

SB

94

<TARGET><BILL>SB 94</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
94</SUBJECT><COMM>HCRA27</COMM></TARGET>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate
Health & Social
Services
Committee
Chair
•
Senate
Education Committee
Vice-Chair



Senator_Betty_Davis@legis.state.ak.us
<http://www.aksenate.org>

Senate
Labor & Commerce
Committee
Member
•
Legislative Council
Member
•
Joint Armed
Services
Member

Senate Bill 94 Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 94 would add a second verse to The Alaska's Flag Song. The late Carol Beery Davis wrote a beautiful second verse, which gives recognition to Alaska Natives and to Benny Benson, who designed the Alaskan flag.

Similar bills have been introduced in the past. Last year The Alaska's Flag Song was performed with both verses as the Senate gavelled in on the first day of session. Also last year, the Senator from District G introduced SB 43. It passed the Senate, but stalled in the House.

This year is the year to join me in supporting a long overdue addition of the second verse to the Alaska Flag Song. By passing this bill you will be recognizing history, our progress as a state and our first people.

Session: (Jan. - May)

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Interim: (May - Dec.)

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5B94
BACKGROUND
MATERIAL

Why a second verse for 'Alaska Flag Song'?

Editor's Note: A copy of the following letter to Betty Kjere, secretary of Pioneers of Alaska Auxiliary No. 8 in Fairbanks, was submitted for publication.

Dear Betty:

I have received your letter dated March 27, in which you objected to the adoption of the second verse of the "Alaska Flag Song."

I would like to explain to you why I introduced HB 117 and why I hope you will change your decision to oppose the bill.

No one loves the flag song any more than I do. For many years, I have sung it for groups, meetings, conventions, commencements and even for Gov. Bill Egan's memorial service here in Juneau. I offer the second verse out of deep respect for the first verse and for its recognition of Alaska's history. I believe the second verse complements the first verse and gives recognition not to one ethnic group, but to all Alaskans and their ability to work together in a unified and harmonious way.

The addition of a second verse has been discussed for many years by various groups. At one time, funds were inserted into the House's version of the budget to hold a contest for selecting a second verse. Carol Beery Davis was asked to write another verse to the flag song to recognize the contribution of Native Alaskans, who were here long before you or I, or even the Pioneers. She did so, and offered it as a gift to the State of Alaska. I was asked to support its adoption and to introduce a bill to make it officially recognized by the state. I did so, and it has passed the House.

In order to understand the special significance of this verse, you must know about Carol Beery Davis, a former poet laureate of Alaska. She is a 64-year resident of Juneau. Her husband, Trevor, was born here 84 years ago, and is the only living member of the original selection committee for the design of Alaska's flag, which selected Benny Benson's North Star and Big Dipper (to whom the second verse refers in lines 1 and 2). Carol has written dozens of books about Alaska, including "The Alaska Flag Song" book which is credited with helping to make the song so well-known. I have enclosed a copy of this book. She now personally both Elaine Densbury and Marie Drake, the two women who decided to write the song and offer it to the state, just as Carol

once, is still contributing to her loved state by offering this beautiful verse, a tribute to unity of all Alaskans:

"A Native lad chose the Dipper's stars

For Alaska's flag that there be no bars

Among our cultures..."

She is recognizing history and our progress as a state:

*"Be it known
through years, the Natives' past
has grown.*

To share life's treasures, hand in hand,

To keep Alaska our Great Land."

She is focusing our attention on the natural beauty of our land and reminds us of the treasures of its beauty:

"We love the northern, midnight sky,

The mountains, lakes, and streams nearby.

The great North Star with its steady light

Will guide all cultures, clear and bright,

With nature's flag to Alaskans dear,

The simple flag of a last frontier."

It is hard for me to understand why anyone who has read these words could object to them. It is impossible for me to understand how anyone who knows who Carol Beery Davis is and the contributions she has made to art, music and literature in Alaska could object to her offering this beautiful gift.

Why did this legislator propose HB 117? Out of respect for a beautiful Alaskan lady who has offered a beautiful verse to a beautiful song about a great state.

Sincerely,

Rep. Fran Ulmer
Juneau