alaska's cold deserves to be the state insect.

by Derek Aluia, 7th grade

The committee and I worked hard on this project. We stuffed hundreds of envelopes, counted votes, baked, earned money for postage and the lobby team trip to Juneau. We're not about to stop working until the dragonfly is the official state insect!

by Melanie Matter, 5th grade.