

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RULES COMMITTEE
February 26, 2002
11:10 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Randy Phillips, Chair
Senator John Cowdery, Vice Chair
Senator Rick Halford
Senator Gene Therriault
Senator Johnny Ellis

MEMBERS ABSENT

All Members Present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 320 am
"An Act relating to the use of electronic balloting equipment."
APPROVED FOR CALENDARING

PREVIOUS SENATE COMMITTEE ACTION

HB 320 - No previous committee action.

WITNESS REGISTER

Representative Joe Green
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Prime sponsor of HB 320.

Russ Kelly
Intern to Senator Lemman
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
POSITION STATEMENT: Noted Senator Lemman's support of HB 320.

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 02-3, SIDE A
Number 001

CHAIRMAN RANDY PHILLIPS called the Senate Rules Committee meeting to order at 11:10 a.m. Senators Cowdery, Ellis and Phillips were

present. The committee took up HB 320.

#HB 320

REPRESENTATIVE JOE GREEN, prime sponsor of HB 320-ELECTRONIC BALLOTING EQUIPMENT, explained that the purpose of HB 320 is to purchase equipment that will allow sight-impaired voters privacy in the polling place. Rather than have a second person read the ballot to the voter and mark it, voting equipment will be sound activated so that the voter can listen to and mark the ballot electronically. HB 320 does not require the Division of Election to purchase the equipment now, it merely provides that when existing equipment needs to be replaced, it purchase equipment with this ability. This equipment has been used very successfully in Harris County, Texas for several years.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN noted HB 320 was amended on the House floor to reflect a similar bill introduced by Senator Leman. The amendment expanded the bill to purchase equipment that provides privacy for not only sight-impaired, but for other handicapped voters.

SENATOR ELLIS said Darryl Nelson from Eagle River advocated at the Anchorage Caucus for changes for other voters with disabilities. He thanked Representative Green for accepting that change to the bill.

SENATOR COWDERY asked how long this equipment has been used in Harris County.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN said he believes it has been used for a few years, between three and five. The same group that presented the equipment to the House State Affairs Committee presented it to the Texas Legislature but the latest equipment differs a little from what is being used in Texas. The equipment is about the size of a laptop computer and has three dials with which to hear the ballot, make a choice, and make changes.

SENATOR COWDERY asked if the equipment is user friendly for people who are not computer literate.

REPRESENTATIVE GREEN said it is.

CHAIRMAN PHILLIPS announced that all committee members were present.

MR. RUSS KELLY, intern for Senator Leman, informed members that he worked closely with Representative Green's staff on SB 258, the companion bill to HB 320. Senator Leman is comfortable with

HB 320 as amended and supports it.

SENATOR THERRIAULT asked if the bill has a new the fiscal note.

An indiscernible response was made.

SENATOR COWDERY moved to approve HB 320 am with the House fiscal note for calendaring at the Chair's discretion.

CHAIRMAN PHILLIPS announced that with no opposition, HB 320 am will be placed on tomorrow's calendar. There being no further business to come before the committee, he adjourned the meeting at 11:18 a.m.

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