

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
February 28, 2006
1:46 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Meyer called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at [1:46:36 PM](#).

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mike Chenault, Co-Chair
Representative Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Stoltze, Vice-Chair
Representative Richard Foster
Representative Mike Hawker
Representative Mike Kelly
Representative Beth Kerttula
Representative Carl Moses
Representative Bruce Weyhrauch

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Jim Holm
Representative Reggie Joule

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Mark Neuman; Senator Con Bunde; Senator Gretchen Guess; Mike Pawlowski, Staff, Representative Kevin Meyer; Rex Shattuck, Staff, Representative Mark Neuman; Sueann Williams testified for Bob Loescher, Spirit Village Inc., Juneau; Dr. Robert Gerlack, State Veterinarian, Anchorage; Kristin Ryan, Director, Division of Environmental Health, Department of Environmental Conservation

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Louisa Castrodale, Division of Public Health, Department of Health & Social Services, Anchorage; Steve Mulder, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Law, Anchorage; Rob Arno, Alaska Outdoor Council (AOC), Mat-Su; Larry DeVilbiss, Director, Division of Agriculture, Department of Natural Resources; Quinlan Steiner, Director, Public Defender, Department of Administration, Anchorage; Ginger Bryant, South Peninsula Haven House, Homer; Christine Kernak, Tundra Woman's Coalition, Bethel; Nicole Songer, Executive Director, Cordova Family Resource Center, Cordova; Sue Christensen, Administrative Assistant, Bering Sea Women's Group, Nome; Sabrina Fernandez, Assistant Attorney General, Department of Law, Anchorage

SUMMARY

HB 353 An Act relating to sentences for sexual offenses.

HB 353 was HEARD and HELD in Committee for further consideration.

HB 380 An Act relating to the powers and duties of the commissioner of environmental conservation; relating to animals, animal products, agricultural products, and the transportation of animals and animal products; relating to the employment, appointment, and duties of a state veterinarian by the commissioner of environmental conservation; relating to the powers of the commissioner of natural resources regarding agricultural products; and providing for an effective date.

CS HB 380 (FIN) was reported out of Committee with a "no recommendation" and with zero note #1 by the Department of Natural Resources.

CS SB 218(FIN)

An Act relating to sex offenders and child kidnapers; relating to reporting of sex offenders and child kidnapers; relating to periodic polygraph examinations for sex offenders released on probation or parole; relating to sexual abuse of a minor; relating to the definitions of 'aggravated sex offense' and 'child kidnapping'; relating to penalties for failure to report child abuse or neglect; relating to sentencing for sex offenders and habitual criminals; and providing for an effective date.

CS SB 218 (FIN) was HEARD and HELD in Committee for further consideration.

#HB380

HOUSE BILL NO. 380

An Act relating to the powers and duties of the commissioner of environmental conservation; relating to animals, animal products, agricultural products, and the transportation of animals and animal products; relating to the employment, appointment, and duties of a state veterinarian by the commissioner of environmental conservation; relating to the powers of the commissioner of natural resources regarding agricultural products; and providing for an effective date.

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Co-Chair Chenault MOVED to ADOPT work draft #24-LS1469\Y, Bannister, 2/27/06, as the version of the bill before the Committee. There being NO OBJECTION, it was adopted.

[1:48:18 PM](#)

MICHAEL PAWLOWSKI, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN MEYER, provided an overview of HB 380. The bill is a product resulting from an interim work group between the Department of Environmental Conservation, the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Natural Resources and the Division of Agriculture. HB 380 provides a repeal and reenactment of the powers of the Department of Environmental Conservation and the statutes that authorize the State veterinarian. Most of those powers were passed in 1949, prior to statehood and do not adequately reflect present threats, facing Alaskans and animals in the State.

Mr. Pawlowski said the primary problem is that the definition of an "animal", historically was limited to "livestock"; that made sense in the 1940's and 1950's when all animals were considered "livestock." The Department currently has no authority to quarantine an animal if it is a pet and not livestock. Mr. Pawlowski reiterated that HB 380 reflects cooperative efforts between the above-mentioned departments. He highlighted changes made in the committee substitute.

- Page 2, Lines 28-31, speaks to when the Department adopts regulations, which grant powers regulated in that section. The commissioner should give substantial weight to the State standards. Issues arose with granting authority already existing in statute. The concern would be that the issue would reopened regulatory powers. Also, there is concern that standard regulatory practices, when related to livestock, can be "messy". The State does not want to open-the-door for unnecessary shut downs in industry practices.

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- The second change highlights the controversial portions of the bill in Section 3, the granting of powers to inspect a premise. The Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Environmental Conservation govern that section jointly. The key between the two departments is what product is being regulated. The Department of Environmental Conservation has the oversight of animals and animal products; the

Department of Natural Resources has the oversight of agriculture products.

In the original bill, the House Resources Committee allowed the inspection of the premise anytime day or night; the proposed bill returns the language to hours of a normal business day and adds: "Anytime that the Commissioner determines that there is an immediate threat to the health or safety of an animal or the general public."

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Mr. Pawlowski said, those were the main changes, indicating other minor changes that would be addressed through testimony and the amendments.

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Vice Chair Stoltze referenced Section 4, and asked why language was specifically included, delegating the commissioner's powers. Mr. Pawlowski understood that language related to the State veterinarian and the manner in which the role of the commissioner and veterinarian interact. He referenced Page 2, Lines 23-26, designating that authority and requested the Department answer why the structure was placed into the bill.

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DR. ROBERT GERLACK, ALASKA STATE VETERINARIAN, ANCHORAGE, testified that the bill was introduced to look at disease problems existing in Alaska. He spoke about diseases now existing, which are "crossing the boundaries" between pets and livestock. It is known that the diseases can be transmitted not only through the animals but also through the animal products. Restricting authority to specific categories of animals would leave both livestock and wildlife susceptible to health threats. He emphasized certain diseases would have great impact on society.

Dr. Gerlack listed diseases that could be transmitted to products; the avian influenza, African swine fever and hoof and mouth.

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Dr. Gerlack explained that the intent of the legislation was to expand the authority to protect livestock industry and animals on farms new to the industry as well as addressing human public health concerns.

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Mr. Gerlack offered to answer questions of the Committee.

Vice Chair Stoltze noted Page 4, Section 4, and asked if that reference was to the State veterinarian. Mr. Gerlack advised the language would allow the State veterinarian to be the inspector but in situations, in which an area could not be attended, there would be designating language for the appropriate authority to provide the necessary investigation with trained personnel.

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Vice Chair Stoltze supported someone with the appropriate expertise being given that authority rather than a political appointee.

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SABRINA FERNANDEZ, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF LAW, offered to answer questions of the Committee.

STEVE MULDER, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF LAW, ANCHORAGE, noted that he was available for questions.

LOUISA CASTRODALE, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES, ANCHORAGE, testified on behalf of Dr. Richard Mandsager, Director of the Division of Public Health. She noted that there offices was in full support of the legislation. They work closely with the State veterinarian; it is essential for those involved in the human health field to be confident in animal quarantine and isolation authority.

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ROB ARNO, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), ALASKA OUTDOOR COUNCIL (AOC), MATSU, mentioned that AOC's statewide membership depends on a wild-food harvest and members are concerned about the health of that harvest. AOC supports passage of HB 380.

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LARRY DEVILBISS, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, ANCHORAGE, testified in support of the proposed legislation. He stated that the committee substitute was an improvement as it clarifies the role of each department.

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Vice Chair Stoltze noted that commercial fishermen often were included in proposals of this nature and asked why they were not.

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KRISTIN RYAN, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION, advised that the Department of Environmental Conservation did include fish in their definition of animal products; however, the Department of Fish and Game regulates wild fish; no one has the authority to regulate "domestic" fish. The definition of agricultural products does not include fish.

Vice Chair Stoltze voiced his frustration.

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Representative Kelly asked about available responses to threats from the avian flu. Mr. Pawlowski understood that the proposed legislation could address the gaps in authority where there is no oversight or testing, letting diseases "slip through the cracks".

Dr. Gerlach added that the intent of HB 380 is to identify other diseases besides the avian influenza, such as monkey pokes coming into this country with the import of rats from Africa. Some rats were intermixed at a pet store and from that, infection spread to a number of people in the Midwest. The legislation provides a first step in dealing with situations that may be problematic. He emphasized that Alaska cannot always rely on voluntary cooperation.

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Vice Chair Stoltze asked if there was any circumstance in which rodents could be regulated at State fairs. Dr. Gerlach replied they would be if they carried a disease that could impact people.

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Co-Chair Meyer MOVED to ADOPT Amendment #1, 24-LS1469\Y.1, Bannister, 2/28/06, which would delete all material on Page 2, Lines 21-22 and would insert:

"(1) Adopt a schedule of fees or charges, and credit provisions, for services related to animals and animal products rendered by state veterinarian to farmers and others at their request, and all the receipts from the fees and charges shall be transmitted to the commissioner for deposit in the state treasury:".

Vice Chair Stoltze OBJECTED.

Mr. Pawlowski explained that Amendment #1 addresses concerns voiced by Representative Holm. The concern was to Page 2, Lines 21 & 22, determining that the fee authority was too broad. The proposed language goes back to the original statute and keeps the fees charged for services related to animals and animal products, to the farmers and others at their requests. The State lab does a lot of testing at the request of individuals and farmers and needs the authority to charge a fee for services. He advised that the Department supported the correction.

Vice Chair Stoltze WITHDREW his OBJECTION. There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment #1 was adopted.

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Co-Chair Meyer MOVED to ADOPT Amendment #2, #24-LS1469\Y.2, Bannister, 2/28/06. Vice Chair Stoltze OBJECTED.

Mr. Pawlowski recommended that language be deleted on Amendment #2, Lines 7 & 8, as it was no longer necessary with passage of Amendment #1. Co-Chair Meyer MOVED to AMEND #2 as recommended.

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Mr. Pawlowski explained that the amendment addresses the distinction and jurisdiction on animal and animal products versus agricultural products. Amendment #2 provides clarifying language, which Representative Holm commented that it would "tighten it up". The Department of Environmental Conservation supports the amendment.

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Vice Chair Stoltze WITHDREW his OBJECTION. There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment #2 was adopted.

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Representative Foster MOVED to REPORT CS HB 380 (FIN) out of Committee with individual recommendations and with zero note #1 by the Department of Natural Resources. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so moved.

CS HB 380 (FIN) was reported out of Committee with a "no recommendation" and with zero note #1 by the Department of Natural Resources.

[2:21:00 PM](#)

#HB353
#SB218

HOUSE BILL NO. 353

An Act relating to sentences for sexual offenses.

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 218(FIN)

An Act relating to sex offenders and child kidnappers; relating to reporting of sex offenders and child kidnappers; relating to periodic polygraph examinations for sex offenders released on probation or parole; relating to sexual abuse of a minor; relating to the definitions of 'aggravated sex offense' and 'child kidnapping'; relating to penalties for failure to report child abuse or neglect; relating to sentencing for sex offenders and habitual criminals; and providing for an effective date.

Co-Chair Meyer explained that the Senate bill would be the vehicle the House Finance Committee would consider, as it was further along in the legislative process. He reminded members that HB 353 and SB 218 were companion bills.

REPRESENTATIVE MARK NEUMAN, CO-SPONSOR, thanked his co-sponsors for helping to make Alaska a better place to live. He pointed out statistics indicating that Alaska ranks as #1 in rapes per capita throughout the United State. There are over 4300 registered sex offenders in the State of Alaska. He stressed that the price and costs associated with the victimization of the 521 statewide victims, averages about \$86.5 thousand dollars per victim. That is over \$45 million dollars per year in victim costs alone. Only 16% of rape victims report their rapes. Representative Neuman pointed out that when a perpetrator is put away for longer periods, they are often accused for additional crimes. The average sex offender commits approximately 110 rapes and 318 other offenses before they are caught. He stressed that there is an epidemic in Alaska and the brakes need to be put on.

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SENATOR CON BUNDE, CO-SPONSOR, testified in support of CS SB 218 (FIN), pointing out it is a bipartisan and unicameral issue. The problem is huge throughout Alaska. The statistics are outrageous and many victims are hesitant to come forward. The problem is larger than is apparent. He noted that in certain areas of the State, there are over 1,000 registered sex offenders.

Senator Bunde acknowledged all the help received from each of the staff and the departments affected. He added that the Department of Law, the Department of Public Safety and Department of Corrections have addressed the details & legal aspects. The Legislature handles public policy issues; hence, the reason for the bill.

Senator Bunde elaborated on the testimony received in the House Judiciary Committee regarding the "sad but true" long-term effects experienced by the victim and the fact of a high recidivism rate and little change in the perpetrator's behavior. There have been many programs attempting to help change that behavior and none seem to work. In order to protect women and children in our society, it requires longer prison terms. He doubted that drugs and alcohol were the main factors contributing to the behavior.

Senator Bunde acknowledged costs associated with incarceration. He believed that the costs associated with the long-term effects on the women and children were much higher.

Senator Bunde rejected the notion that the legislation resulted from national "hysteria reaction" around Jessica's law. The bill provides the opportunity to address a long and overdue concern. The bill proposes longer sentencing and using polygraph testing for those on probation and parole. It has been proven that the polygraph testing, keeps the perpetrator relatively under compliance. He urged favorable consideration of the bill.

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SENATOR GRETCHEN GUESS, CO-SPONSOR, testified in support of the legislation. She pointed out the number of co-sponsors with diverse party and regional support.

Senator Guess addressed the values of the legislation. She indicated that sex crimes have always been "under-dog" considerations for the Legislature. Rape and molestation have been spoken of as a family or community matter. It has only been recently that people have become aware that these crimes are intentional acts of violence that are devastating. The Alaska Statutes carry a very low punishment and she asked if those punishments reflect the values of Alaskan communities. CS SB 218 (FIN) addresses these concerns. The bill before the Committee contains many compromises made along the way.

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Senator Guess reminded members that the bill speaks to crimes of penetration, molestation, and incest in the third degree. Those crimes are very serious. The bill distinguishes sexual crimes against children with proof of the actual case and therefore, the sentence could be reduced for some molestation crimes. Senator Guess warned that crimes against of children are obscene.

The range of activity in the bill was expanded when addressing molestation and incest, which warrant the range between the second and third degrees and would provide the flexibility within the judicial system on the nuances that happen with the above-mentioned crimes.

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Senator Guess pointed out that the Sam 3 - the sexual abuse of a minor is not contained in the proposed legislation. Those cases identify "date-rape" and are not included in the sentencing guidelines at this time. She urged favorable consideration of the bill.

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Vice Chair Stoltze thanked Senator Guess for the amount of work done on the legislation.

Co-Chair Meyer pointed out that the original bill had "stiffer" penalties and asked why it had been modified. Senator Guess explained that her original bill had focused on the sexual abuse of a minor, not the sexual assault ranges. All the penalties were higher. Compromise resulted when addressing some of the "other crimes" out there. She noted that there always must be "give and take" when working with the whole legislative body and which, addressing crime of penetration and attempted rape of a child. Senator Guess was uncomfortable with the changes made in the Senate Finance Committee, reducing the sentence from 3 years to 1 year.

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Senator Bunde noted that he had been one of the legislators recommending less severity in the punishment. He claimed there is an issue of proportionality regarding treatment of a convicted sex crime being treated more harshly than a murder crime. He agreed it was an important discussion to have. Discussing sentencing can accomplish several things and can place people in jail sending a clear message of societal standards.

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Representative Neuman noted concerns regarding the proportionality of a Court challenge and recommending one or two years higher than the current sentencing. Representative Neuman stressed that these are "lifetime" crisis against the victim. He pointed out that he had not initially included polygraphs because of the fiscal expense; however, following discussion with Senator Guess, he now understands it would happen only twice a year and would cost

around \$200 dollars each time. The Court can order the perpetrator to pay for those costs.

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Representative Kelly questioned if there had been public education notices for women and children around these matters.

Senator Bunde replied he was not aware of such noticing happening in the State, however, in a less direct way, there has been press coverage and interest. The legislation would put out a considerable amount of information to the public indicating the new standards. Unless a person has been involved in the system before, they might not be aware of that information. He noted that some offenders intentionally move to states that do not use the polygraph system.

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Representative Neuman noted the national media hype following the concern. The average person probably does not have to deal with it. Passage of the bill would provide a lot of Alaskan's with information on the vastness of these issues.

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Senator Guess noted from comments heard in her district, citizens assume the sentencing is already that high. She noted especially crimes against children require public education, as is the case with sexual assault. She observed that public awareness is gradually increasing as the crimes become discussed within the communities & churches. She pointed out that crimes against children are sometimes committed by family-members.

Senator Bunde observed the great number of articles in the newspapers recounting sexual assault cases, especially involving children.

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Representative Kerttula commended the sponsors for shedding light on issues helping victims. She asked clarification regarding the Letter of Intent and the sources behind the shocking statistics. She referenced Page 3 and the horrific number of offenses happening before the perpetrator gets caught and asked if that number could be substantial. In the same section, it indicates that crimes go undetected for sometimes up to sixteen years. Representative Kerttula was shocked.

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Senator Bunde emphasized the amount of time that went into preparing the report; he acknowledged it was startling. He referred to the footnote referencing the sex offender treatment evaluation report as the base for that information. He noted that Ms. Parker of the Department of Corrections could provide more information.

Representative Kerttula requested a copy of that report. She voiced concern that some of the proposed sentences were higher than those for murder and questioned that philosophy.

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Senator Bunde responded that it was not the intent to seek higher sentences than for murder or manslaughter. That was a policy decision, observing that many of these victims often face a "lifetime sentence". He advised that large sentences could serve as a deterrent, admitting that if the sentence is higher than manslaughter, it definitely, sends a strong message.

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Senator Guess expressed that her analysis of the sentencing procedures reflected the nature of intention. When someone dies, there are multiple ways in which it may happen. Death could be unintentional, whereas there was not a case of unintentional sexual assault. She noted that since rape and molestation were intentional, the sentences should be higher, observing they do not extend as far as manslaughter. She noted that murder crimes were not taken into consideration when making the decisions for sentencing of sexual assault crimes.

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Senator Guess advised that in most cases, there are multiple offenses, which played a part in determining the sentence for a single crime.

Representative Neuman observed that there are many aspects to the issue of sentencing; the first being 15 to 25 years. He reiterated that the victim must deal with the crime, every day of their life. He referred to Page 3 from the Letter of Intent, noting that the average number of victims of a sex offender before caught is 110 and that they could go an average of 16 years before detected.

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Representative Bunde thanked Representative Kerttula for mentioning the Letter of Intent, as it is an integral part

of the bill. He knew that most likely there would be a Court challenge. He mentioned the amount of research in drafting the letter, so when the challenges happens, the Legislature will have the information.

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Representative Kerttula suggested language be more specific.

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Senator Guess referred to Ms. Parker, Department of Corrections. She pointed out that a defense attorney could bring up lesser crimes during a trial. A crime of harassment would be handled differently than the molestation and penetration. She agreed that there has not been a problem at this time with mandatory jail time and suggested there is subjectivity in the current legislation. She was not willing to trade leniency for child molesters.

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Senator Guess commented on the differences that cross the ten-year line, stressing that rape should incur a serious sentence.

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Senator Bunde acknowledged that Representative Kerttula had asked important questions and pointed out that all laws contain some ambiguity. He observed that prosecutorial discretion was a part of the current system and noted that a judge and jury play a part, as well as litigators, in the actual sentences served by a perpetrator.

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Representative Neuman referred again to the Letter of Intent, highlighting that perpetrators of sexual crimes were often guilty of multiple incidents.

Representative Kerttula thanked the panel for their work with a difficult topic.

Representative Kelly observed that the perpetrators cannot be rehabilitated and expressed support for the longer sentences.

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Senator Bunde advised that there was some small success in rehabilitation of offenders, who were the victims of incest. He concurred that there has not been broad success with most.

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Senator Guess referred to a study tracing treatment of sex offenders. She noted that the study revealed that there was not a statistical difference between those treated and those untreated. She noted one of the key successful provisions in the sentencing portion of the bill is the automatic probation and polygraphs. She thought that could be the best practice to protect people and help those convicted of crimes. She observed a pattern of behavior and if revealed, could prevent recurrence with use of the polygraph. Required polygraph testing can serve as a deterrent to offenders.

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Representative Neuman reiterated that the polygraph testing can decrease the rate of recurrence.

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Senator Bunde stated that the current polygraph practice utilizes trained operators, which he hoped would be a regulated and standardized policy. Requiring specific training could make the legislation too inflexible.

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Co-Chair Meyer opened PUBLIC TESTIMONY.

SUEANN WILLIAMS TESTIFIED FOR ROBERT LOESCHER, SPIRIT VILLAGE INC., JUNEAU, read a letter of support from Robert Loescher, a board member for Spirit Village, Inc. (Copy on File).

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Vice Chair Stoltze asked about the nature of Spirit Village and the services they provide. Ms. Williams responded that they are a non-profit organization, providing programs for prisoner's re-entry into the communities.

Vice Chair Stoltze asked if it was a culturally based program. Ms. Williams replied that a portion was culturally based.

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NICOLE SONGER, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CORDOVA FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER, CORDOVA, testified in support of the legislation and encouraged the Committee's support.

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SUE CHRISTENSEN, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, BERING SEA WOMEN'S GROUP, NOME, spoke to issues of harassment and child molestation. She stressed the "defenselessness" of a child and suggested that a law be passed, addressing the need for vulnerable children's protection for those 10 years and younger. She addressed mental illness, foster care, addicts, rapes and molestation of children and the need to front-load services for those victims. Ms. Christensen emphasized that these crimes "kill" and alter a child's core and deserves a death penalty. She mentioned the national law regarding the age of consent and requested clarification on the child kidnapping section.

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QUINLAN STEINER, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), DIRECTOR, PUBLIC DEFENDER AGENCY, DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION, ANCHORAGE, commented that Section 2, as written, creates an irreconcilable conflict with the rules of professional conduct that would prevent the Public Defender's Agency to represent individuals guilty of a previous sex crime conviction. He advised, he was working with Susan Parks from the Department of Law, to develop language that would maintain the substance of that section and thought that there was language that could work for both parties. He offered to answer questions of the Committee.

[3:29:11 PM](#)

GINGER BRYANT, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), SOUTH PENINSULA HAVEN HOUSE, HOMER, spoke in strong favor of the bill. She stressed how heartbreaking these crimes are against children. It is a crime of silence and without polygraphs, the crimes will continue. She urged that the perpetrators be placed behind bars.

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CHRISTINE KERNAK, (TESTIFIED VIA TELECONFERENCE), TUNDRA WOMAN'S COALITION, BETHEL, testified in strong support for the proposed legislation.

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REX SHATTUCK, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE MARK NEUMAN, indicated, he intended to provide personal testimony. He stated the legislation affects many people, known and unknown.

Mr. Shattuck provided testimony regarding his own sexual abuse. He emphasized that the numbers provided in the backup are "very" realistic. He noted that his situation resulted in a Class B felony for the perpetrator and knew

five other individuals impacted by the same person, who was in a place of authority, not a family member.

Until recently, Representative Neuman admitted he had not been aware of the impact of Mr. Shattuck's personal abuse. He commented that he felt obligated to testify. Sentencing of a Class B felony can result in two to five years sentence. If the legislation were passed, that perpetrator would potentially be looking at five to fifteen years. Mr. Shattuck pointed out that he has dealt with the crime for 35+ years. When comparing it to a murder, with a murder situation, there is a sense of finality; however, with a crime of sexual molestation of a child, the victim deals with the devastation for a lifetime. The legislation provides an important message to those contemplating such a crime and sends a strong societal signal. He urged that the bill be passed from Committee.

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Representative Kerttula apologized for any hurtful comments she might have made, noting her intent was that the State of Alaska draft a better and stronger law.

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Co-Chair Meyer closed PUBLIC TESTIMONY.

Co-Chair Meyer indicated that the Department of Corrections and Department of Law would provide testimony at the next meeting.

Vice Chair Stoltze requested that the Public Defender be invited for that meeting.

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Representative Foster discussed concern with the fiscal costs, mentioning subcommittee work to address such issues. He worried about the impact of those costs to the Alaska Court System and wondered about supplemental cost requests that would be associated with the increased penalties.

Co-Chair Meyer echoed the same concerns, noting further discussion on those matters at the next meeting.

HB 353 and CS SB 218 (FIN) were HEARD and HELD in Committee for further consideration.

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[3:40:40 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 P.M.

