

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 10, 2001

1:07 p.m.

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

OVERVIEWS: LAW AND PUBLIC DEFENDER

**TAPES**

01-1, SIDES A & B

01-2, SIDE A

**CALL TO ORDER**

REPRESENTATIVE NORMAN ROKEBERG, Chairman, called the House Judiciary Standing Committee to order at 1:07 p.m. [stated as 1:27].

**PRESENT**

Committee members present were Representatives Rokeberg, Ogan, Meyer, Coghill, James, and Berkowitz. Representative Kookesh was excused. Representative Porter arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**SUMMARY OF INFORMATION**

BRUCE BOTELHO, Attorney General, Department of Law (DOL), presented an overview of the department. His two main goals during the overview were to provide the legislature with a basic understanding of the general functions and organization of the department, and to highlight some key issues on the horizon including the Katie John case, the Venetie case, state tribal relations, Glacier Bay litigation, consumer protection/antitrust, mergers, oil and gas issues, prosecution of alcohol-related crimes and domestic violence crimes, and privacy issues as they relate to e-commerce.

REPRESENTATIVE OGAN expressed great interest in the matter of state and tribal sovereignty and was assured by Chairman Rokeberg and Attorney General Botelho that the issue would be pursued more fully by the committee.

ATTORNEY GENERAL BOTELHO gave a brief explanation of the term "sovereignty" at the request of Representative James, stating it was primarily about "the right to govern" but contained many different contexts.

CYNTHIA M. COOPER, Deputy Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Law, listed the responsibilities of the Criminal Division and provided organizational information both verbally and in the form of handouts. She focused primarily on the duties and trial procedures of the trial attorneys and the District Attorneys office. In response to questions by Representative Berkowitz, she felt that the current locations of their offices were serving those areas well, but agreed that with more funding the division could provide better service.

BARBARA J. RITCHIE, Deputy Attorney General, Civil Division, Department of Law, gave the overview for the Civil Division and pointed out mission differences between the Civil and Criminal Divisions. Main among them was the wide variety of topics the Civil Division addressed and the need for different sections in the division to focus on specific areas of the law. She detailed these sections and provided handouts for illustration.

BARBARA BRINK, Director, Public Defender Agency (PDA), Department of Administration (DOA), gave a brief listing of her experiences with the agency and used handouts to highlight how case loads and workloads were being impacted by legislation passed recently. She spoke of how so-called therapeutic and wellness courts were providing innovative approaches. Among the handouts were examples of success stories in which the PDA assisted its clients as they turned their lives around for the better.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

CHAIRMAN ROKEBERG announced that Representative Ogan would be vice chairman.

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

The committee took no action.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

CHAIRMAN ROKEBERG adjourned the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting at 3:17 p.m.

NOTE: The meeting was recorded and handwritten log notes were taken. A copy of the tape(s) and log notes may be obtained by contacting the House Records Office at State Capitol, Room 3, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (mailing address), (907) 465-2214, and after adjournment of the second session of the Twenty-Second Alaska State Legislature this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.