

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 29, 2003

1:00 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Lesil McGuire, Chair
Representative Tom Anderson, Vice Chair
Representative John Coghill
Representative James Holm
Representative Ralph Samuels
Representative Les Gara
Representative Max Gruenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: ALASKA COURT SYSTEM

TAPES

03-1, SIDE(S) A & B

CHAIR LESIL MCGUIRE convened the meeting of the House Judiciary Standing Committee at 1:00 p.m. Representatives McGuire, Anderson, Holm, Samuels, and Gara were present at the call to order. Representatives Gruenberg and Coghill arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION

CHRIS S. CHRISTENSEN, Deputy Administrative Director, Administrative Staff, Office of the Administrative Director, Alaska Court System (ACS), presented an overview of the ACS. In doing so, he spoke about how and why the ACS first came about; how it differed from the federal court system and court systems in other states; and how it differed and how it resembled aspects of the other two branches of government - the executive branch and the legislative branch - at both the state and federal levels. In addition, he provided details and statistics pertaining to the different types of courts in Alaska and their respective duties and jurisdictions.

MR. CHRISTENSEN explained to members that the ACS does not offer opinions either in support of or in opposition to legislation; the ACS will, however, provide information regarding how it is impacted by particular legislation and offer advise on ways to improve that legislation. Citing some examples, he cautioned members to be aware, when creating legislation, that the judicial branch of government is generally the branch most affected by legislation, and asked members to consider the criminal justice system as a whole in that what is done to one aspect of it affects all the others.

MR. CHRISTENSEN offered a brief explanation regarding the duties of the Alaska Commission on Judicial Conduct (ACJC) and the Alaska Judicial Council (AJC) and responded to questions regarding those two entities. He also responded to questions regarding the therapeutic courts such as the wellness court, the felony drug court, the felony driving while intoxicated (DWI) court, and the mental health court.

DOUG WOOLIVER, Administrative Attorney, Administrative Staff, Office of the Administrative Director, Alaska Court System (ACS), also responded to questions pertaining to the therapeutic courts.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG asked Mr. Christensen and Mr. Wooliver to give thought to ways of improving and streamlining the current criminal justice system.

CHAIR MCGUIRE asked Mr. Christensen and Mr. Wooliver to provide the committee with additional statistical information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

COMMITTEE ACTION

The committee took no action.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:05 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-Third Alaska State Legislature this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.