



## ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

# Representative Genevieve Mina

Chair, House Health and Social Services Committee

Member, House Transportation Committee

Member, House Judiciary Committee

*Serving House District 19: Airport Heights, Mountain View, & Russian Jack*

### CSHB 188, Version I - Explanation of Changes 04/02/26

*"An Act establishing the welcoming Alaska office; establishing the welcoming Alaska center; establishing the Welcoming Alaska Advisory Committee; relating to the state's refugee services program; repealing the office of citizenship assistance; and providing for an effective date."*

#### Version A to Version I

##### Section 1.

##### *AS 23.05.031 Welcoming Alaska office*

**Page 1, Lines 6-7:** Changes office location from "in the office of the commissioner" to "in the Department of Labor and Workforce Development." Adds new purpose statement emphasizing economic integration and workforce security. Adds leadership structure specifying director appointment by commissioner of labor and workforce development.

**Page 1, Line 14:** Changes language from "information about how to use labor unions" to "information about how to access labor unions" to reflect more inclusive barrier-reduction approach.

**Page 2, Lines 3-5:** Updates duty (2) to establish office as state's coordinating entity for immigrant and refugee workforce integration, aligning employment, training, credential recognition, workforce participation, and economic mobility strategies across state agencies.

**Page 3, Lines 17-19:** Adds duty (17) to coordinate refugee programs, including education, training, employment, housing, and medical support and other services, for refugees who no longer receive federal assistance."

**Page 3, Lines 20-21:** Renumbers duty (17) as (18).

**Page 3, Line 24:** Changes appointing authority from "governor" to "commissioner of labor and workforce development" to align with office location in DOLWD.

##### *AS 23.05.133 Welcoming Alaska Advisory Committee*

**Page 4, Line 13:** Changes advisory committee size from "nine members" to "thirteen members."

**Page 4, Line 18:** Changes governor-appointed voting members from "seven" to "eleven."

**Page 4, Lines 20-21:** Updates member representing a nonprofit organization providing services to include "refugees, new immigrants and newcomers."

**Page 4, Line 28 - Page 5, Line 3:** Adds four new members to the advisory committee:



## ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

# Representative Genevieve Mina

Chair, House Health and Social Services Committee

Member, House Transportation Committee

Member, House Judiciary Committee

*Serving House District 19: Airport Heights, Mountain View, & Russian Jack*

(F) a representative of a refugee resettlement agency operating in the state

(G) a representative of a refugee-led or immigrant-service community-based organization

(H) a representative with expertise in workforce development or labor market analysis

(I) a representative from the health care delivery sector

**Page 5, Lines 4-5:** Renumbers members (F) and (G) as (J) and (K).

### ***AS 23.05.135. Definitions***

**Page 6, Lines 23-25:** Adds new definition: (4) "refugee" has the meaning given in 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(42) and includes individuals eligible for services under the federal Refugee Act of 1980 or any successor federal program.

### **Section 2. Adds a new section which modifies *AS 23.05.131(a)* enacted in Section 1**

**Page 6, Line 24 - Page 9, Line 3:** Adds duty (19) for the office to serve as the state's refugee services program under federal Refugee Act of 1980 and assume responsibilities previously carried out by the state's designee, including: providing or coordinating refugee resettlement services for long-term economic self-sufficiency; operating or overseeing refugee support services, including refugee cash and medical assistance as authorized; and collaborating with refugee resettlement agencies, community partners, and refugee-led organizations.

### **Section 3. Adds a new section which modifies *AS 23.05.131* enacted in Section 1**

**Subsection (c)** is amended to add language that the executive director of the office will also serve as the state refugee coordinator for the state's refugee services program under the Refugee Act of 1980.

### **Section 4. Adds a new subsection to *AS 23.05.131* enacted in Section 1**

**Subsection (e)** requires the commissioner to designate a Department of Health employee to serve as the coordinator of refugee health services under the state's refugee services program, and that the coordinator will work with public health agencies to coordinate the refugee health program, consistent with guidance from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement.

### **Section 8. Provides for an effective date for Sections 2-4 of July 1, 2027.**

**Page 9, Line 31:** This effective date is in coordination with the transition of the Alaska Office of Refugees to the State of Alaska.

### **Section 9. Conforming language related to the updated effective date.**

**Page 10, Line 9:** Except in Section 8, the effective date is July 1, 2026.