

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

April 21, 2005

4:40 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair
Representative Vic Kohring
Representative Sharon Cissna
Representative Berta Gardner
Representative Lesil McGuire

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Paul Seaton, Vice Chair
Representative Tom Anderson

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Board of Education and Early Development

Esther Cox - Anchorage
Shirley Holloway - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

Bonnie C. Gaborik - North Pole

CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

HOUSE BILL NO. 193

"An Act relating to the licensing, regulation, enforcement, and appeal rights of ambulatory surgical centers, assisted living homes, child care facilities, child placement agencies, foster homes, free-standing birth centers, home health agencies, hospices or agencies providing hospice services, hospitals, intermediate care facilities for the mentally retarded, maternity homes, nursing facilities, residential child care facilities, residential psychiatric treatment centers, and rural health clinics; relating to criminal history requirements, and a registry, regarding certain licenses, certifications, approvals, and authorizations by the Department of Health and Social

Services; making conforming amendments; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 204

"An Act relating to the prescription and use of pharmaceutical agents, including controlled substances, by optometrists."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

ESTHER COX, Appointee

to the Board of Education and Early Development
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Board of Education and Early Development.

SHIRLEY HOLLOWAY, Appointee

to the Board of Education and Early Development
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Board of Education and Early Development.

BONNIE GABORIK, Appointee

to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR PEGGY WILSON called the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at [4:40:44 PM](#). Representatives Kohring, Gardner, and Cissna were present at the call to order. Representative McGuire arrived as the meeting was in progress.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Board of Education and Early Development

4:40:59 PM

CHAIR WILSON announced the first order of business, the confirmation hearings for appointees to the Board of Education and Early Development Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

4:42:47 PM

ESTHER COX, Appointee to the Board of Education and Early Development, said that she feels that the board has a great thing going right now. Each board member has experience that meshes together into a board that is able to debate and discuss issues and do good things for the children in Alaska. She said she has only served a couple of years on the board and would like to serve a full term. In response to a question from Chair Wilson, she said it's true that it takes a couple of years to "get up to par" in the position. She noted that one of the first jobs this particular board had was to hire a commissioner, and she said she thinks the board did a super job in that regard. In further response to Chair Wilson, she said the board has not taken any stand on "the area cost differential," although she said the board has held some discussion on the subject.

4:44:21 PM

REPRESENTATIVE KOHRING stated his belief that one of the best things that can be done to improve education statewide is to encourage alternative methods, such as home schooling, private education, correspondence school, and charter schools. He inquired as to Ms. Cox's views are on that subject.

MS. COX said that she comes from a district that has really tried to capitalize on alternative education, and she believes in offering families and children options regarding educational options. She stated, "The same shoe doesn't fit everybody." She said she was involved in public education for 33 years and was happy to know that there were alternatives available.

REPRESENTATIVE KOHRING asked Ms. Cox her opinion of the "voucher system."

MS. COX said she knows that by and large, educators are not in favor of the voucher system, and she stated she is not certain "that's the way to go." Notwithstanding that, she said she would certainly give that option due consideration.

[4:45:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA said that she is well aware of the school system's focus on preparing students for exit exams and on No Child Left Behind criteria; however, she said she has been working on the development of curricula which incorporates career ladders and stresses workforce development. She mentioned that the health field is currently the leading employer in the state and will continue to be a strong force in the future. She stated a desire to see all children in school graduate to jobs that they love. She asked Ms. Cox for her views on the idea [of promoting career development courses].

MS. COX reminded the committee that she is the former principal of the King Career Center in Anchorage. She stated her belief that children ought to be able to graduate with some kind of skill. She said working with one's hands is often looked down upon, yet the bottom line is that no matter what a student goes into, he/she will have to have some skill development.

[4:48:19 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked Ms. Cox if she thinks that the schools across Alaska are equally funded and that the students in them have equal opportunity.

MS. COX responded that that's a loaded question and questioned how she would answer it. She stated that there is a cost differential; it costs more money to educate children in rural Alaska. She said that has to be a consideration. What that cost differential should be, she said she could not say.

CHAIR WILSON clarified that she was not asking Ms. Cox to state a specific number. She indicated that there is "an unfairness in some areas." She offered an example.

MS. COX said being on the board has been a good experience for her, because it has given her a perspective as to the needs in the state.

CHAIR WILSON remarked that there are schools in her district that have not been able to buy a new textbook in 15 years.

[4:51:27 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOHRING moved to advance the name of Esther Cox to the joint session of the House and Senate. There being no objection, the nomination of Esther Cox for reappointment to the Board of Education and Early Development was advanced.

[4:52:03 PM](#)

SHIRLEY HOLLOWAY, Appointee to the Board of Education and Early Development, said she thinks she shares similarities with the people on the committee regarding the desire to serve the state and make a difference. She indicated that she has been involved with [the education of children] for 42 years. She said she brings a lot of experience to the board, due to both her successes and failures. She said Alaska has been good to her and serving on the board is a way to give back and continue to "help and support something that I think is vital to our country and our state - and that's public education."

[4:53:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA repeated her previously asked question regarding workforce development.

MS. HOLLOWAY opined that there is nothing more important than developing pathways and career ladders for students. Students need a set of skills to help decide where they want to go with their lives. She stated that it is bothersome to her that there is a misconception that No Child Left Behind doesn't fit into this idea. She said the intent of No Child Left Behind is to ensure that children learn to read, write, and compute, which she pointed out is basic to a career ladder. She stated that some of the best basic skills teachers are vocational education teachers because they understand how to teach those skills in a relevant way. She indicated that when she worked on the North Slope, she helped develop a Center for Occupational Training and discovered that reading math skills could be increased through small engine repair just as well as could be done in a classroom.

[4:55:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOHRING expressed his respect for Ms. Holloway and her wealth of experience.

[4:56:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCGUIRE moved to advance the name of Shirley Holloway to the joint session of the House and Senate. There being no objection, the nomination of Shirley Holloway to the Board of Education and Early Development was advanced.

[4:57:29 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON passed the gavel to Representative McGuire.

The committee took an at-ease from 4:57:40 to 4:58:31.

Professional Teaching Practices Commission

[4:59:15 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCGUIRE announced the next order of business, the confirmation hearing for the appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission.

BONNIE GABORIK, Appointee to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission, emphasized how important it is for the teaching profession to police its own ranks, both for the protection of the students and parents and for the teachers. She stated that if nothing else, teaching is about ethics. She mentioned being fascinated by a presentation by Bonnie Barber (ph) in Fairbanks and feeling that she wanted to continue being involved with education beyond the classroom. She said she has a reputation as an educator, as being fair across the board, as being able to make tough decisions when necessary, and able to [maintain confidentiality]. She said she thinks she would do a good job on the commission.

[5:01:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCGUIRE thanked Ms. Gaborik and explained that the committee would wait until it had a quorum to make the motion to advance the appointment.

The committee took an at-ease from 5:01:31 to 5:02:02.

[5:02:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCGUIRE moved to advance the name of Bonnie C. Gaborik to the joint session of the House and Senate. There being no objection, the nomination of Bonnie C. Gaborik to the Professional Teaching Practices Commission was advanced.

ADJOURNMENT

The House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting was recessed at [5:03:05 PM](#) to a call of the chair. [The meeting reconvened April 22, 2005.]