

HJR

15

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

DIVISION OF PARKS & OUTDOOR RECREATION OFFICE OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

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February 25, 2009

Representative Scott Kawasaki
Alaska House of Representatives
Room 428, State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

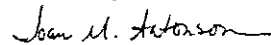
Dear Representative Kawasaki:

The Alaska Historical Commission is the citizen's board that serves as the geographic names board for the State of Alaska. The members of the Alaska Historical Commission met at Juneau last week and reaffirmed the 1976 decision by its predecessor, the State Board on Geographic Names, and its 2001 vote of reaffirmation that the name of Mt. McKinley be changed to Denali.

Commission members are aware that a member of Ohio's congressional delegation introduces a bill each new session of Congress declaring McKinley the official name for the mountain. Members also are aware of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names' policy to take no action on a geographic name proposal when there is pending legislation regarding a name in Congress. Members said, however, the mountain has great importance for Alaska's first people who occupied this land for thousands of years and is a very special place to most Alaskans.

The Alaska Historical Commission members support the proposed House Joint Resolution 15 of the 26th Alaska State Legislature and urge its passage.

Sincerely,



Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

For Judith E. Bittner

State Historic Preservation Officer

Alaska Historical Commission

Lieutenant Governor Sean Parnell, Chair

Judith E. Bittner, SHPO	Patricia Roppel, Wrangell
Romer E. Derr, Juneau	Jonathon S. Ross, Anchorage
Michael R. Martz, Bethel	Douglas W. Veltre, Anchorage
David. Moore, Anchorage	Candy Waugaman, Fairbanks



Representative Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

District 9 Fairbanks

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 11, 2009

To: Representative Bob Herron, Co-Chair
House Committee on Community and Regional Affairs

From: Scott Kawasaki
Representative District 9

RE: House Joint Resolution 15

for Rep Scott Kawasaki

I respectfully request a hearing to be scheduled in the House Committee on Community and Regional Affairs for House Joint Resolution 15, urging the United States Congress to change the name of Mount McKinley to Denali.

A copy of the resolution, sponsor statement, and additional material are attached.

There will be various testimonies given from multiple locations from around the state at many LIO locations. At this point in time, we have not confirmed the list of witnesses that will present when the bill receives a hearing.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call Mercedes Theuer at 465-6890.

In Juneau o State Capitol Juneau, Alaska 99801

In Fairbanks o 1292 Sadler Way Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Juneau o (907) 465-3466 o Fax (907) 465-2937 o Fairbanks o (907) 456-7423 o Fax (907) 451-9293

Email: Representative_Scott_Kawasaki@legis.state.ak.us

Referral File-All materials included here from
(H) CRA Committee hearing on February, 26, 2009.



Representative Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

District 9 Fairbanks

House Joint Resolution 15 Sponsor Statement

"A Resolution Urging the United States Congress to Change the Name of Mount McKinley Back to Denali."

Millions of people from all over the world come to Alaska every year to engage in our unique culture and embrace our spectacular environment. Mount McKinley is viewed as the centerpiece of that environment, but its name disregards Alaskan culture and undermines its majesty. The State of Alaska has been denied the right to rename this geographical landmark since 1975 due to a block in the United States Congress. It is time to reassert our interests and bring attention to the importance of the Denali name.

The intent of HJR 15 is to rechristen Mount McKinley its rightful Athabascan name, Denali, meaning "The High One." The highest peak on the continent is widely recognized as Denali, but officially renaming it would properly respect the mountain's history and the culture of Alaska Natives.

Should the mountain forever maintain the name of a president who never visited Alaska, a name which the mountain received in 1896 when McKinley had just been named the Republican candidate, the mountain's current name would forever linger as a reminder of the usurpation of the state's right to name geographical landmarks. Having made several efforts to rename the mountain since its designation as Mount McKinley, it is clear the people of Alaska generally share this aspiration.

I urge you to support HJR 15 for the sake of Alaskan culture.

In Juneau ◦ State Capitol Juneau, Alaska 99801

In Fairbanks ◦ 1292 Sadler Way Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Juneau ◦ (907) 465-3466 ◦ Fax (907) 465-2937 ◦ Fairbanks ◦ (907) 456-7423 ◦ Fax (907) 451-9293

Email: Representative_Scott_Kawasaki@legis.state.ak.us

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN: The House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

TO: HJR 15 (HCRA)

OFFERED BY: Representative Kawasaki

Delete at page 1, lines 7-9

Add the following at page 1, lines 7-9:

WHEREAS "Denali" translates to "The High One" from the Koyukon dialect of the Athabaskan people and is indicative of its worldwide recognition as the highest mountain on the continent of North America, standing at 20,320 feet; and

AMENDMENT 2

OFFERED IN: The House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

TO: HJR 15 (HCRA)

OFFERED BY: Representative Kawasaki

Delete at page 2, lines 1-2

Add the following at page 2, line 1-2:

WHEREAS the Alaska Board of Geographical Names officially recognizes the name of the mountain as "Denali"; and



Alaska State Legislature

1975

Source:

HCS SJR 6 am H

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6

Relating to the renaming of Mt. McKinley.

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

WHEREAS for many years Alaska's famed Mt. McKinley was known as Denali; and

WHEREAS Denali is a name highly honored among the Native people of Alaska; and

WHEREAS one of the aims of naming mountains, bridges, lakes or the like should be to honor and keep alive the heritage of those who were here before us; and

WHEREAS the renaming of Mt. McKinley as Denali would be a fitting and proper gesture to a large segment of the Alaskan population and would be originally Alaskan; and

WHEREAS the Legislature wishes to preserve the traditional name of Mt. McKinley National Park;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that the Secretary of the Interior is respectfully requested to direct the United State Board on Geographic Names to officially designate Mt. McKinley as Denali; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that Mt. McKinley National Park be renamed McKinley National Park.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Rogers C. B. Morton, Secretary, Department of the Interior; the Honorable C. Sumner Spalding, Chairman, United States Board on Geographic Names; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the

Honorable Mike Gravel, U. S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U. S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 229

To provide for the retention of the name of Mount McKinley.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 7, 2009

Mr. RYAN of Ohio (for himself and Ms. SUTTON) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To provide for the retention of the name of Mount McKinley.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. RETENTION OF NAME OF MOUNT MCKINLEY.**

4 Notwithstanding any other authority of law, the
5 mountain located 63 degrees 04 minutes 12 seconds north,
6 by 151 degrees 00 minutes 18 seconds west shall continue
7 to be named and referred to for all purposes as Mount
8 McKinley.

○

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Daily News - Miner

Fairbanks lawmaker wants to rename Mt. McKinley

By [Rena Delbridge](#)

Originally published Tuesday, February 10, 2009 at 12:39 a.m.

Updated Tuesday, February 10, 2009 at 10:21 a.m.

JUNEAU — It's taken years of patience, but an Alaska legislator sees a window of opportunity to change the name of North America's tallest mountain from Mount McKinley to Denali.

The window could be as narrow as a weather break a mountaineer hopes for in a bid to summit the 20,322-foot tall peak, but Rep. Scott Kawasaki, D-Fairbanks, is making the attempt.

"The people of Alaska should have the right to name their own monuments, and Denali is one of the big ones," he said. "Now is our opportunity to reassert our authority over our mountain ... the name Denali means something, culturally, to most Alaskans."

He filed a House resolution that, if approved, would urge Congress in Washington, D.C., to make the change.

According to Kawasaki, Alaskans have been denied the right to rename the landmark since 1975 due to a block in Congress.

Like many natural features of the American landscape, the mountain was named for a U.S. president, William McKinley of Ohio, as a token to a popular national figure of the time.

McKinley, who never visited the territory of Alaska, was the Republican nominee when prospector William A. Dickey dubbed the landmark in his honor.

Native Alaskans call the mountain Denali, which means The High One in Athabaskan. Kawasaki's bill includes a notation that restoring the original name may help "to rectify past injustices toward Alaska Native peoples."

Since 1975, Ohio Rep. Ralph Regula blocked legislation in Congress to rename the mountain.

Regula's district includes McKinley's hometown. He filed legislation yearly protecting the mountain's name, and with a bill pending, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names can't make a change.

While the moves to prevent a change ebbed with Regula's retirement this year, two other Ohio representatives, Betty Sutton and Tim Ryan, have pledged to continue the battle — and in January filed a bill blocking a name change.

Kawasaki grew interested in the debate at the beginning of his first term in the Legislature, about two years ago.

A high school student in Fairbanks sent him a message via Facebook, the social networking site, asking him to consider support for a name change because of the traditional and cultural value Denali has in many Alaskan communities.

The representative hasn't forgotten, and he renewed his interest recently following an e-mail from an Alaskan studying at Yale, who pointed out now could be the perfect time to launch an offensive.

Kawasaki's House Joint Resolution 15 was introduced Monday and referred to Community and Regional Affairs and the Resources committees.

The representative said he'll talk with Interior senators about sponsoring a mirror proposal in that body.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Denali or McKinley?

My wife and I visited Alaska for a few days about 20 years ago. It was because of that visit that this news item attracted my interest

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — A move is under way to change the name of North America's tallest mountain from Mount McKinley to Denali.

The mountain in Alaska was named for President William McKinley of Ohio, who never visited the territory which later became the nation's 49th state.

State Rep. Scott Kawasaki has filed a resolution that would have Alaska urge Congress to make the change.

Kawasaki says the people of Alaska should have the right to name their own monuments. Denali is the Native American name for the mountain.

Since 1975, Ohio Congressman Ralph Regula blocked legislation to rename the mountain. Regula's district included McKinley's hometown of Canton. Regula retired this year, but two other lawmakers from Ohio have pledged to continue his fight.

Every Alaskan I talked to referred to the mountain as Denali, not Mount McKinley. Once I stood in Earthquake Park in Anchorage and was staring at a huge mountain off in the distance. I asked a passerby which mountain it was. He said it was Denali. Wow, I thought. The thing is a hundred miles away and it looks like it's just outside of town

Kawasaki has a point about how the people of Alaska should have the right to name their own monuments.

I was born and raised in Ohio, and I have distant kin in Canton. McKinley's name on a mountain in Alaska means little to me.

There's nothing wrong with "Denali." Change the name.

Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong

By James Loewen

New Press. 416 pp. \$18.77

Friday, March 10, 2000

Chapter One: The Far West

The Tallest Mountain — The Silliest Naming

ALASKA Denali (Mt. McKinley)

Since people probably reached Alaska before any other part of the Western Hemisphere, they probably named North America's tallest mountain thousands of years ago. They didn't call it Mt. McKinley.

Replacing Native American names with those of European Americans is a form of cultural imperialism. The practice declares that the new rulers of the landscape can afford to ignore what Native names mean and connote in favor of new names that typically have no relation to what is named.

Low-profile conflicts have raged for many years between those who want to change the names of localities and geographic features back to their original Native names, and those who want them named for European American people, towns, or words. To some degree this is a contest between Native Americans and European Americans, but European Americans are usually found on both sides of the arguments. The battles might also be characterized as between traditionalists and those desiring change, except that both parties claim to have tradition on their side. Denali, or Mt. McKinley, dramatically embodies these disputes about names all across America, not only because it is such a dramatic place but also because the controversy at Denali has gone on for more than twenty-five years.

William A. Dickey renamed the peak, the tallest point in North America, Mt. McKinley in 1896. Why he got to name it is hard to fathom. Dickey had come to Alaska spurred by discoveries of gold in Cook Inlet. With three companions he made it to Talkeetna and saw Denali, "the great one" in the language of the nearby Tanaina Indians. According to C. H. Merriam, testifying before the U.S. Geographical Board in 1917, "The right of the discoverer to name geographical features has never been questioned," but Dickey was no discoverer. Native people had discovered the mountain thousands of years earlier. Even if only *white* people "discover," Russians saw it in the 1770s or 1780s and named it Bulshaia Gora, "big mountain." Even if only *English-speaking* white people "discover," George Vancouver saw Denali in 1794. Dickey was not even the first white *American* to see it; other Americans had preceded him by a quarter century.

Dickey had no serious reason to name the mountain as he did. William McKinley had not yet been martyred when he received the honor.

McKinley had not yet been martyred when he received the honor, indeed he had not even been elected president. Nor had McKinley ever been to the mountain, or even to Alaska. William Dickey favored conservative fiscal policies, while most people in the West wanted to expand the amount of money in circulation by minting more silver coins and certificates. Dickey was irritated by arguments he had lost with "free silver" partisans on his trip and decided to retaliate by naming Denali after the gold standard champion.

"The original naming was little more than a joke," according to George R. Stewart, author of *American Place-Names*. From the first, some people preferred the Native name, and Dickey's frivolous reason for choosing McKinley gave them ammunition. Nevertheless, probably because he wrote about his trip in the *New York Sun*, Dickey's choice began to catch on. McKinley defeated William Jennings Bryan in 1896, so at least the mountain turned out to be named after a president, and, when McKinley was shot in Buffalo in 1901, after a martyred president.

Today however, many Americans consider the Native name more melodious and object to "McKinley" on aesthetic grounds—as if the Mississippi River had been renamed for, say, Zachary Taylor. Others support Native efforts to gain more acceptance, including better recognition on the landscape. "It's time we listened to the Native people of Alaska," declared Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska in 1991. "This mountain is the largest in North America. It was named by the Natives long before we arrived."

Nationally, a lone congressman from Ohio prevents the renaming of the mountain. In 1975, Rep. Ralph Regula from Canton, William McKinley's hometown, blocked a compromise proposed by the Alaska legislature to name the mountain Denali and leave the national park surrounding it named for McKinley. Five years later the National Park Service agreed to a compromise Regula couldn't block: it changed the name of Mt. McKinley National Park to Denali National Park, but the mountain stayed Mt. McKinley. This resolution proved unstable, however. Finding its Native lobby more persuasive than Ohio's McKinley lobby, Alaska changed its name for the mountain to Denali, relegating the 25th president to the parenthetical statement, "(also known as Mt. McKinley)." Regula has found a way to block any change on the national level, however. His aide told me, "The Board of Geographic Names won't change names so long as legislation on the subject is pending. Congressman Regula always has legislation pending." The legislation never gets anywhere, but it suffices to prevent action by the board.

When the Board on Geographic Names was considering a proposal to rename the mountain in 1977, Congressman Regula testified, "This action would be an insult to the memory of President McKinley and to the people of my district and the nation who are so proud of his heritage." But Americans *aren't!* That's the problem: most Americans don't rank William McKinley very high in the pantheon of presidents. They remember him if at all as a creation of political boss Mark Hanna, beholden to big business, and addicted to high tariffs. He also got us bogged down in a seemingly endless colonial war in the Philippines (25). Such facts do not deter Regula, who portrays McKinley as "a champion of the working class" and credits him for "settlement of the

long-standing Spanish-American conflict."

Naturally the congressman's office claims higher principles, not mere local pride, motivate Regula to block renaming the mountain. "The congressman feels that a lot of money goes into maps," emphasized aide Barbara Wainman, "and names shouldn't be changed lightly." Moreover, she noted, if they win Denali, Native groups will want to change other names.

On that last point Wainman is right. Entry 24 tells that Native groups *do* want to change other names all across America. And American Indians are winning some of these battles. Memphis renamed DeSoto Bluff "Chickasaw Heritage State Park." "Custer's Last Stand" is now "The Little Bighorn Battlefield." Also, the U.S. Board on Geographic Names adopted a policy in 1990 to favor names derived from American Indian, Inuit, and Polynesian languages. Eventually Natives will outlast Ralph Regula and rename Denali.

E-Mail This Article

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Chapter 3

DOMESTIC GEOGRAPHIC NAMES POLICIES

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names has formulated policies and procedures that deal with particular naming problems or issues. These policies have been developed over the past 100 years to encourage and permit uniformity and objectivity in the decision-making process and to assist in national standardization. Although most proposed geographic name situations and conditions will be addressed by these policies, there may be certain instances in which other factors must be considered to arrive at a suitable decision.

POLICY I: NAMES BEING CONSIDERED BY CONGRESS

Geographic names and their applications specifically established by an act of Congress are official by law and, therefore, take precedence over decisions of the Board. Occasionally, a name or name-change proposal submitted to the Board becomes at the same time a matter of proposed legislation before Congress. To prevent confusion by possible conflicting action by the bodies, the Board adheres to the following policy:

Policy

The U.S. Board on Geographic Names will not render a decision on a name or its application if the matter is also being considered by the Congress of the United States. If Congress does not act on the proposed legislation by the end of its second session, the Board will not act on the case for 90 days after the beginning of the next session of Congress. If Congress formally declines to act on proposed naming legislation, the Board will wait 90 days before deciding on the case, unless new legislation is introduced during that period.

Approved by:	Approved by:
Board on Geographic Names	Secretary of the Interior
March 12, 1981	April 20, 1981

POLICY II: NAME CHANGES

Geographic names, as do other categories of proper names, perform an important reference or label function in language. Each name identifies a particular geographic feature, place, or area. This function requires a high degree of stability in the spoken and written forms of names and their applications. Consequently, changes in existing names should not be made without good reason. The U.S. Board on Geographic Names will consider every proposal involving a name change on an individual basis, and the merits of each case will be carefully evaluated.

Definition

"Name change" means formally changing the proper name of a place, feature, or area in the United States or its territories and outlying areas now recognized by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as official for use on Federal maps and in other Federal publications. The Board recognizes three classes of name changes:

- Those made to bring Federal official usage into agreement with well-established local usage.
- Those made to eliminate particular name problems as in cases involving derogatory names, name duplication, and names originally authorized on the basis of incorrect information.
- Those made at the request of persons or organizations, public or private, for commemorative or other reasons important to the proposer.

Policy

sec. 1

General: The U.S. Board on Geographic Names does not encourage changes in official geographic names. It will not initiate changes in domestic geographic names except in rare cases such as those involving certain derogatory names and name duplications. All name change proposals are evaluated in cooperation with State geographic names authorities, Federal, State, and tribal agencies, local governments, other authoritative bodies, and the public.

sec. 2

Conforming to Local Usage: It is the policy of the Board to follow present-day local usage whenever possible. However, the Board will consider proposals to change official names that do not agree with well-established local usage or its applications. Considerations other than local usage may be overriding in certain individual cases. Factors such as Board policies, document usage, population density, and State, tribal, and local governmental needs are always considered in Board decisions.

sec. 3

Derogatory Names: The Board has a firm policy prohibiting the inclusion of a word in an official geographic name considered by the Board to be derogatory to any racial, ethnic, gender, or religious group (see Policy V: Derogatory Names).

sec. 4

Duplicate Names: Common names are often applied over and over again in the naming process. Where duplication leads to confusion, the Board encourages requests to change names in order to eliminate duplication (see Policy VII: Name Duplication).

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6. Indians of North America—Alaska—Names. I. Kari,
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Cover photo: Shem Pete in his chief's clothing at a Cook Inlet Region, Inc. potlatch in October, 1985. Photo by Kathy Kiefer.

Preparation of this book was funded in part by a grant from the State of Alaska, administered by the Department of Community and Regional Affairs, through the 1985 Cultural Heritage Program of Cook Inlet Region, Inc. Funding was also provided by Cook Inlet Region, Inc., and by Alaska Native Language Center, College of Liberal Arts, University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

The University of Alaska is an EO/AA employer and educational institution.

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P.O. Drawer 93330
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Athabaskan Names for Mount McKinley

by James Kari

The tallest mountains in the Alaska Range are literally in the center of traditional Alaska Athabaskan territory. The Athabaskans surrounding the Alaska Range have two names for the tallest mountain—one is found in the languages north or west of the range, and one in the languages to the south. These are listed here in the practical writing systems of these languages.

North or west of the Alaska Range: 'The High One'

Deenaalee	Koyukon
Denaze	Upper Kuskokwim
Denadhe	Tanana
Denadhe	Holikachuk
Dengadh, Dengadhiy	Ingalik

South of the Alaska Range: 'Big Mountain'

Dghelay Ka'a	Upper Inlet Dena'ina
Dghili Ka'a	Lower Inlet Dena'ina
Dghelaay Ce'e	Ahtna

The name Denali is derived from the Koyukon name. This name does not mean 'The Great One', as is commonly believed, but is instead based on a verb theme meaning 'high' or 'tall'. William Dickey's statement, "The Indians of Cook Inlet have always called this the Bulshaia (great) mountain" (1897:325), is not correct. Dickey recorded the Russian word for 'big'.

The first documented sighting of the mountain was in February 1834, when an Alaska Native, Andrei Glazunov, saw a high mountain from the mouth of the Stony River in the middle Kuskokwim River area. He recorded the name as "Tenada" (VanStone 1959). This is clearly the Ingalik name **Dengadh**. Glazunov is

said to have been a Russian creole and a speaker of Kodiak Alutiiq, an Eskimo language. He was literate in Russian, and he was formally documenting previously unexplored areas of the Kuskokwim and Yukon rivers at the direction of Admiral Ferdinand von Wrangell. Tenada and other names from Glazunov's journal appear on the 1839 Wrangell map, the best map of its day of the southcentral Alaska area (Wrangell 1980 [1839]; see p.35).

Dickey, who was quite euphoric about being the first white man on the middle Susitna River in 1896, thought that his sketch map of the Susitna River (Moore 1981:16; see p. 159) was the first to record a name for the tallest mountain.

The choice for a name for the tallest mountain continues to be controversial. Brooks, in order to enhance the case for the name Mount McKinley, claimed that there was no Russian map with names on the tallest mountains of the Alaska Range (Brooks 1911:24, 1953:230).

Donald Orth, secretary of the U.S. Board of Geographic Names (U.S.B.G.N.), has summarized the Denali-McKinley name change controversy (1980, 1985). In 1975 the Alaska legislature officially adopted the name Denali for the mountain and recommended that name to the U.S.B.G.N. However, the Board will not issue a ruling because in 1977 a bill was introduced in Congress by the Ohio (President McKinley's home state) delegation to retain in perpetuity the name Mount McKinley. This bill has never come up for a vote, and is apparently still pending. As of 1985 the U.S.B.G.N. had received 25,000 letters and signatures from throughout the United States, with about 68% favoring the name Denali.

A congressional vote to change the name would emphasize the importance and desirability of preserving indigenous place names.

[Close this window](#)[Print this page](#)**FAIRBANKS****Daily News - Miner****Restoring Denali****Mountain's name blocked by flawed agency policy**

Published Wednesday, February 18, 2009

The names of past presidents cover our maps like left-over campaign signs. These presidents may have been fine citizens, but the minor memorials to them are too often next to meaningless.

So it has gone with Alaska's and North America's tallest mountain, dubbed Mount McKinley in 1896 by a prospector seeking to promote the Republican nominee for president, William McKinley of Ohio.

A far more interesting, unique and descriptive name existed for the mountain long before it became McKinley. That traditional Athabascan name, Denali, should be restored, as Fairbanks Rep. Scott Kawasaki has urged Congress to do. He introduced a resolution to that effect in the Alaska Legislature.

However, the easiest route to restoring the mountain's proper name may not be through Congress but rather through the U.S. Department of the Interior. Within that department lies the Board of Geographic Names, and that board has a policy that has been gamed for decades by Denali's opponents.

The board's "Policy I" is simple: "The U.S. Board of Geographic Names will not render a decision on a name or its application if the matter is also being considered by the Congress of the United States."

Not surprisingly, the members of Congress from William McKinley's home state of Ohio are happy to ensure, year after year, that "the matter" is brought before Congress. McKinley was the nation's 25th president when he was assassinated in 1901. He never visited Alaska.

This session, Rep. Tim Ryan, D-Ohio, fulfilled his duty by introducing HR 229, which states: "Notwithstanding any other authority of law, the mountain located 63 degrees 04 minutes 12 seconds north, by 151 degrees 00 minutes 18 seconds west shall continue to be named and

referred to for all purposes as Mount McKinley.”

That qualifies as “being considered by Congress” under the geographic names board policy. So the board will not consider any petitions to rename Mount McKinley as Denali.

The board’s reasoning when it adopted this policy was sound. While the board is the authoritative source of all names in the United States, its decisions, of course, can be trumped by an act of Congress. So, to avoid wasting time on names likely to be nullified in short order, the board suspends action when such legislation is before Congress.

Unfortunately, this policy is easily abused. Any congressional delegation that opposes a geographic name change may halt the board’s consideration indefinitely, regardless of the merits.

It’s time for a new policy. Since this policy is neither in law nor in regulation, it can be changed at any time with a minimal public process.

The current board policy was approved by Secretary of the Interior James Watt on April 21, 1981. Watt, a Colorado resident who served under President Ronald Reagan, drew criticism for his environmental policies before being drummed out of office for an offensive joke.

It should give Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, also of Colorado but serving under President Barack Obama, great pleasure to rewrite one of Watt’s well-intentioned but flawed guidelines: Policy I of the U.S. Board of Geographic Names.



Dedicated to preserving the Athabascan way of life.

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May 27, 2008

Ms. Carla Beam
Community Affairs Director
BP Exploration Inc.
PO Box 196612
Anchorage, AK 99519

Dear Carla,

Our project, *Sharing Alaska Native Traditional Knowledge*, will focus on elements of the People (Denai'na), language (Denak kanaaga), lands (Dena' nena) and history (Yo do na). An example of this concept is in the story of Mount Denali.

Mount Denali is North America's highest mountain. Its name means the Tall One. He is sacred because he looks down on his People and blesses them. Mount Foraker is next to Denali and is known in Athabascan as Sultana, meaning Denali's wife. These names and what they represent was passed down by our ancestors. The two peaks signify a basic Athabascan belief that a man cannot live alone and survive. Survival in Dena' nena calls for a partnership between a husband and a wife.

Today as I view Denali it reminds me of the fact that it will be there forever and that I am a tiny part of Denali's world. Denali is a part of our everyday Athabascan life as we look to him for weather predictions, just as our ancestors did in years past to plan for their subsistence gathering over the next few days or weeks. Mount Denali has been the cornerstone for speakers during ceremonial events. Denali represents our resilience to survive in this great land.

Information like this and a lot more will be part of the multimedia documentary produced by the project, *Sharing Alaska Native Traditional Knowledge*, by Cultural Heritage and Education Institute.

Sincerely,

Robert Charlie
Executive Director

"In the old days . . . everybody belonged to a clan. In Minto, there are four: Caribou (Bedzeyh Ti Xwt'ana), Fishtail (Ch'echalyu), Paint (Tsiyhyu), and Middle (Touidra Gheltsilna)." - Chief Peter John

February 20, 2009

Dear Representative Scott Kawasaki and members of the Community and Regional Affairs Committee:

Please accept this comment on HJR15, sponsored by Rep. Kawasaki. I am in favor of the resolution and the renaming of Mt. McKinley to its original name, DENALI. Although a relative newcomer to Alaska, having arrived in 1989, I have always called "the high one" or "the great one" DENALI. It is a most appropriate name and officially calling it DENALI honors the original peoples of Alaska. In addition, it is a much more beautiful name than McKinley!! Please support this resolution.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Carolynn Tomory
35331 W Pinochle Lane
Glacier View (Sutton), Alaska 99674
(907) 745-5452
Email: ctomory@mtaonline.net

February 20, 2009

To the House Committee on Community and Regional Affairs:

I am most certainly in favor of HJR 15. Although I am originally from Ohio, I do not believe Denali should be called or should ever have been called Mt. McKinley. "The" mountain already had a name, DENALI, and it should be called by that name.

Respectfully,

Raymond J. Tomory
35331 W Pinochle Lane
Glacier View (Sutton), AK 99674

February 20, 2009

Rep. Kawasaki,

I just wanted to say THANK YOU for what you are trying to do with the Mountain. I moved here in 1991, and knew this was home right away. I have noticed that most of the sourdoughs call the Mountain Denali, while the Cheechakos (sp?) call it Mt. McKinley. I also wanted to let you know that you have the support of many of the people that I have spoken with recently about this issue.

Keep up the good work.

Christie Lutsch
PO Box 82117
Fairbanks, AK 99708-2117

February 22, 2009

To Whomever it May Concern,

My name is Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; I was born and raised in Sitka, Alaska and am a recent graduate of Sitka High School. I am currently pursuing undergraduate studies at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut. Of more relevance, however, is my great love of the mountains and wilderness. I am an aspiring mountaineer and while most of my adventures have been focused in Southeast Alaska and the Yukon, I have ventured up to Talkeetna for climbing and caught a glimpse of North America's tallest and most awe-inspiring peak, Denali. We all know the story behind the name -- William Dickey, an out-of-stater passing through the region named it for the Ohioan, William McKinley. (It is worth noting that with the possible reappellation of Denali, Ohio's politicians will still have representation: Mount Foraker, Alaska's third highest mountain, is named for Joseph Foraker, a former Ohio Senator and Governor from the turn of the century.) But what is perhaps not so well known is that that name -- Mount McKinley -- has been controversial for just as long. Hudson Stuck, leader of the first party to reach the true summit in 1913, recorded his strenuous objections to the name "Mount McKinley" in their account of the expedition, *The Ascent of Denali*: "...forefront in the author's heart and desire, must stand a plea for the restoration to the greatest mountain in North America of its immemorial native name. If there be any prestige or authority in such matter from the accomplishment of a first complete ascent...the author values it chiefly as it may give weight to this plea." While Hudson Stuck's plea, lamentably, has been left unanswered, these next few years offer a rare window on the federal level to effect a renaming of one of Alaska's greatest treasures and the State of Alaska should make every effort to ensure such an attempt is successful.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
805 Charles St.
Sitka, AK 99835
203.436.0222/907.747.5387
jonathan.kreiss-tomkins@yale.edu

CRAIG RENKERT

4611 Coolbrook Dr
Hilliard OH 43026

e-mail: hike4fun77@gmail.com
(614) 319-3537

February 22, 2009

Representative Kawasaki
Room 428, State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Kawasaki

I am writing to *support* the House Joint Resolution 15 to change the name of Mont McKinley to Denali.

I was born and grew up in Ohio. While attending college in Colorado I expanded an interest in hiking that started when I was a Boy Scout hiking along the Scioto River near Columbus. Not long after college my hiking challenges sought greater mountains to climb. I raised donations for and help organize equipment for the American team that successfully climbed Mt Everest in 1976. In 1977 I organized and lead a climb of Denali. We spent twenty eight days on the mountain and were known as the Up-N-Over expedition. Our route led us up the West Buttress, to the summit, and down the Muldrow Glacier ending at Wonder Lake.

As a result of my experience on the mountain I decided to move to Alaska, which I did later that year. I spent eighteen years in Alaska working, hiking, and learning about the Alaskan people. One of the things I learned living in Alaska is that Alaskan Natives have great respect for each other and the land. Having the mountain "The High One" labeled for a politician that has no connection to the mountain reduces respect for the person and the state that he called home.

As a resident of Ohio I support the resolution to change the name of Mount McKinley to Denali. I believe restoring the name of North America's highest mountain to Denali will right a wrong that started over one hundred years ago. Doing so will in a small way bring greater honor to President McKinley and his home. I will also urge the Ohio congressional delegation to support that name change.

Sincerely,

Craig Renkert

From: Brad Faulkner [mailto:seafood@xyz.net]
Sent: Tuesday, February 24, 2009 9:46 PM
To: 'Rep_Scott_Kawasaki@legis.state.ak.us'
Subject: Denali bill - a little history

Charles Sheldon wrote The Wilderness of Denali. He spent time in the shadow of Denali in 1906-1908. He was a good friend of Theodore Roosevelt. His work was instrumental in creating McKinley National Park. Maybe more than anyone. The last chapter of his book he advocates for the real name, Denali. He labeled the end of this chapter, "Farewell to Denali" He says, "The Indians who have lived for countless generations in the presence of these colossal mountains have given them names that are both euphonious and appropriate." Read it. Use it. His words work well. It is at the local library. Good luck. *[Staffer retrieved this publication from the State Library.]*

McKinley is so wrong it needs a champion to officially change it to the real name. Alaskans know better.

Brad Faulkner
Homer
Alaskan first

From: Brad Faulkner [mailto:seafood@xyz.net]
Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2009 7:49 PM
To: 'Rep_Scott_Kawasaki@legis.state.ak.us'
Subject: Denali bill - a little history

Rev. Hudson Stuck formed the party that first climbed Denali. Walter Harper, an Alaska native was the first to stand on top. Walter drowned with his new bride in the Princess Sophia disaster.

In the preface to his book, The Ascent of Denali (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1914) Hudson Stuck wrote – his first sentence – "**Forefront in this book, because forefront in the author's heart and desire, must stand a plea for the restoration to the greatest mountain in North America of its immemorial native name.**" Stuck goes on to argue for Denali for three pages in the preface to his book. If you have not read this preface, you need to.

McKinley gave us the most corrupt period in Alaska history. I am speaking of course of Nome in 1900 and the corrupt judgeship of Arthur H. Noyes. The judge was appointed by McKinley to the federal bench. The ring leader of the whole thing was an ally of McKinley's named Alexander McKenzie. To quote William Hunt in, North of 53, The Wild Days of the Alaska Yukon Mining Frontier, "**During the McKinley era, roguery flourished**" (chapter 16 and 17 relevant) (chosen by the Alaska Historical Society as one of the best 67 history books about Alaska since 1867). Finally a San Francisco Circuit Court arrested and convicted McKenzie. McKinley went on to pardon him.

You need to understand this period to realize how oxymoronic naming Denali after McKinley really is.

Just a little history which you may or may not know. Both these books are great Alaska History books. Good luck.

Brad Faulkner
Homer

This CS for HJR 15 reflects 2 changes from (H) CRA Committee hearing on February, 26, 2009.

2 amendments (enclosed) were presented by the Sponsor and both were adopted

No other changes were made

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15(CRA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered: 2/27/09

Referred: Resources

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES KAWASAKI, Gardner

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Congress to change the name of Mount McKinley to Denali.**

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

3 **WHEREAS** the Athabaskan name "Denali" for Alaska's highest mountain has been in
4 use for thousands of years before the renaming of the mountain to McKinley in 1896, is still
5 widely used across the state, and is recognized throughout the world as synonymous with
6 Mount McKinley; and

7 **WHEREAS** "Denali" translates to "The High One," from the Koyukon dialect of the
8 Athabaskan people and is indicative of its worldwide recognition as the highest mountain on
9 the continent of North America, standing at 20,320 feet; and

10 **WHEREAS**, in 1896, when prospector William A. Dickey christened the mountain
11 "Mt. McKinley," William McKinley of Ohio had recently been named the Republican
12 candidate for President of the United States but had not yet assumed the office of President;
13 and

14 **WHEREAS** President McKinley never visited the territory of Alaska; and

15 **WHEREAS** officially recognizing the Athabaskan name of Denali may help to rectify
16 past injustices toward Alaska Native peoples; and

1 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Board of Geographical Names officially recognizes the name
2 of the mountain as Denali; and

3 **WHEREAS** members of Congress have blocked any attempt by Alaska officials to
4 rename the mountain Denali since 1975, effectively revoking the right of the people of the
5 State of Alaska to name their own geographical landmarks;

6 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
7 Congress to pass legislation to change the name of Mount McKinley to Denali.

8 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of
9 the United States; the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr., Vice-President of the United States and
10 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Ken Salazar, United States Secretary of the
11 Interior; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives; the
12 Honorable John Boehner, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; the
13 Honorable Harry Reid, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mitch McConnell,
14 Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Jeff Bingaman, Chair of the Energy and
15 Natural Resources Committee of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the
16 Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
17 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress; and all other members of the 111th United
18 States Congress.

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN: The House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

TO: HJR 15 (HCRA)

OFFERED BY: Representative Kawasaki

Delete at page 1, lines 7-9

Add the following at page 1, lines 7-9:

WHEREAS "Denali" translates to "The High One" from the Koyukon dialect of the Athabaskan people and is indicative of its worldwide recognition as the highest mountain on the continent of North America, standing at 20,320 feet; and

AMENDMENT 2

OFFERED IN: The House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

TO: HJR 15 (HCRA)

OFFERED BY: Representative Kawasaki

Delete at page 2, lines 1-2

Add the following at page 2, line 1-2:

WHEREAS the Alaska Board of Geographical Names officially recognizes the name of the mountain as "Denali"; and