

Sponsor Statement for HB 285

Alaska's State Song

An Act adding a second verse to the official Alaska state song

Released: January 10, 2002
Contact: Representative Carl Morgan at (907) 465-4527

This legislation is a vehicle to officially add a second verse, written by Carol Beery Davis, to the Alaska state song.

"Alaska's Flag" written by Marie Drake and composed by Elinor Dusenbury was adopted as the official state song in 1956, and was gifted to the University of Alaska in April 1960. Carol Beery Davis wrote the second verse to "Alaska's Flag" and gifted the words (protected by copyright) to the University of Alaska Foundation in February 1987. This legislation would allow for the gift, a second verse to "Alaska's Flag", to be recognized and adopted as part of the official state song as was the first verse in 1956.

Further, this legislation would recognize Carol Beery Davis, an Alaskan pioneer and poet laureate, as the maker of the second verse. While the official Alaska state song recognizes and describes Alaska's flag, the words of Davis in the second verse of "Alaska's Flag", "*A Native lad chose the Dipper's stars, For Alaska's flag that there be no bars*", provides recognition of Bennie Benson who designed Alaska's official flag in 1927. Benny Benson described his design of the flag:

"The blue field is for the Alaska Sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaskan flower. The North Star is for the future of Alaska, the most northerly in the union. The Dipper is for the Great Bear - symbolizing strength."

It is timely to have this second verse officially added to the Alaska state song as 2002 marks the 75th Anniversary of the Alaska Flag.

Additionally, it is appropriate to recognize the contributions of all Alaskans, whether it was our sourdoughs who dreamed of gold in the streams nearby or a young native lad who saw and gave Alaska a flag of great symbolism.