

Honoring Alaska's Armed Forces

“These pieces of legislation are the least we can do for the military men and women of our state. American’s situation right now brings home the very real nature of our War on Terror and that we have Alaskans who are going in harm’s way on our behalf. This is not some theoretical long distance situation. It is happening to real people living in our community. During the first session, members of the Twenty-third Legislature felt that because our guardsmen were being deployed at that moment, it was important that they knew we were appreciating their sacrifice and what they were about to do. We wanted to say thank you and encourage them as they went on their way – we didn’t want to wait and say it when they arrived back home.”

–Senator Con Bunde, Chair Senate Labor & Commerce Committee

The Twenty-third Legislature was mindful of Alaska’s military men and women and their fight in the War on Terrorism. The lives of many changed after the attack on American soil on September 11, 2001. As lives changed, government needed to change along with it. Several bills passed in honor of those men and women called away to active duty.

First, Majority members wanted active duty personnel to know that the state supports them 100 percent. The state also passed legislation to continue the wages and benefits of all state employees who were called to active duty and to allow for family members to receive a deployed military member’s Permanent Fund Dividend.

The Legislature continues to give their full appreciation to Alaska’s military, not only to those who serve, but also to their spouses, families and employers.

2004 Second Session

HB 536: Permanent Fund Application Deadlines: Military

Amends the current PFD application process to give members of the armed services who receive hostile fire/imminent danger pay an additional 90 days from the time they stop receiving that pay to file for the PFD.

Sponsor: House Rules Committee by Request Economic Development, International Trade & Tourism Committee

SB 301: Pioneers' Homes/Veterans' Homes

Authorizes the establishment of an Alaska Veterans' Home and allows the Department of Health and Social Services to require home residents to apply for other state or federally sponsored programs that could reduce the amount of assistance. Designates the Pioneer Home in Palmer as the State veterans' home. Sets the minimum level of allowable assets for residents receiving assistance, and requires the State to conduct annual unannounced licensing inspections. The Legislature adopted two letters of intent that the State continue to maintain a Pioneers' Home waiting list for the Palmer home and that the home have an occupancy of 75 percent veterans and 25 percent from the waiting list.

Sponsor: Senate Rules Committee by Request of Gov. Frank Murkowski

2003 First Session

SB 26: State Employees Called to Military Duty

Allows the governor to ensure that state employees who are members of the reserve and auxiliary military units, including the Alaska National Guard, Alaska Naval Militia, and the Alaska State Defense Force will not be financially penalized while on active duty.

Sponsor: Senator Robin Taylor

SB 148: PFD: Allowable Absence for Military Services

Changes the allowable absences for certain members of the armed forces and their spouses and dependents for purposes of eligibility for permanent fund dividends.

Sponsor: Senator John Cowdery

SJR 9: Supporting Members of Military

Expresses confidence in and support for all members of the military, their families, and employers of members of the National Guard.

Sponsor: Senator Con Bunde

SJR 10: Pledge of Allegiance Resolution

Expresses the support of the Alaska State Legislature for the review of *Newdow vs. U.S. Congress* by the United States Supreme Court and a firm belief of the principles and ideals stated in our nation's Pledge of Allegiance.

Sponsor: Senator Lyda Green