

SENATE BILL NO. 117

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Introduced: 3/5/25

Referred: Labor and Commerce, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act renaming the State Commission for Human Rights the Alaska State**
2 **Commission for Civil Rights; relating to removal of commissioners of the Alaska State**
3 **Commission for Civil Rights; relating to reports from the Alaska State Commission for**
4 **Civil Rights; relating to the definition of 'employer' for the purposes of the Alaska State**
5 **Commission for Civil Rights; and relating to local civil rights commissions."**

6 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

7 * **Section 1.** AS 18.80.010 is amended to read:

8 **Sec. 18.80.010. Creation.** There is created in the office of the governor an
9 Alaska [A] State Commission for Civil [HUMAN] Rights.

10 * **Sec. 2.** AS 18.80.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

11 (b) The governor may remove a commissioner from office for cause. For
12 purposes of this subsection, cause includes incompetence, neglect of duty, and
13 misconduct in office, and public statements and public or private actions that

undermine the commission's work or violate this chapter. To remove a commissioner for cause, the governor shall provide a copy of the charges to the commissioner and offer an opportunity for the commissioner to be publicly heard in person, or by counsel, in the commissioner's defense, upon not less than 10 days' notice. If a commissioner is removed for cause, the governor shall file with the lieutenant governor a complete statement of all charges made against the commissioner and the governor's findings based on the charges, together with a complete record of the proceedings.

* **Sec. 3.** AS 18.80.150 is amended to read:

Sec. 18.80.150. Annual report. Each year, the [THE] commission shall review all data [REPORT ANNUALLY TO THE GOVERNOR] on civil rights problems the commission [IT] has encountered in the preceding year [,] and produce a report by November 15 of each year on those problems. The report may include recommendations for [RECOMMEND] legislative action. [THE COMMISSION SHALL PROVIDE THE LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY WITH 40 COPIES OF THE REPORT DURING THE WEEK PRECEDING THE CONVENING OF THE ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE SESSION FOR LIBRARY DISTRIBUTION.] The commission shall make [COPIES OF] the report available to the public electronically and notify the governor and the legislature that the report is available.

* **Sec. 4.** AS 18.80.220 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(e) In an action brought under (a)(1) of this section, it is an affirmative defense that

(1) the employer is a religious corporation, association, educational institution, or society that hires employees of a particular religion to perform work connected with carrying on the corporation, association, educational institution, or society and its activities; and

(2) the employee is hired to engage in activities that are ecclesiastical, spiritual, or religious, and the employee's job responsibilities include furthering the study or advancement of religion.

* **Sec. 5.** AS 18.80.290(a) is amended to read:

(a) The legislative body of a municipality may, by ordinance or resolution,

1 authorize the establishment of membership in and support of a local civil [HUMAN]
 2 rights commission. The number and qualifications of the members of a local
 3 commission and their terms and method of appointment or removal shall be as
 4 determined by the legislative body, except that a member may not hold office in a
 5 political party.

6 * **Sec. 6.** AS 18.80.300(2) is amended to read:

7 (2) "commission" means the Alaska State Commission for Civil
 8 [HUMAN] Rights;

9 * **Sec. 7.** AS 18.80.300(5) is amended to read:

10 (5) "employer" means a person, including the state and a political
 11 subdivision of the state, who has one or more employees in the state but does not
 12 include an organization [A CLUB] that is exclusively social [,] or a fraternal and [,
 13 CHARITABLE, EDUCATIONAL, OR RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION OR
 14 CORPORATION, IF THE CLUB, ASSOCIATION, OR CORPORATION] is not
 15 organized for private profit;

16 * **Sec. 8.** AS 18.80.300(7) is amended to read:

17 (7) "executive director" means the executive director of the Alaska
 18 State Commission for Civil [HUMAN] Rights;

19 * **Sec. 9.** AS 24.60.039(b) is amended to read:

20 (b) If a person files a complaint with the committee under AS 24.60.170
 21 alleging a violation of this section, the committee may refer the complainant to the
 22 Alaska State Commission for Civil [HUMAN] Rights and may defer its consideration
 23 of the complaint until after the complainant establishes to the satisfaction of the
 24 committee that the commission has completed its proceedings in the matter.

25 * **Sec. 10.** AS 39.50.200(b)(13) is amended to read:

26 (13) Alaska State Commission for Civil [HUMAN] Rights
 27 (AS 18.80.010);

28 * **Sec. 11.** AS 44.62.330(a)(42) is amended to read:

29 (42) Alaska State Commission for Civil [HUMAN] Rights, where
 30 procedures are not otherwise expressly provided in AS 18.80;