

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 23, 2005

9:35 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Carl Gatto, Vice Chair
Representative Jim Elkins
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Jay Ramras
Representative Berta Gardner
Representative Max Gruenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Paul Seaton, Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 23

"An Act relating to construction of a legislative hall."

- HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 48

"An Act relating to a determination of costs attributable to relocating the legislature or the state capital or of constructing a new capitol building in the present capital city, and to a determination of all costs of retaining the existing capitol building and keeping the state capital and legislature in the present capital city; relating to voter approval of certain bondable costs; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 176

"An Act exempting the state and its political subdivisions from daylight saving time."

- HEARD AND HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 23

SHORT TITLE: CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE HALL

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) ROKEBERG

01/10/05 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 12/30/04
01/10/05 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/10/05 (H) STA, FIN
03/19/05 (H) STA AT 9:30 AM CAPITOL 106
03/19/05 (H) <Bill Hearing Postponed>
04/23/05 (H) STA AT 9:30 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 48

SHORT TITLE: EXPENDITURE FOR CAPITOL CONSTRUCTION
SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) STOLTZE, GATTO

01/10/05 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/05
01/10/05 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/10/05 (H) STA, FIN
02/22/05 (H) STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/22/05 (H) Heard & Held
02/22/05 (H) MINUTE(STA)
03/03/05 (H) STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
03/03/05 (H) Heard & Held
03/03/05 (H) MINUTE(STA)
04/23/05 (H) STA AT 9:30 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 176

SHORT TITLE: ELIMINATE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME
SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) SALMON

02/25/05 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/25/05 (H) CRA, STA
04/07/05 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 124
04/07/05 (H) Moved Out of Committee
04/07/05 (H) MINUTE(CRA)
04/08/05 (H) CRA RPT 1DP 1DNP 3NR
04/08/05 (H) DP: SALMON;
04/08/05 (H) DNP: OLSON;
04/08/05 (H) NR: CISSNA, KOTT, LEDOUX
04/23/05 (H) STA AT 9:30 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE NORMAN ROKEBERG

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 23 as sponsor; stated his concerns regarding HB 48.

BEN MULLIGAN, Staff

to Representative Bill Stoltze
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of Representative
Stoltze, sponsor of HB 48.

REPRESENTATIVE WOODIE SALMON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 176, as sponsor.

MOIRA SMITH, Staff
to Representative Woody Salmon
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered testimony during the hearing on HB
176 on behalf of Representative Salmon, sponsor.

RICH POOR
Douglas, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of himself during the
hearing on HB 176.

LYNN WILLIS
Eagle River, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of himself in support
of HB 176.

ROBERT WEBER
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of himself during the
hearing on HB 176.

PAULEEN FLOYD
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of herself in support
of HB 176.

LELAND FISHBACK
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of himself in support
of HB 176.

RANDY RAMUGLIA
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of himself during the
hearing on HB 176.

ACTION NARRATIVE

VICE CHAIR CARL GATTO called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at [9:35:36 AM](#). Representatives Elkins, Lynn, Gardner, and Gatto were present at the call to order. Representatives Ramras and Gruenberg arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 23-CONSTRUCTION OF LEGISLATIVE HALL

VICE CHAIR GATTO announced that the first order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 23 "An Act relating to construction of a legislative hall."

REPRESENTATIVE NORMAN ROKEBERG, Alaska State Legislature, as sponsor of HB 23, indicated that this is the third legislative session in which he has introduced the concept of the bill. Based on Juneau's actions, he said, the issue is back in people's minds. He specified that the bill relates to the construction of a legislative hall and not "the capitol building, per se." The bill would establish the framework in which the legislature could take up the issue of where its future home should be and "what that home should be like." The proposed legislation would set up through the legislative council the requirements that those municipalities with populations of over 30,000 shall be able to propose a legislative hall, with a rent set at \$1 per year. The legislature would pay all the operating and maintenance costs.

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG noted that since statehood in 1959, there has been ongoing debate regarding where the capital shall be, and the bill would allow for competition between all local governments and the state, provided they meet certain criteria related to location, transportation, and fiscal capabilities.

[9:39:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG said the current [capitol] building is antiquated and does not meet fire and safety codes. Furthermore, it is unfriendly to the public. The building was originally designed as federal office space, he added. He offered further details. He stated his belief that Alaskans deserve a building they can take pride in, that is also functional.

[9:41:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG said another issue is the question of where the hall should be located. He said the building should fit its backdrop. He revealed that he was a real estate developer who specialized in the building and development of office buildings. Representative Rokeberg directed attention to a copy of a letter [included in the committee packet] that was written by Lyman E. Knapp. [The letterhead is that of the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education. However, "Washington D.C." has been crossed off and in it's place is, "On U.S.S. Pinta, near Ft. Wrangell June 2d 1890."] In the letter, Mr. Knapp lists the reasons for not removing the capital from Sitka to Juneau, including the remoteness of Juneau and its terrible winds. Representative Rokeberg said location is an important issue that must be resolved.

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG noted another issue is the question of who should make the decision regarding a legislative hall. He said since the building would be the legislature's, that body should make the decision. He stated that [the legislature] needs to have the framework of the project development and the legislative council could work that out through proposals.

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG said the bottom line is the fiscal note and what the cost to the citizens of Alaska would be. He talked about the one dollar a year payment, and indicated that the city that has the capital must pay the costs. He said his bill overcomes the biggest hurdle, which is the costs of a new capital. He indicated that both the Matanuska/Susitna (MatSu) and the Kenai Peninsula Boroughs have passed resolutions related to the bill. He said he believes there would be interest from communities, with the final decision ultimately residing with the legislature.

[9:50:02 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO predicted that there would be a savings to the state in moving the capital to South Central Alaska, because there would no longer be the need to transport so many people from Anchorage and the surrounding areas to Juneau. He said he is curious to know what that difference in cost would be. If, for example, the savings would be \$5 million a year, he wondered if the legislature would, in turn, appropriate that \$5 million toward the leasing or construction of the building.

[9:52:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG said some of those numbers have been looked at but some are outdated. He said it is a key element in the rationale for relocating the capital. He said \$5 million is the total cost of the legislature, most of it going to staff salaries. In terms of "the per diem differentials and the actual travel components," he said the savings are relatively small. He mentioned the cost to private citizens. Most of those in rural areas travel through Anchorage to get to Juneau, so there would be a significant savings to the public. He said it would cost more to cool down the new building, only because the capitol has no air conditioning. The issue is that there is not adequate ventilation. The net savings is not the driver to the bill. Notwithstanding that, he predicted that a new building would ultimately cost the state less. He said the current building could be "modestly remodeled," but it has "significant life safety problems."

[9:56:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG said it is his opinion that the cost of remodeling the current building is not worth it. He offered further details regarding the violations of fire codes in the current capitol, concluding that the building would have to be gutted before it could be made workable. He told the committee about a letter from a fire marshal after an inspection in 1998. Representative Rokeberg added that there is a lot of character in the building. He offered details regarding efforts that have made to improve the current capitol building.

[10:00:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG said he is concerned about the condition of the current building and the size of certain offices.

[10:02:26 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO remarked that the capitol fire alarm sounds like a car alarm, thus he did not evacuate on an occasion when it sounded.

[10:04:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG recommended that a thorough inspection of the capitol be conducted, so that the people of the state could know everything that is wrong with the building.

10:05:01 AM

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG said legislation is not needed to do that. He suggested installing a sprinkler system. He said there is lack of dual egress, and the primary stairwell could be a death trap.

10:06:46 AM

VICE CHAIR GATTO said the capitol was built in 1929, and thus has been grandfathered in and does not have to meet certain codes. However, if a major renovation were done, all those codes would have to be met.

VICE CHAIR GATTO ascertained that there was no one further to testify. He said he promised Chair Seaton that he would not pass any bills in his absence.

REPRESENTATIVE ELKINS responded, "If we weren't going to move any bills today, I'd just as soon be some place else. I mean, I thought that's why we came here, to move legislation."

VICE CHAIR GATTO explained, "Well, by closing public testimony and having this, I think when we bring it up the next time we will be able to dispose of it in short order."

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG said he doesn't have a problem holding the bill over. He stated his intent to prepare some amendments and asked if the public testimony could remain open.

VICE CHAIR GATTO suggested that Chair Seaton could choose to reopen public testimony if he wishes.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG emphasized the importance of the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN thanked Representative Rokeberg.

[HB 23 was heard and held.]

HB 48-EXPENDITURE FOR CAPITOL CONSTRUCTION

10:11:06 AM

VICE CHAIR GATTO announced that the next order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 48 "An Act relating to a determination of costs attributable to relocating the legislature or the state capital or of constructing a new capitol building in the present capital

city, and to a determination of all costs of retaining the existing capitol building and keeping the state capital and legislature in the present capital city; relating to voter approval of certain bondable costs; and providing for an effective date."

BEN MULLIGAN, Staff to Representative Bill Stoltze, Alaska State Legislature, testified on behalf of Representative Stoltze, sponsor of HB 48. He said he would address questions that were asked on a previous day. He said if a lease agreement amount exceeds \$500,000 annually, or the total will exceed \$2.5 million, the legislature would be notified of the lease. Furthermore, the lease must not exceed 40 years. The same time requirement would apply to a lease purchase agreement. Mr. Mulligan noted that AS 36.30.085(e) applies to lease purchase agreements, and read as follows:

(e) The department, the Board of Regents, the legislative council, or the supreme court may not enter into a lease-purchase agreement to acquire or improve real property unless the agreement has been approved by the legislature by law.

MR. MULLIGAN said the proposed [capitol building] plan on Telephone Hill [in Juneau] would have to be approved for a lease purchase agreement by the legislature.

MR. MULLIGAN, regarding a prior day's question on retroactivity, stated:

I talked to our legal department and then our legal council, and ... they both agreed that this would be a problem, and we're open to a friendly amendment to get rid of that and just have an effective date.

[10:14:20 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO said, "Now that some of the considerations for Telephone Hill have essentially been minimized, I think it's fair to say that the effective date issue would be a minor one." He noted for the record that he is also a sponsor of the bill. He reviewed that the Frank Initiative asks for the costs to be revealed for any capital relocation. However, consideration was made that a relocation made within the same community would not be counted as a relocation to a different community, and he and Representative Stoltze thought it should be. The bill addresses the intent that if the legislature wants to move into a new

structure, a bond would have to be approved. He stated that the capitol is the only building that is owned by every Alaskan.

[10:16:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER observed that if both HB 48 and HB 23 by Representative Rokeberg passes, even if a community donated a building to the legislature, a vote of the people would still be necessary to approve it.

VICE CHAIR GATTO responded, "Sure, the bondable cost would have to be approved."

MR. MULLIGAN said, "The state money aspect comes into play when we have to approve the rent when it comes through appropriations." He said he could talk to Representative Rokeberg's staff to see how the two bills work together.

[10:17:32 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO surmised that even if the legislature were given a building, there would still be costs related to occupying it, which the voters would have to approve. He offered examples.

REPRESENTATIVE NORMAN ROKEBERG, Alaska State Legislature, stated that he has concerns about HB 48 because it merely modifies the [Frustrated Responsible Alaskans Needing Knowledge (FRANK)] Initiative. He said he is surprised that the issue of all bondable costs - which he said is "the crux of the FRANK Initiative" - has not been addressed in the proposed legislation. He indicated that reparations to the community of Juneau for economic losses would be defined as a bondable cost. That is why the costs are so high. He cautioned, "If you're going to modify this particular statute, you might want to confront that issue." He said he believes his bill [HB 23] should be amended "to repeal this particular provision if it's to be approved," because the decision rests with the legislature, not a vote of the people. He offered further details. He stated, "My ultimate conclusion is this ... particular statute, and even its modification, would keep the capital in Juneau."

[10:21:32 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO stated the intent of the bill is to say, "If you're going to have something about full bondable costs, it has to be whether it's down the street or up to the next zip code."

REPRESENTATIVE ROKEBERG said, "I believe bondable cost is a way you maintain the status quo. I mean, that's the key to the whole FRANK Initiative. What you need to do is repeal the FRANK Initiative." He indicated that the face of the FRANK Initiative makes sense, because the citizens of the state should have a voice in how much to pay. However, Representative Rokeberg explained, "The whole price escalated to such a degree, and the debate and the campaign was over this multi-billion dollar price tag; it destroyed everything."

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG stated for the record that he has not been a fan of the capital move, because of the economic effect it would have on Juneau and [Southeast Alaska]. He said [the legislature] has "a trust responsibility" to everybody in the state. More importantly, he stated, "Wherever we sit has got to be safe."

[10:23:41 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO said that warnings of destroying the economy of Southeast Alaska by moving the capital are exaggerated, because Juneau will still have a federal building, the Coast Guard, mining, the university, and tourism. A proposal to have a "simple hall" in which the legislature meets for four months is not going to destroy Juneau. In fact, he noted that some people would enjoy Juneau more if it were less crowded. He pointed out that where one community may lose, another stands to gain, and it's not the obligation of the legislature to say, "We think some communities ought to gain, and pick it, and some communities ought to lose, and pick it, but rather have the process be open." He noted that Ketchikan lost an enormous amount of money when the pulp mill shut down and the community has rallied and found a way to survive. He noted that Ketchikan opened a shipyard and a plywood mill, for example.

[10:26:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ELKINS said he is from Ketchikan and disagrees with Representative Rokeberg's previous comments regarding that city. He said there would be no shipyard if it wasn't subsidized by the legislature for millions of dollars each year. He said there is no plywood mill, because the one Ketchikan had went bankrupt. He emphasized that [having the capital in

Juneau] is "a huge economic engine" for Southeast Alaska. He said many of the things Vice Chair Gatto listed, such as the federal building, wouldn't remain in Juneau if the capital was moved.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG said government works like a clock or a scale; the various parts of it have to be in balance for it to work. The legislature is the people's check on the executive branch. States that have adopted term limits, he opined, have largely upset the balance, weakening the legislature. He emphasized the importance of having the legislature be in the same city as the executive branch, so that the former can hold the latter accountable in person, not just over the phone. He indicated that a legislative hall is a capitol, because that's where the legislature lives. Representative Gruenberg said he is not aware of any other city in the U.S. or, for that matter, anywhere in the world, that has separated its legislature from the rest of state government.

VICE CHAIR GATTO ascertained that there was no one in the room or via teleconference wishing to testify.

[HB 48 was heard and held.]

HB 176-ELIMINATE DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME

[10:31:27 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO announced that the final order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 176 "An Act exempting the state and its political subdivisions from daylight saving time."

REPRESENTATIVE WOODIE SALMON, Alaska State Legislature, as sponsor of HB 176, said the subject of this bill - to eliminate daylight saving time - has appeared in the past. Daylight saving time originated to save energy, but Alaska has abundant daylight in the summer months. For example, in Barrow the sun doesn't set from April to October.

[10:34:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SALMON said some people argue that businesses need to be connected to the businesses on the East Coast, but through the use of computers and cell phones, Alaskans can be reached anywhere at any time of day.

MOIRA SMITH, Staff to Representative Woody Salmon, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Salmon, sponsor of HB 176, reported that researchers who have studied human physiology have argued that it is a disruption to the human circadian rhythms to change time zones when traveling or through observing the changing of the clock twice a year in April and October. The research shows that the time change is particularly disruptive to teenagers; teachers who give state exams the week of the change to daylight saving time in April have observed that the switch is quite disruptive to their students. Ms. Smith said a poll was conducted by [Dittman Research] that shows 58 percent of Alaskans support "getting rid of daylight saving time." She revealed that 29 of the 32 public opinion messages (POMs) have shown support of [HB 176].

[10:37:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER said this is an issue that she was asked to address when she was first elected. She said she decided she didn't want Alaska to be "even further off the time clocks of the rest of the United States."

MS. SMITH, in response to a question from Representative Gardner, confirmed that currently Alaska time is one hour different from Pacific time and four hours different from Eastern time. If HB 176 were adopted, then for six months of the year, when standard time begins in October, Alaska time would be the same time as Pacific time and only three hours different from Eastern time. In response to a follow-up question from Representative Gardner, she said, "The ... moment when the sun is at the high point in the sky would fall closer to noon were we to observe standard time all year long in Anchorage"

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG said if Alaska were to stay on daylight saving time and not change its clocks in October, the only time it would make any difference would be in winter. For example, instead of the sun rising at 10:30 a.m. and setting at 1:30 p.m., it would rise at 11:30 a.m. and set at 2:30 p.m.

REPRESENTATIVE SALMON, in response to a question from Vice Chair Gatto, said the bill would actually freeze the clocks on standard time - not daylight saving time.

VICE CHAIR GATTO said that changes the formula. Seattle, for example, would never be the same time as Alaska. Instead, from October to April, Alaska would be one hour earlier than Seattle,

but then from April to October, Alaska would be two hours earlier than Seattle.

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER suggested that Alaska could change to Pacific time in addition to eliminating daylight saving time.

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG, in response to a question from Representative Elkins, offered his understanding that Alaska, at one time in the past, had four time zones: Pacific, Yukon, Alaska, and Bering.

VICE CHAIR GATTO said Alaska communicates on a global economy. If [HB 176] were to be adopted, it would increase the time difference between Alaska and most of the rest of the United States, which would mean less time to connect with vendors, the stock market, insurance companies, airlines, and factories. He said that is a difficult situation.

[10:46:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ELKINS said he doesn't care whether the bill passes or not. He recalled that when Alaska changed to its current system, then Governor Bill Sheffield asked for the support of every city councilperson and every borough assembly person in the state, telling them that if, at the end of the year, they didn't like it, they could request to change it back. He said Ketchikan made that request, but nothing changed.

VICE CHAIR GATTO said he thinks that change was to get Juneau on the same clock as Anchorage, so the capital could do business with Anchorage during the same hours.

REPRESENTATIVE ELKINS remarked that the state does a lot of business with Seattle.

VICE CHAIR GATTO said he personally thinks Alaska should be on the same time as Seattle.

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER said she would like to offer an amendment to move Alaska to Pacific Standard Time and "discontinue participating in [Daylight saving time]."

[10:48:53 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SALMON responded that time zones are set so that the sun is at its highest point at noon during standard time.

If Alaska were to change to Pacific standard time, then "your high noon is going to be too early."

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG directed attention to the previously mentioned Dittman Research poll [included in the committee packet]. He noted there was only one question in the poll, which he read as follows:

Do you support Alaskans switching to [daylight saving time] for the summer and then switching back in the fall, or should we leave our clocks the same throughout the year?

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG said the question did not ask whether clocks should remain the same on standard versus daylight saving time. He said the question was seriously flawed in that respect. He said he is a co-sponsor of the bill, and he said it is his impression that federal law won't allow Alaska to remain on daylight saving time all year. He said adopting Representative Gardner's idea for an amendment would get around that problem, because Alaska would be on Pacific standard time. He offered his understanding that some parts of the state don't want to be "as far advanced as maybe the urban areas would be to be on the same time zone as the West Coast." He said he thinks his constituents would like not to have to shift their clocks back and forth and would prefer to be on the same time zone as the West Coast. He said it would be possible to keep Alaska on two time zones, and just shift the line past which part of the state is on [Hawaii/Aleutian] time.

[10:53:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ELKINS noted that any community in the state that wants to can change. He noted that Metlakatla never changed their clock and the state never took them to challenge.

MS. SMITH agreed that a community can do that, but Metlakatla has done so without federal approval; therefore, there is no recognition of it. The federal government could change Alaska's time by statute or by a regulation issued by the U.S. Department of Transportation. She said Alaska would have to petition the federal government to change its time zones.

REPRESENTATIVE ELKINS said Metlakatla has not suffered.

[10:55:30 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO indicated that the issue of time change has a lot to do with business hours and with kids having to go to school in the dark. He said he has received many letters on this issue.

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN said the previously mentioned poll is fascinating, but he wonders if the people who responded to it were just as confused as the committee over the details of the issue. He clarified that there has been a lot of interesting discussion relating to both sides of the argument and he is not sure the poll is valid "until you go to a discussion like this."

[10:57:50 AM](#)

RICH POOR, testifying on behalf of himself, stated that he doesn't know why Alaska would we want to pull itself another hour away from the East Coast where the investments of the Permanent Fund Corporation are affected by the stock market. People come to Alaska because they like the outdoors, he said, and after a day of work, they want to go out and play. If the state stays on standard time, that time disappears.

[11:00:15 AM](#)

MR. POOR listed the times that the sun sets on June 22 in various communities across the state. Losing an hour would mean, for example, that Fairbanks would no longer be the land of the midnight sun. Because of the light Alaska gets in the evening during the summer, parks and game fields are utilized to the fullest.

[11:01:56 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO admitted that one of the advantages of daylight saving time is that although there is more darkness in the morning, there are extra hours of light in the evening "when you prefer it."

[11:02:50 AM](#)

MR. POOR noted that television schedules are a "direct feed from the networks off the West Coast," so if the bill passes, prime time in Alaska seven months out of the year would be a 6 p.m. instead of 7 p.m. He mentioned airline schedules.

[11:04:11 AM](#)

MR. POOR, in response to a question from Representative Gardner, offered a more concrete example of the effects of not changing to daylight saving time along with being on Pacific standard time, as her suggested amendment would have the state do. He offered his understanding that the Alaska State Legislature has the ability to decide whether or not to change to daylight saving time, but would have to send a resolution to the U. S. Department of Transportation asking for a consideration to change the time to Pacific standard time. The federal government would send staff to hold hearings to get public testimony in Alaska and then take a recommendation back to the secretary of the department who would make the final decision. The factors considered when deciding would be in regard to commerce, communications, "and things like that," he said.

[11:06:27 AM](#)

MR. POOR added that he likes Representative Gardner's suggested amendment.

[11:07:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG offered his understanding that there is currently an energy bill in the U.S. House of Representatives, which proposes that the United States, as a whole, would be on daylight saving time for a total of eight months of the year. He recommended, "If we do that, then it might be preferable, if we can do it, to call it, 'Alaska [daylight saving time]' for the full year, rather than the Pacific time, because the Pacific standard time would only be four months if this new federal law passes."

[11:08:19 AM](#)

LYNN WILLIS, testifying on behalf of himself in support of HB 176, said he is glad that the needed debate on the issue is finally taking place. He presented his testimony as follows:

[Daylight saving time] is arguably not required in Alaska, but maybe this hearing will allow us to see the overriding public good that requires us to continue to use [daylight saving time]. In the absence of any such clear public benefit, I would ask that you respect the privacy of Alaska's residents and stop this semi-annual intrusion into our lives.

The arguments to end [daylight saving time] include the following 10 points: First, we live in the land of the midnight sun. Without touching the clock, this week, Southcentral Alaska gained about 40 minutes of natural daylight. Yes, I understand it gets dark in the winter in Anchorage - or in Alaska, in general. You can't have permanent, same length of the day, unless you move to the Equator - that's just something we put up with by living up here.

Second, as stated, data gathered in April 2004, by Dittman Research, shows that ... 58 percent - a majority - favor no longer changing clocks; but if you quit changing clocks, you quit using [daylight saving time]. The same public opinion survey showed only 37 percent continued to do what we're doing now.

Third, based on my inquiries to the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, no data is available that would show a savings of energy by use of [daylight saving time]. Fourth, this is the third repeal attempt in six years. The last effort in 2002 - HB 409 - had the necessary 26 votes to be scheduled for a floor vote, but was held in the Rules Committee.

Fifth, advances in communication technology, such as cell phones, voice mail, [facsimile ("fax")] machines, and use of the Internet allow messages to be left and business transactions to be conducted at any time. Sixth, some Alaska businesses can benefit from a time difference, by providing services outside of normal business hours elsewhere.

Seventh, Alaska now does business and provides services to areas that do not use [daylight saving time], such as the Pacific Far East, including China and Japan. Advancing our clocks increases the time between them and us. Eighth, Alaska workers, such as myself, who are on the job early in the morning, actually lose daylight when sun up is delayed by the use of [daylight saving time]. Work and commuting are much safer during daylight hours.

Ninth, people are impacted by [daylight saving time] when sleep and eating patterns are upset. The sun's position does not jive with the time of the day. The sun is highest in Anchorage now at 2 p.m., and will be

during this period of [daylight saving time]. On a hot summer day, this causes the heat to extend long into the evening hours.

[Last], most of Alaska is on permanent [daylight saving time]. In 1983, Alaskans living in all areas West of the Yukon Territory, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Nome, advanced their clocks one hour permanently. Now, from April to October, these same Alaskans experience ... double [daylight saving time]. The evidence is apparent: Alaska does not need [daylight saving time]. Let us first end the use of [daylight saving time] and then proceed to any permanent time zone changes.

[Daylight saving time] has to be one of the most invasive laws in existence. Twice a year, by government fiat, every Alaskan is forced to change every time keeping device they own, endure a form of state-sponsored jet lag, and have the sun be as much as three hours off of clock time. What is the clear and present need for this? Article I of our Alaska [State] Constitution recognizes the right of people to privacy. Would you please respect that right and end the use of [daylight saving time] in Alaska? Thank you.

[11:12:36 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO, regarding Mr. Willis' remark about the equator, noted that daylight time does change in the equator, it just changes less than the extreme changes of the poles.

[11:13:21 AM](#)

ROBERT WEBER, testifying on behalf of himself, said he runs a welding shop and a time zone in relation to his dealing with others is meaningless. He clarified he means that Alaska doesn't share a time zone with any place else, thus it doesn't matter whether the state is one hour or five hours off from anywhere else, because everyone is aware of the time zones. He stated there is a misconception regarding what is sunset and when it's dark. Where he lives, he explained, the sun may set two to four hours before it actually gets dark, for example. Alaska is big, and Juneau is the only area in the state that is close to a "normal" time zone related to the sun's rising and setting. He noted that Little Diomedes has a four-hour time

difference between Big Diomedes, yet is only three miles away. Parts of our state are in the Eastern hemisphere, a fact that he said people "keep forgetting."

MR. WEBER said, "I hope to see some common sense come out of this bill, and at the very least, stop the gut-wrenching, get-up-an-hour-early-in-the-spring thing." He said his daughter and her fellow classmates had to take the federal placement test one day after the time change. He added, "Getting up at 4:30 in the morning is not good for test results." He indicated that things couldn't really be made right "unless you establish six time zones." Notwithstanding that, he concluded, "You can't make everybody happy, so at the very least, ... keep us at a normal rate."

[11:17:23 AM](#)

PAULEEN FLOYD, testifying on behalf of herself in support of HB 176, said she came to Alaska about 36 years ago and wondered why the state had daylight saving time. She observed, "It seems to me that the sun itself sets the time for Alaska, and not the clock." She noted that senior citizens have trouble changing their clock, because it throws off their schedule and the timing of taking medication.

[11:18:50 AM](#)

LELAND FISHBACK, testifying on behalf of himself in support of HB 176, said he is a full-time teacher to children with disabilities. He said the time change really affects students. He said he teaches autistic students who need "sameness." Any changes, such as to the weather or time, really affects them a lot. On a personal note, he said he has three teenage daughters who are drivers. Statistics, he said, show that there is an increase in traffic accidents after the time change in the spring. Mr. Fishback said e-mail and computers allow business to be conducted across the states. He encouraged the committee to support the bill as written.

[11:20:59 AM](#)

MR. FISHBACK, in response to a question from Vice Chair Gatto, said studies show that people get in the habit of going to bed at a certain time, which is why the time change is difficult. He added that, as a country, "we are constantly sleep deprived," and the time change makes that worse.

[11:22:01 AM](#)

RANDY RAMUGLIA, testifying on behalf of himself, said he is a businessperson who does business with others across the country and the four-hour time difference [between Alaska and the East Coast] is "a huge hindrance to doing business." He offered an example. He said he thinks it's important that if the legislature votes to do away with daylight saving time, it includes the amendment suggested by Representative Gardner. In response to a comment from Vice Chair Gatto, he reiterated that having the extra hour in which to do business makes a huge difference. It does not require having daylight saving time if Alaska were to go on Pacific time. He clarified, "If we cannot go to Pacific time, I would be opposed to doing away with [daylight saving time], because the five-hour difference would ... have a very severe impact financially on my company and, I'm sure, many other businesses in Alaska." In response to a question from Vice Chair Gatto, he indicated that it is not a big problem to change several clocks twice a year.

[11:24:37 AM](#)

VICE CHAIR GATTO asked Mr. Ramuglia if he is aware that reminders to change the batteries in smoke detectors often coincide with the bi-annual clock change.

MR. RAMUGLIA answered no; however, he said his alarms make a noise when the batteries are low.

[11:26:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER said she used to work for Mr. Ramuglia, and every year there was an employee who came in late due to the time change. She said she would routinely go to work at 6 a.m. in order to communicate with businesses on the East Coast.

[11:28:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAMRAS said he opposes "doing anything with [daylight saving time]." He offered an anecdote. He said Alaska is unique because it straddles all the numerous global time zones and markets, and he said he was told that Alaska has the potential to grow as a global financial center because of its unique geography, which he indicated may be a good reason not to "monkey with [daylight saving time]."

[11:37:03 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SALMON indicated that one question to ask is whether the state should be "stuck on" daylight saving time or standard time.

[HB 176 was heard and held.]

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting adjourned at [11:38 AM](#).