

**STATE OF ALASKA  
THE LEGISLATURE**

**2009**

**Source**  
CSSJR 5(FIN)

**Legislative  
Resolve No.**  
4



Urging the United States Department of Defense to continue to provide retirement benefits for members of the Alaska Territorial Guard who served during World War II.

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

**WHEREAS**, in 1942, the Alaska Territorial Guard was formed by Territorial Governor Ernest Gruening in response to Japanese activity around Alaska; and

**WHEREAS**, during World War II, approximately 6,389 members of the Alaska Territorial Guard served without compensation in the state while the Alaska National Guard was deployed; and

**WHEREAS** the Alaska Territorial Guard engaged in combat with the enemy, protected the lend-lease route that stretched from North America to the Soviet Union, and rescued downed airmen; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2000, because of the efforts of Alaska's U.S. Senator, Ted Stevens, the United States Congress passed legislation that required that service as a member of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II of an individual who was honorably discharged be considered active duty for purposes of all laws administered by the United States Secretary of Defense; and

**WHEREAS** sec. 8147 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2001 (P.L. 106-259, 38 U.S.C. 106) requires the United States Secretary of Defense to issue certificates of honorable discharge to members of the Alaska Territorial Guard based on the nature and duration of each individual's World War II service; and

**WHEREAS** Alaska Territorial Guard members who have been honorably discharged are considered to be on active duty for the purposes of all laws administered by the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, including laws relating to veterans' benefits; and

**WHEREAS** approximately 25 Alaska Native elders who served in the Alaska Territorial Guard are still receiving benefits; and

**WHEREAS** the recent decision of the United States Department of Defense to reverse the determination that service in the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II be regarded as active duty for military retirement purposes is of grave concern because it will leave approximately 25 Alaska Native elders who live in the most remote parts of Alaska without critical funds to pay the costs, among the highest in the nation, of heating fuel and food during an already tough Alaska winter;

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the United States Department of Defense to honor the service provided by the Alaska Territorial Guard by continuing retirement benefits for members of the Alaska Territorial Guard; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature thanks the Alaska Congressional delegation for its swift action on behalf of the remaining elderly members of the Alaska Territorial Guard by their introduction of S. 342 and H.R. 744, which provide for the treatment of service as a member of the Alaska Territorial Guard during World War II as active service for purposes of retired pay for members of the United States armed forces; and be it

**FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests that the United States Department of Defense continue to use its emergency and extraordinary expense funds to provide retirement benefits for the Alaska Territorial Guard members until the United States Congress passes S. 342 or H.R. 744, or the United States Department of Defense reverses its January 2009 decision.

**COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Barack Obama, President of the United States; the Honorable Eric K. Shinseki, United States Secretary of Veterans

Affairs; the Honorable Pete Geren, United States Secretary of the Army; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Mark Begich, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.