

Senate State Affairs Committee – March 20, 2025

- Good afternoon, Chairman Kawasaki, Committee members and guests.
- My name is Geraldine Simon. I'm a tribal member from the Native village of Allakaket but live and work in Fairbanks.
- From 2018 to 2024 I served as an attorney member to the Alaska Judicial Council.
- The position allowed me to participate as a council member in reviewing judicial applications and conducting interviews for 41 open judicial positions of the 73 available.
- Each of the council members evaluated the candidates' experience, legal knowledge and judicial temperament. Each interview included binders of information with the candidate application, the letters of support and the survey results of those involved in the legal field.
- The goal was to find the most qualified candidates among the applicants – “the best available timber” per the legislative history.
- In my experience, the council members were diligent, collegial, listened to one another's perspectives and discussed the applicant's qualifications in depth. As a result, disagreements were very rare.
- Each of the candidates received a fair review and the council voted independently on each candidate whose name was forwarded for nomination.
- Based upon my experience on the Judicial Council, I support the current process and oppose SJR 13.
- Thank you for considering my testimony.