

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
April 2, 2008  
1:46 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Meyer called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at [1:46:14 PM](#).

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mike Chenault, Co-Chair  
Representative Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair  
Representative Bill Stoltze, Vice-Chair  
Representative Harry Crawford  
Representative Les Gara  
Representative Mike Hawker  
Representative Reggie Joule  
Representative Mike Kelly  
Representative Mary Nelson  
Representative Bill Thomas Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Richard Foster

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Bob Lynn; Representative Jay Ramras;  
Representative Kyle Johansen; Jesse Kiehl, Staff, Senator  
Kim Elton; James King, Director, Division of Parks,  
Department of Natural Resources; Tom Obermeyer, Staff,  
Senator Bettye Davis; Denise Daniello, Executive Director,  
Alaska Commission on Aging; Marie Darlin, Alaska Associated  
Retired People Task Force; Jody Simpson, Staff, Senator  
Charlie Huggins

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Ivan Moore; Marc Hennenthal; Chris Ellingson, Acting  
Executive Director, Alaska Public Offices Commission,  
Anchorage; Michael Hanzuk, Development Specialist, Ardor  
Program, Office Economic Development, Ardor program,  
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development;  
Michael Catsi, Executive Director, Southwest Alaska  
Municipal Conference

SUMMARY

HB 281      An Act extending the statute of limitations for  
the filing of complaints with the Alaska Public  
Offices Commission involving state election  
campaigns.

CS HB 281 (FIN) was reported out of Committee with "individual" recommendations and with a new zero note by the Legislative Affairs Agency, a new fiscal notes by the Department of Law and the Department of Administration.

CS SB 57(RES)

An Act relating to fishing, hunting, and trapping in marine park units of the Alaska state park system, amending the area within designated marine park units of the Alaska state park system, and adding marine park units to the Alaska state park system.

CS SB 57 (RES) was reported out of Committee with a "no recommendation" and with fiscal note #2 by the Department of Natural Resources and zero note #3 by the Department of Fish and Game.

SB 209 An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska Commission on Aging; and providing for an effective date.

SB 209 was reported out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with fiscal notes #1 & #2 by the Department of Health and Social Services.

SB 254 An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska regional economic assistance program; and providing for an effective date.

SB 254 was HEARD & HELD in Committee for further consideration.

[1:47:17 PM](#)

#hb281

HOUSE BILL NO. 281

An Act extending the statute of limitations for the filing of complaints with the Alaska Public Offices Commission involving state election campaigns.

Co-Chair Meyer noted that Amendments 1 & 2 had been WITHDRAWN at a prior meeting.

[1:49:08 PM](#)

Representative Gara MOVED to ADOPT Amendment 3, 25-LS1115\T.4, Bullard, 4/2/08. Vice-Chair Stoltze OBJECTED.

Representative Gara addressed his comments to the amendment:  
Page 1, Line 7, following "Code;", inserting  
"requiring the disclosure of the identity of

certain candidates, groups, non group entities, and persons paying for certain polls mentioning the name of a political party or the names of certain candidates for state or municipal office;".

Page 1, following Line 9: Insert a new bill section to read: "Section 1. AS 15.13 is amended by adding a new section to read: Sec. 15.13.092. Identification of certain polls. All opinion polls that mention a candidate in an election occurring under this chapter or that mention a political party in the 60 days preceding an election, must clearly identify the name of any candidate, group, or non-group entity paying for the poll and any person paying more than \$2,000 for the poll, followed by the words "contributed money to pay for this poll."

Page 1, line 10, deleting "Section 1" and inserting "Sec. 2".

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 5, Line 3, deleting "sec. 2", inserting "sec. 3". Page 5, Line 6, deleting "sec. 2", inserting "sec. 3". Page 5, Line 7, deleting "sec. 2", inserting "sec. 3". Page 5, Line 8, deleting "sec. 1" & inserting "sec. 2". Page 5, Line 9, deleting "sec. 1", inserting "sec. 2".

On Page 5, Lines 10, 11 & 12, deleting "sec. 3" and inserting "sec. 4". Page 5, Lines 12 & 13, deleting "sec. 6" and inserting "sec. 7". Page 5, Lines 15, 17 & 18, deleting "sec. 7" and inserting "sec. 8". Page 5, Lines 19 & 20, deleting "sec. 8" and inserting "sec. 9". Page 5, Line 20, delete "sec. 8" and insert "sec. 9". Page 5, Lines 22 & 23, delete "sec. 9" and insert "sec. 10". Page 5, Line 25, delete "sec. 10" and insert "sec. 11". Page 5, Line 27, delete "sec. 11" and insert "sec. 12".

Page 6, Line 6, deleting "Section 13" and inserting "Section 14". Page 6, Line 7, deleting "sec. 14" and inserting "sec. 15".

Representative Hawker was not aware that his name was going to be included on the amendment.

Representative Gara explained the intent of the amendment to address attack polls, certain polls in which, the public never knows who are behind. There are situations the public might like to know about:

- If there is a candidate behind a poll;
- If there is a Political Action Committee (PAC) behind the poll; and
- If there is any person [business, labor group, organization] who is paying more than \$2,000 dollars for the poll.

[1:51:35 PM](#)

Co-Chair Meyer thought it would apply to all political opinion polls. Vice-Chair Stoltze did not know if there was a legal definition of "polling". He understood the intent but pointed out that sometimes, there is something that resembles a poll but in actuality, distributes only factual or non factual information. The body of law is complicated.

Representative Gara appreciated the question, noting two solutions. Regardless of the kind of poll, people should know who is paying for the poll and who is attempting to affect the outcome of that election. If Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC) needed to define the word "polling", they could do it by regulation. He did not believe that "poll" needs to be defined any further than it currently is. Vice-Chair Stoltze wondered if it should be defined regulatoraly.

[1:54:25 PM](#)

Co-Chair Meyer supported the intent of Amendment 3, however, worried that the change might taint the outcome of the poll. He asked if disclosure could be placed at the end. Representative Gara said yes, the amendment provides the discretion to determine where to insert the information to the voter.

IVAN MOORE testified via teleconference, spoke in opposition to Amendment 3. He stated that in principle, he did not have an issue with the requirement. He but worried about the mandatory disclosure during the course of the poll, creating a bias. When the pollster conducts the poll, they do not know who the client is that is paying for it. When a surveyor requests to know who is offering the poll, Mr. Moore's phone number is provided and he can be called directly. He was worried with his interviewers knowing who the funder of the poll is because that can introduce a bias. He suggested amending it to require that a pollster disclose when asked, instead of it being a requirement that it is disclosed in every interview. Co-Chair Meyer understood that.

Mr. Moore reiterated that knowing who the funder is creates a tendency to do things that make people happy, which the interviewer could subconsciously segue the information.

[2:00:21 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Stoltze referenced the professional pollsters versus those that offer "push-polls". Mr. Moore was uncomfortable with the suggestion that there are many of the push polls about and that pollsters routinely engaged in polls that are intended to influence the outcome of an election. That has never been his intent during his 20 years in business. Vice-Chair Stoltze asked clarification regarding the types of polls & the negative tactics used.

[2:02:21 PM](#)

Representative Gara was not concerned about who pays for the candidates but rather worried about "shadow groups" influencing elections. Mr. Moore argued that he does not tell his interviewers who pays for the polls but rather has them call him directly. Representative Gara thought that Mr. Moore could hire people that would not be influenced. Mr. Moore disagreed. Representative Gara maintained the need to disclose to the voters is more important and that pollsters could find a way to work around their bias.

Co-Chair Meyer asked if it would apply to out of State pollsters as well. Representative Gara affirmed. He disclosed that Mr. Moore had worked for him in the past and that they never did a push poll.

[2:04:01 PM](#)

Representative Crawford questioned what happens when there is an unknown group requesting a poll. Co-Chair Meyer responded that they would have the option to call Mr. Moore. Representative Crawford pointed out that the amendment does not clarify that.

Representative Gara pointed out that if a candidate was paying, their name would be required; if a political party was paying, then that would have to be disclosed. He acknowledged that some of the group/non group entities can come up with misleading names that the legislation will not be able to address. The last line clarifies that if there is any contributor that has placed more than \$2,000 dollars into the poll, their name must be revealed.

[2:05:39 PM](#)

Representative Hawker addressed root names that are intentionally misleading and in which a pollster could ask an offensive series of poll questions, paid for by a certain

party. He noted that the comments made by Representative Gara had assuaged his concerns.

Co-Chair Chenault questioned that certain parties would be responsible for disclosing to Alaska Public Office Commission (APOC). Representative Gara believed that the bulk of citizens who receive the polling information would not research the APOC records and that those records are not always available until the end of the summer before an election.

Co-Chair Chenault referenced the language: "Must clearly identify the name of any group or non group", asking what difference that could make. Representative Gara agreed it would be difficult to do everything right. If the candidate was paying or the political party or corporation or labor union was paying, it will important to find out that information. Under those circumstances, it is important to know the party that is behind it. Co-Chair Chenault indicated concern with those offering polls for deceptive motives, yet did not think the amendment addressed the real concerns.

[2:09:28 PM](#)

Representative Hawker responded that from personal experience, he had utilized a professional pollster and those dollars were filed with APOC. He attempted to find out who has been polling with the many calls he receives. Polling in and of itself is not disclosable; disclosure is only required when the group and entity requirements that the Legislature subjects to disclosure. He emphasized that the need is full disclosure.

[2:11:24 PM](#)

MARC HENNENTHAL, testified via teleconference, agreed with the comments made by Mr. Moore regarding disclosure by the interviewers regarding who pays for a poll. He mentioned the published information available regarding interviewer bias. Providing polls is the business of measuring behavior, opinions and the like, not advertising or advocating for a position. He maintained that push polls are not truly polls and by law, they are required to indicate who is offering the service.

Mr. Hennenthal pointed out that outside of the political arena, anyone that polls usually do not want anyone else to know that they are polling as it provides information to their competitors. He spoke against projecting the rules of advertising to the pollsters.

Co-Chair Meyer asked when the pollsters reveal the name of the requester. Mr. Hennenthal explained that the pollsters

can only provide his phone number as the name for information on the poll.

[2:15:42 PM](#)

Representative Gara disclosed that he had sold a car to Mr. Hennenthal's son. He asked if legally Mr. Hennenthal would be required to indicate "paid for by". Mr. Hennenthal replied that push poll require that but he added that a push poll is not a real poll. APOC requires a "paid for by" indication on that type poll.

Representative Gara asked what occurs if it was not a push poll "paid for" poll & offered by a legislator; APOC stipulates that information should be made available. Mr. Hennenthal stated they do not provide that information and are not required to so and that it could bias the interviewers on the results of the poll.

Representative Gara thought that if he paid for a poll, it should be considered a campaign expense and should be included. He worried that requiring the information for a push poll could indicate a name not recognized by the person being polled. Mr. Hennenthal maintained that not every poll is required to register who pays with APOC.

Representative Gara pointed out that is what the amendment addresses. He asked what happens if he pays for the poll. Representative Gara advised that Mr. Hennenthal would have to provide his own name and that no one would really know who requested the poll. He added that under the amendment, the name would need to reveal the information. Mr. Hennenthal commented that would be reselling it. Representative Gara said in that case, he was not being regulated by it and that if it becomes a "real campaign poll", the poll should not happen unless the money is provided up front.

[2:19:00 PM](#)

Representative Hawker followed the distinction between advertising and measuring. He agreed that there is an extreme on each end of the spectrum and worried about playing around those margins. The amendment clarifies that it must be disclosed and closes the loophole. Mr. Hennenthal asked about the confidentiality of the company that has interest in their opponents. Representative Hawker clarified that was the point of the amendment and that he thought it was a good idea. Mr. Hennenthal maintained that language would discourage anyone adding anything political to their polls.

[2:21:30 PM](#)

Representative Kelly accessed that the conversation affects poll information. He worried that the action could change the confidence level on a poll; however, agreed that it is nice for politicians to know.

[2:22:38 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Stoltze referenced comments made by Representative Hawker that opposing candidates do receive the information and that information does not show-up on the APOC records, would the amendment change that, making easier to enforce. Representative Hawker refuted that it would be an alleged violation. A corporation or some other organization, polling with political motives, can make the information public without it being a violation. Vice-Chair Stoltze acknowledged that he had not indicated his thought "artfully"; he expected that every poll was on the "level".

[2:24:34 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE BOB LYNN, SPONSOR, acknowledged that all polls are inaccurate & bias, admitting the area is of concern. He requested the amendment be a separate piece of legislation and offered to work with Committee members during the interim. He preferred not to incorporate it.

[2:26:11 PM](#)

Co-Chair Meyer agreed that the amendment should be considered on the House Floor. Representative Gara offered an idea to scale back the amendment to solve those concerns. He directed his comments to the two pollsters on-line. If at the end of the polls, the interviewer comments that: "This poll is paid for by persons interested in the outcome of this election". The language could add a requirement to provide a local or toll free phone number, which should not bias the interviewers and providing the information to people that are willing to make the call. Mr. Moore agreed that could resolve his concerns and supported the approach. Mr. Hennenthal also agreed that it does address the interviewer bias but that he would maintain his objection to the change. Government should not be intruding, especially when 90% of the polling is on sensitive areas. He thought the change could open a "can of worms".

[2:30:30 PM](#)

Representative Gara stressed that the amendment only applies to a poll that mentions a candidate or political party. Mr. Hennenthal thought that it could drive up costs. He pointed out that the poll charges by the length and is measured accurately, which means certain entities could not be offering polls as it would be prohibitively expensive.

Representative Gara pointed out that it does resolve the concern of interviewer bias. Mr. Hennenthal agreed.

[2:31:54 PM](#)

Co-Chair Chenault asked for an estimate on a typical political poll. Mr. Hennenthal responded anywhere from \$100 dollars on up. The highest he knew of cost \$20,000 dollars that is rare. Mr. Hennenthal said \$5,000 was reasonable; however, tracking polls are cheaper. Mr. Moore commented that he does not go as low as \$100 dollars, usually charging between \$250 to \$500 dollars for only adding a name to a statewide poll.

[2:34:40 PM](#)

Co-Chair Chenault questioned where \$2 thousand dollars had originated and wondered about a group of PAC's presenting a poll. He asked if a push poll could be considered influencing an election.

CHRIS ELLINGSON, ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA PUBLIC OFFICES COMMISSION, ANCHORAGE testified via teleconference, stated that the statute carries a provision alluding to a push poll and is called "false statements, telephone polling, and calls to convince". She added that APOC does not receive many calls on push polls.

[2:36:55 PM](#)

Co-Chair Chenault asked if a poll attempting influence an election was required to be registered by APOC. Ms. Ellingson stated that they do not have to be registered. She understood that sometimes polls are not designed for a candidate or a ballot issue. Sometimes other questions are added, peripheral to the issue.

Co-Chair Chenault worried about the issue of influencing an election, which he believed that under the APOC rules, they are required to be registered. Ms. Ellingson suggested that the Chairman was addressing communications. There are definitions in the law about the different types of communications and depending on how they are structured, determine if an entity would need to be registered and identified.

[2:39:36 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Stoltze asked for APOC's comments on Amendment 3. Ms. Ellingson said they had not received that amendment yet.

Vice-Chair Stoltze requested commentary on how the law is enforced & disclosed for polling procedures and requirements. Ms. Ellingson responded that polls are

difficult to specifically address because for many years, they have never been addressed in statute. Between 2002-2003, there was some definition put into the statutes. Prior to Campaign Finance Reform, any poll was considered a contribution. In 1997 with passage of the campaign finance laws, poll costs became costly and over the limit factor for contribution. Enforcing is difficult & APOC is usually the last to find out about the polling. The polls are done outside the realm of campaign disclosure area; it would be difficult to administer and get a handle on. The Commission has addressed how to get something created for determining the guidelines. She worried about the outside polling industry.

[2:43:53 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Stoltze supported the intent of the amendment but worried about the effect on the bill and the obligations placed upon APOC.

Representative Gara addressed questions previously asked by the Committee. He pointed out that the \$2 thousand dollar limit would not apply in most cases. He maintained that people should know how much the poll costs. He understood that there could be more demand on the resources but no monitoring unless someone files a complaint.

[2:46:06 PM](#)

Co-Chair Meyer responded that he could accomplish a poll by hiring an out of state pollster. He asked if the change would adversely affect the Alaskan polling business. Representative Gara maintained that if you were a candidate paying for it, the name would have to be revealed. He did not know if the law could be enforced on the out of state pollsters.

Ms. Ellingson noted that if someone does make an independent expenditure to purchase a poll, there are identification requirements if related to an Alaskan candidate. If an individual is paying, they are allowed ten days to file the expenditure report.

Representative Hawker recommended removing the dollar limit and making it an absolute full disclosure.

Co-Chair Chenault asked if a Political Action Committee (PAC) paid for a poll, would the reporting requirements indicate that. Ms. Ellingson said yes. She pointed out that PAC and group are used interchangeably in the law.

Representative Gara MOVED to ADOPT Conceptual amendment, changing the words at the end of Amendment #3 (Copy on File). The amendment would be to Page 1, Line 13, deleting

"contributed money to pay for this poll" and inserting, " 'this poll is paid for by persons interested in the outcome of this election.' The person conducting the poll must provide a toll free or local phone number that can be called to obtain the information in this section."

There being NO OBJECTION, it was adopted.

[2:51:16 PM](#)

Representative Hawker acknowledged that the conceptual amendment makes it better. The intent is to have people disclose their participation in the campaigning.

Representative Hawker MOVED to ADOPT Conceptual Amendment 2 to Amendment #3, removing the \$2,000 dollar requirement and stating that "any person paying for such a poll, would be wrapped into this web". Representative Gara OBJECTED for purposes of discussion.

Representative Gara wanted to avoid the pollster's phone call going on for a long time. He recommended adding between "\$500 - \$700 dollars".

Co-Chair Chenault did not think those numbers would make the call longer or shorter. He thought it would only cost the person offering the poll extra money.

Representative Gara WITHDREW his OBJECTION. There being NO further OBJECTION, conceptual Amendment 2 to Amendment #3 was adopted.

[2:54:39 PM](#)

Representative Lynn commented on the changes made, suggesting they would be better placed in another piece of legislation. He stated the important aspect of the bill is inclusion of the statute of limitations.

Vice-Chair Stoltze WITHDREW his OBJECTION to the amended Amendment #3. Co-Chair Chenault OBJECTED.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Thomas, Crawford, Gara, Hawker, Joule, Kelly, Meyer  
OPPOSED: Stoltze, Nelson, Chenault

Representative Foster was not present for the vote.

The MOTION PASSED (7-3).

[2:58:33 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Stoltze MOVED to REPORT CS HB 281(FIN) out of Committee with individual recommendations and with the accompanying fiscal notes. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CS HB 281 (FIN) was reported out of Committee with "individual" recommendations and with a new zero note by the Legislative Affairs Agency, a two new fiscal notes by the Department of Law and the Department of Administration.

#SB57

[3:00:33 PM](#)

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 57(RES)

An Act relating to fishing, hunting, and trapping in marine park units of the Alaska state park system, amending the area within designated marine park units of the Alaska state park system, and adding marine park units to the Alaska state park system.

JESSE KIEHL, STAFF, SENATOR KIM ELTON, explained the legislation, which adds 14 islands to an existing marine park parcel. The islands are heavily used by both local residents as well as visitors from out of State for hunting, fishing, recreation and tourism. The waters off the islands are productive fishing grounds.

Mr. Kiehl stated that the bill was developed jointly with the Division of Parks. It is supported by the City & Borough of Juneau (CBJ), the local tourism companies, urban Native corporations, fishing charter companies as well as outdoor groups including the Territorial Sportsmen.

Mr. Kiehl noted that one of the primary purposes for adding the lands and water to the State Marine Park system is to begin to develop amenities on the islands such as cabins and boat launches in partnership with local groups to a reduced cost to the State. The bill explicitly excludes private land holdings in the areas described. All those land holdings have water access and will not be impeded by the bill. SB 57 clarifies that whatever rules the Department of Fish and Game implements for hunting and trapping would apply to these areas as well.

[3:04:49 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Stoltze asked if the fishing reference referred to both sport and commercial. Mr. Kiehl clarified that the bill was deliberately crafted to be broad and does refer to sport, commercial and subsistence use and gathering.

Vice-Chair Stoltze noted that he did not care about the legislation since it was not close to the area he

represents. He opined that one does not know what they are inviting when the Parks Division and their management come into that area. He wanted to know that it was approved with informed consent.

Co-Chair Meyer asked if there was commercial value to the land for mining or timber interests. Mr. Kiehl was not aware of significant commercial value. He deferred to the Department of Natural Resources. There is one possible commercial use - the beaches might be suitable for shellfish farming, which the bill would not impact.

Representative Gara asked where the Copper River meridian was in Southeast Alaska.

JAMES KING, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PARKS, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES, did not know the answer to that.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY CLOSED.

[3:09:07 PM](#)

Representative Thomas commented that over the years, there has never been a problem with compatibility in the areas. He thought the areas were also important to the Anchorage commercial fishermen. He did not oppose the bill.

Representative Hawker commented that there is a "body of testimony" included from hearings in the Senate Resources and Senate Finance Committees. He indicated his support of the bill, which has been endorsed by adjacent land owners, the fisheries community and the park. He applauded the work done by the sponsor.

Co-Chair Meyer noted the small fiscal note.

Vice-Chair Stoltze MOVED to REPORT CS SB 57 (RES) out of Committee with individual recommendations and with the accompanying fiscal notes. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CS SB 57 (RES) was reported out of Committee with a "no recommendation" and with fiscal note #2 by the Department of Natural Resources and zero note #3 by the Department of Fish and Game.

#SB209

SENATE BILL NO. 209

An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska Commission on Aging; and providing for an effective date.

[3:12:22 PM](#)

TOM OBERMEYER, STAFF, SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS, explained that under AS 44.21.200, a number of the Alaska boards and commissions have an expiration date. SB 209 is an act extending the termination date of the Alaska Commission on Aging and providing for an effective date. In accordance with the Alaska Statutes as part of the legislative oversight responsibility, the Division of Legislative Budget and Audit (LBA) conducted a sunset review of the Commission in 2007. The purpose of that review was to assess the demonstrated public need for the continuation of the Commission. As a result, LBA determined that the Commission on Aging is helping older Alaskans. The audit recommended that the Legislature adopt legislation extending the commission's termination date to June 30, 2016. SB 209 makes that amendment.

[3:14:53 PM](#)

DENISE DANIELLO, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING, voiced support for SB 209. The Alaska Commission on Aging was established in 1982 to be a voice for older Alaskans. The Commission satisfies a federal requirement of the Older Americans Act, Section 306(AD), requiring a commission council comprised of individuals of senior status and funded by Older Americans Act. The Commission satisfies that State requirement and the State is able to bring forth \$4.7 million federal dollars to support senior services.

[3:16:19 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Stoltze asked for reflections on the audit regarding the mission of the Commission. Ms. Daniello responded that the audit contained a requirement taken up under SB 243 to update the statutes to reflect current practice. In 2003, under previous Governor Murkowski's Administration, there was a change in the way grants for senior services were administered. Under Executive Order (EO) 103, established a new division called Division of Senior and Disability Services, which assumed the grant making authority from the Alaska Commission on Aging. The statutes were never updated to reflect that change.

Vice-Chair Stoltze corrected that the Executive Order was EO 108 not EO 103. He pointed out that was the only question the audit raised.

[3:18:22 PM](#)

MARIE DARLIN, AARP TASK FORCE, testified on behalf of over 90,000 members in AARP in Alaska, who voice support for SB

209. She reiterated that it had been the recommendation of a recent audit. She commented on the work of the Commission, which helps determine the important issues and vision for the best interest for the State. She urged support for the bill.

[3:20:38 PM](#)

Representative Gara applauded the work done by Ms. Darlin and the members of AARP.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY CLOSED

Representative Thomas inquired the age restriction. Ms. Daniello responded that for the Alaska on Aging, it is 60 years of age or older as defined by the Older Americans Act.

Co-Chair Meyer referenced the fiscal notes.

Vice-Chair Stoltze MOVED to REPORT SB 209 out of Committee with individual recommendations and with the accompanying fiscal notes. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

SB 209 was reported out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with fiscal notes #1 & #2 by the Department of Health and Social Services.

#SB254

[3:23:23 PM](#)

SENATE BILL NO. 254

An Act extending the termination date of the Alaska regional economic assistance program; and providing for an effective date.

JODY SIMPSON, STAFF, SENATOR CHARLIE HUGGINS, said that the Alaska Regional Economic Assistance Program was created by the Legislature in 1988 to promote the economic development of Alaska's urban and rural areas. The program enables the creation of Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR). To carry out the mission of each ARDOR, the State provides funding in the form of grants. In turn, the ARDOR's use that money to leverage, on the average eight times the State's investment in private, federal and other funds.

The intent for the statewide ARDOR's is:

- Enable local officials and business to pool resources and work together on economic development;

- Develop partnerships among public, private and other organizations; and
- Provide technical assistance via direct links with local citizens.

[3:26:02 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Stoltze pointed out that SB 254 is a companion bill to HB 272, which he had sponsored.

[3:27:00 PM](#)

MICHAEL HANZUK, DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST, ARDOR PROGRAM, OFFICE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ARDOR PROGRAM, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT testified via teleconference, offered to answer questions of the Committee.

[3:27:40 PM](#)

MICHAEL CATSI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SOUTHWEST ALASKA MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE testified via teleconference, offered to answer questions of the Committee. He noted support for the bill.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY CLOSED

[3:28:53 PM](#)

Co-Chair Meyer stated that SB 254 would be HELD in Committee for further consideration.

#

[3:29:28 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 3:29 P.M.