

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

March 11, 2008

3:07 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair
Representative Bob Roses, Vice Chair
Representative Anna Fairclough
Representative Wes Keller
Representative Paul Seaton
Representative Sharon Cissna
Representative Berta Gardner

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11

Supporting federal funding for veterans' health care and urging the United States Congress to ensure adequate funding for veterans' health care.

- MOVED SJR 11 OUT OF COMMITTEE

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 241(SED)

"An Act relating to a report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD AND HELD

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 119(RLS)

"An Act relating to grant programs to support libraries."

- HEARD AND HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SJR 11

SHORT TITLE: SUPPORTING U.S. VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) WIELECHOWSKI

05/09/07 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS

05/09/07 (S) HES
 02/04/08 (S) HES AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 02/04/08 (S) Moved SJR 11 Out of Committee
 02/04/08 (S) MINUTE(HES)
 02/06/08 (S) HES RPT 3DP
 02/06/08 (S) DP: DAVIS, THOMAS, DYSON
 02/11/08 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 02/11/08 (S) VERSION: SJR 11
 02/13/08 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/13/08 (H) MLV, HES
 02/26/08 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
 02/26/08 (H) Moved Out of Committee
 02/26/08 (H) MINUTE(MLV)
 02/29/08 (H) MLV RPT 6DP
 02/29/08 (H) DP: KAWASAKI, LEDOUX, FAIRCLOUGH,
 DAHLSTROM, BUCH, ROSES
 03/11/08 (H) HES AT 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106

BILL: SB 241

SHORT TITLE: UNIV. REPORT: TEACHER TRAINING/RETENTION

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) STEVENS BY REQUEST OF JT LEG EDUCATION
 FUNDING TASK FORCE

01/18/08 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 01/18/08 (S) SED, HES
 02/01/08 (S) SED AT 8:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 02/01/08 (S) Heard & Held
 02/01/08 (S) MINUTE(SED)
 02/06/08 (S) SED RPT CS 3DP 2NR NEW TITLE
 02/06/08 (S) DP: STEVENS, WILKEN, DAVIS
 02/06/08 (S) NR: OLSON, HUGGINS
 02/06/08 (S) SED AT 8:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
 02/06/08 (S) Moved CSSB 241(SED) Out of Committee
 02/06/08 (S) MINUTE(SED)
 02/13/08 (S) HES AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 02/13/08 (S) Moved CSSB 241(SED) Out of Committee
 02/13/08 (S) MINUTE(HES)
 02/15/08 (S) HES RPT CS(SED) 2DP 2NR
 02/15/08 (S) DP: DAVIS, THOMAS
 02/15/08 (S) NR: ELTON, DYSON
 02/29/08 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 02/29/08 (S) VERSION: CSSB 241(SED)
 03/03/08 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/03/08 (H) HES, FIN
 03/11/08 (H) HES AT 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106

BILL: SB 119

SHORT TITLE: SCHOOL LIBRARY GRANTS
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) OLSON

03/14/07 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/14/07 (S) HES, FIN
04/25/07 (S) HES AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/25/07 (S) Moved SB 119 Out of Committee
04/25/07 (S) MINUTE(HES)
04/27/07 (S) HES RPT 4DP
04/27/07 (S) DP: DAVIS, ELTON, THOMAS, COWDERY
01/30/08 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
01/30/08 (S) Heard & Held
01/30/08 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
02/08/08 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
02/08/08 (S) Moved CSSB 119(FIN) Out of Committee
02/08/08 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
02/11/08 (S) FIN RPT CS 6DP NEW TITLE
02/11/08 (S) DP: HOFFMAN, STEDMAN, ELTON, THOMAS,
DYSON, OLSON
02/18/08 (S) RLS AT 11:00 AM BELTZ 211
02/18/08 (S) Moved CSSB 119(RLS) Out of Committee
02/18/08 (S) MINUTE(RLS)
02/19/08 (S) RLS RPT CS 2DP 2AM NEW TITLE
02/19/08 (S) DP: STEVENS, ELLIS
02/19/08 (S) AM: THERRIAULT, GREEN
03/03/08 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
03/03/08 (S) VERSION: CSSB 119(RLS)
03/04/08 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/04/08 (H) HES, FIN
03/11/08 (H) HES AT 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SJR 11, as the sponsor.

RUSSELL KELL, Member
Vietnam Veterans of America
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SJR 11.

TIM WHEELER, Secretary
Alaska Veterans Business Alliance
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SJR 11.

KEVIN MCGEE, Member
American Federation of Government Employees Local 3028
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SJR 11.

JOHN YOUMANS, Member
Alaska Veteran's Business Alliance
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SJR 11.

SENATOR GARY STEVENS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 241, as the sponsor.

TIM LAMKIN, Staff
to Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 241.

CYNTHIA HENRY, Vice Chair
Board of Regents
University of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on SB 241.

JOHN PUGH, Chancellor
University of Alaska Southeast
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 241.

GINNY AUSTERMAN, Staff
to Senator Donald Olson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 119, on behalf of Senator Olson, sponsor.

DARWIN PETERSON, Staff
to Senator Bert Stedman
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 119.

CHARLOTTE GLOVER, Youth Services Librarian
Ketchikan Public Library
Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

ROSLYN GOODMEN, School Librarian; Library Consultant
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Speaking as an individual, testified in support of SB 119.

DEBBY EDWARDSON, Writer
Barrow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

PATRICIA LINVILLE, Librarian
Seward Community Library
Seward, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

SUE PAULSEN
Petersburg, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Speaking as an individual, testified in support of SB 119.

SHARON JUNGE, Physician
Petersburg, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Speaking as an individual, testified in support of SB 119.

PEARL BROWER, Special Assistant for External Affairs
Ilisagvik College
Barrow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

DAVID ONGLEY, Representative
Tuzzy Library
Barrow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

JUDITH MCQUERRY, Representative
Ketchikan Public Library
Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

CAITLIN DIXON, School Librarian
Shoenbar Middle School
Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

KARI SAGEL, Teacher
Blatchley Middle School; Librarian
Alaska Association of School Libraries
Sitka, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

BARB BRYSON, School Librarian; Board Member
Alaska Association of Libraries
Valdez, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

CATHY BOUTIN, School Librarian; Member
Governor's Advisory Council on Libraries
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Speaking as an individual, testified in support of SB 119.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR PEGGY WILSON called the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at [3:07:32 PM](#). Representatives Fairclough, Gardner, Keller, Seaton, Cissna, and Wilson were present at the call to order. Representative Roses arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SJR 11-SUPPORTING U.S. VETERANS' HEALTH CARE

[3:08:31 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the first order of business would be SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11, Supporting federal funding for veterans' health care and urging the United States Congress to ensure adequate funding for veterans' health care.

[3:08:53 PM](#)

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI, Alaska State Legislature, introduced SJR 11, as the sponsor. Senator Wielechowski informed the committee that SJR 11 urges the U. S. Congress to ensure adequate funding for veteran's health care. He noted that at least twenty states have passed similar resolutions, and that SJR 11 passed the Alaska State Senate unanimously. The

Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) provides medical care for veterans who have risked their lives to protect the nation. Veteran's medical care includes treatment for spinal cord injury, blindness, traumatic brain injury, post traumatic stress disorder, and other injuries. In addition, the VA provides training for health care personnel, conducts research, and forms an additional line of defense during times of crisis. The Governmental Accountability Office (GAO) reports the agency has been underfunded and lags behind inflation and the increased demand for services. In fact, veteran's enrollment for health care increased by 134 percent between FY 1996 and FY 2004, yet funding only increased by 34 percent, adjusted for 1996 dollars. The resolution professes the gratitude of the state for the sacrifices made by veterans who are suffering from medical and mental problems resulting from injuries sustained during their service. Most importantly, it urges Congress to ensure adequate funding for veteran's health care.

[3:10:45 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON opined that SJR 11 is very important to the state due to the number of veterans living in Alaska.

[3:10:55 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked the sponsor for the percentage of veterans living in Alaska, compared to other states.

[3:11:22 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI stated that Alaska has the highest percentage of veterans of any state. The resolution has the unanimous support of the veteran's organizations in the state and he said that the sponsors would not object to the addition of this statistic to the language of the bill.

[3:12:00 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA further asked whether Alaska is home for many veterans returning with serious injuries from the present conflict.

[3:12:37 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI indicated yes. He pointed out that some of the veteran's injuries are listed on page 1, line 14, of the bill.

[3:13:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA anticipated support for the resolution when it reaches the floor.

[3:13:30 PM](#)

RUSSELL KELL, Member, Vietnam Veterans of America, stated that adequate funding will assure that veterans are healthy enough to pursue the educational programs available to them. The result of the past inadequate funding by Congress is denied and delayed medical treatment for entitled veterans, thus veterans have been unable to pursue education and productive employment. Also, without treatment, medical symptoms increase later in life. Assured funding is a benefit to all Alaskans as veterans' medical care will be paid by Medicaid if not paid by the VA. Mr. Kell confirmed that Alaska has the highest population of veterans per capita; in fact, this population is expected to increase.

[3:15:49 PM](#)

TIM WHEELER, Secretary, Alaska Veterans Business Alliance, urged the committee to advocate for adequate funding for all veterans, especially the many wounded veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. He requested the immediate passage of SJR 11.

[3:16:24 PM](#)

KEVIN MCGEE, Member, American Federation of Government Employees Local 3028, informed the committee that politics continue to inhibit funding at the VA. The American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) Local 3028 renewed its call for assured funding of the VA health care system for the veteran's health administration, and to hire new claims processors for the benefits office. In addition, Local 3028 supports: increased oversight to assure that funds are spent on veteran's needs; improved Vietnam Veterans of America employee training; restored bargaining rights for VA health care professionals; and the passage of SJR 11. Mr. McGee opined that there is a morale obligation to insist that all veterans are provided the best medical care possible, without worry about the funding. He concluded that AFGE Local 3028 would seek federal and state action to assure mandatory funding, a stronger health care work force through the restoration of bargaining rights, a reduction

in the claims backlog, greater oversight, and expanded veteran's employment opportunities.

[3:19:18 PM](#)

JOHN YOUMANS, Member, Alaska Veteran's Business Alliance, stated his agreement with the previous testimony and added that his experience in the last 24 years supports the need for this bill to pass.

[3:19:50 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON closed public testimony.

[3:20:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER asked for further information about the Priority 8 veterans who were temporarily barred from entering the health care system five years ago. She understood that all veterans are promised health care.

[3:21:03 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI explained that veterans have said that promises of health care were made at the time of their enlistment; however, for many the promise has been broken. In fact, the government has recently increased the amount of co-pay for medical services. He pointed out that SJR 11 expresses appreciation for the sacrifice of veterans and asks for adequate funding for veteran's health care.

[3:22:11 PM](#)

MR. MCGEE further explained that [Priority 8] veterans have incomes of \$30,000.

[3:22:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER opined that the promise for health care was without limitations.

[3:23:11 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON stressed the obligation of the government to support veterans.

[3:23:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH moved to report SJR 11 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, SJR 11 was reported out of House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee.

SB 241-UNIV. REPORT: TEACHER TRAINING/RETENTION

3:23:54 PM

CHAIR WILSON announced that the next order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 241(SED), "An Act relating to a report to the legislature on teacher preparation, retention, and recruitment by the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska; and providing for an effective date."

3:24:51 PM

SENATOR GARY STEVENS, Alaska State Legislature, informed the committee that SB 241 was a result of the legislative education task force and requires a report from the University of Alaska (UA) specific to the tracking, training, and retaining of qualified public school teachers. He noted that the legislature does not often have a dialog with the UA Board of Regents; however, the bill proposes that, on the thirtieth day of the legislative session, the Board of Regents issue an annual report to the legislative educational committees. This annual report becomes a biannual report after 2013. The bill sends a message that the legislature wants to know what the UA is doing about the teacher shortage in the state. Senator Stevens acknowledged that, although the UA makes a great deal of information available, it is valuable that it be reported to the legislature.

3:26:59 PM

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER asked for an explanation of what the UA can do to "retain" teachers.

3:27:41 PM

SENATOR STEVENS explained that the UA's responsibility would be to report on the rates of retention for each school district and the school districts' plans for improvement.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER surmised that the sponsor would approve clarification of that responsibility by the committee.

[3:28:21 PM](#)

TIM LAMKIN, Staff to Senator Gary Stevens, Alaska State Legislature, speaking on behalf of the sponsor, Senator Stevens, stated that one retention tool in use by the UA is the statewide mentoring project that is a direct partnership between the UA and the Department of Early Development & Education (DEED).

[3:28:56 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON observed that the UA can play a big role in retention by the proper preparation of students to handle situations in rural areas. Students need information pertinent to remote and rural placement.

[3:30:29 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN pointed out that some teachers prefer rural placement.

[3:30:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA asked about the depth of the report; in fact, retention can be related to the amount of funding provided by the legislature. She asked whether the report would include studies on the issues of funding incentives and benefits to teachers.

[3:31:40 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN affirmed that the intent of the task force was not to limit the parameters of the report. Representative Cissna's inquiry falls in the realm of the report.

[3:32:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH expressed her concern that the report will be used to financially leverage an appropriation, rather than the discussion of actions taken to address the rates of retention.

[3:32:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES referred to the July 1, 2012, effective date on page 2, line 26, of the bill. He asked whether this was a conflict with Section 1, that sets an effective date of ninety days from enactment.

[3:33:14 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN explained that the report would be presented annually for the first five years, and biannually after July 1, 2012.

[3:34:40 PM](#)

CYNTHIA HENRY, Vice Chair, Board of Regents, University of Alaska, informed the committee that it was the position of the Board of Regents to comply with any request from the legislature. She stated that teacher education is a high priority for the UA, and expressed her hope that working together with the legislature can help to fill the teacher vacancies across Alaska.

[3:35:47 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON surmised that the annual report would be delivered in person to the legislative committees.

[3:36:26 PM](#)

MS. HENRY agreed. She noted that the Board of Regents holds a February meeting in Juneau that could coincide with its presentation of the report.

[3:37:03 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN affirmed that the presentation is set to accommodate the existing Board of Regents meeting schedule.

[3:37:30 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked for more information on what the UA could do to address the teacher shortage in the state.

[3:38:17 PM](#)

JOHN PUGH, Chancellor, University of Alaska Southeast, explained that individual school districts have the primary responsibility to retain teachers; however, the UA mentor project, established in partnership with the DEED four years ago, is making a

difference by supporting first year and second year teachers throughout the state. The mentors are master teachers who work with beginning teachers to help them through the critical period of the first five years of teaching. Also, the UA can provide professional development activities to school districts that ensure that new teachers are continuing professional development during their apprenticeship. Finally, the UA can encourage placement in rural Alaska by offering rural assignments during internships. Intern placements in rural Alaska have resulted in permanent placements.

[3:41:00 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked whether the mentors make suggestions for improvements to the program.

[3:41:28 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH indicated that mentors have provided feedback on curriculum. Furthermore, the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) course requires placement in a classroom for an entire year, thus there is feedback from teachers on each student's teaching abilities. In addition, the UA uses teachers as adjunct faculty teachers at the university level; this assures that professors have the opportunity for time back in a classroom.

[3:42:48 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked whether the state requires teachers to visit classrooms.

[3:43:02 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH said that the state does not have that requirement. The UA at Southeast (UAS) requires that all teachers who become faculty are certified.

[3:43:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES asked how many students are enrolled in the MAT program.

[3:43:36 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH answered that, at the UAS, there are 100 students in the undergraduate program, including some part-time

and distance education students. In most years, there are about 50 students in the year-long MAT program.

[3:44:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES asked whether the year-long internship, with a portion of time in rural Alaska, is available to MAT students only.

[3:44:50 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH indicated that UAS does not require a full year internship in the four year program. The undergraduate program includes junior and senior year course requirements and a one semester internship.

[3:45:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked for clarification of the requirement that the report include "an outline of the university's past, current, and future plans." He asked for an interpretation of the meaning of "past."

[3:45:58 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH said that he was unclear on that point. He opined that the material covering all of the UA's past would be burdensome.

[3:46:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON asked for the sponsor to comment.

[3:46:37 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN suggested that data on the past known teacher shortage is fairly recent. He also noted that the past history would be reported once just to reconcile the data.

[3:47:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES mentioned that there has been a teacher placement service in the state for many years and data is available. He opined that data older than five years would not be helpful.

[3:48:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON affirmed that the intent of the task force was not to go back, but rather to report on the current situation and the future plans for implementing the training, attraction, and retention of teachers.

[3:49:09 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON suggested the deletion of "past."

[3:49:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON indicated that the deletion of "past" will be considered.

[3:49:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER asked whether there are active efforts to recruit students from local communities to get teaching credentials.

[3:50:34 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH described the "future teachers program" in place in rural communities throughout the state. Through support by a grant, there is recruiting at high schools and Native teachers and students are brought in. Each high school has teachers that work with identified students as mentors to prepare them for course work in the field of education.

[3:52:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GARDNER asked that the report include information on the future teacher's program.

[3:52:20 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH agreed.

[3:52:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES recalled efforts to encourage teacher's aides in rural communities to become certified teachers. Some of the obstacles were: travel to the university for the final courses; the expense; time away from family; and university course requirements. He noted the difficulty to overcome these obstacles.

[3:53:50 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH reminded the committee that UAS offers a bachelor degree in elementary education by distance from anywhere in the state. Nevertheless, good teachers must have content course work; in fact, the field of secondary education now has a federal mandate that requires a degree or a major in a given field to teach high school. Qualifying teachers for the secondary level will continue to be a challenge.

[3:55:24 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:55 to 3:57

[3:57:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER expressed his concern that SB 241 is a proposal for more than a report; in fact, the bill calls for "short-term and five-year strategies with accompanying budgets." He assumed that the UA must spend money to develop a new five-year strategy; however, the zero fiscal note accompanying the bill refers only to the preparation of reports.

[3:57:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES explained that the education tax force discussed this issue during one task force meeting. The simple inquiry that inspired the bill was to determine how well the UA was working to fill the education gap.

[3:58:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON agreed and suggested that the issue should also be looked at in the context of the creation of the standing committee on education. The identified goal was that teacher training, and the hiring and retention of teachers, was affecting education in the state. This was a highly important issue, not related to funding, that the task force wanted to refer to the standing committee on education, and this report was a way to provide the committee with updated information from the UA.

[4:00:19 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES confirmed that the main focus of the education task force was on funding and it worked hard to

establish multi-year, forward funding of education so that the substance of educational issues could be investigated.

4:01:30 PM

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER presumed that the intent of the sponsor was to include in the report the efforts of all schools to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers; not just efforts by the UA.

4:03:09 PM

MR. LAMKIN confirmed that the intent of the bill was to provide a forum to allow the discussion of substantive educational policy, not just the funding of educational programs. Secondly, if the committee decides to remove the UA and to include the DEED, there must be a title change to the bill. He opined that the collaboration of other departments is implicit in the bill.

4:04:41 PM

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES cautioned that there are many issues involved in teacher retention, such as living and working conditions, and removing the UA will take the report outside of the intent of the bill.

4:05:18 PM

MR. LAMKIN spoke regarding the request for "strategies with accompanying budgets." He suggested that the UA would need to request a budget, along with its strategies, in order to be fair.

4:06:11 PM

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH expressed her concern that the bill presents an expectation for growth within the UA system. If funding becomes necessary, there must be measurable outcomes so that the funding can be retracted. For the legislative history, she said that she did not want to see the UA presenting budgets, but rather information on what it is doing to attract, train, and retain qualified public school teachers. Separately, the UA may submit options with an attached fiscal report. Representative Fairclough related that the UA budget has increased 50 percent during the last four to five years; however, the student population has not. In addition, it has added at least 80 new programs. She warned that when students

enter a new UA program, the curriculum must be maintained for years, even with a small number of enrollees.

[4:08:33 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN offered to draft a letter of intent.

[4:08:47 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH said that she is happy to support the training and retaining of teachers in the state; however, there must be accountability in a business plan. In order to invest in education, the committee needs to understand the UA budget implications.

[4:09:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA observed that the Board of Regents have a loose role in the bill by providing the university's past, current, and future plans. She gave the student's perspective and supported the requirement that the university issue a report with "outcome measures" in terms of successes.

[4:12:05 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH agreed and said, "That is the whole point of our performance based budgeting that we have been presenting to the legislature." He gave the example that most of the UA budget money has gone to health care programs; in fact, the nursing program and health science programs have doubled or tripled graduates. He opined that the first report would show all the graduates in every area; however, some areas, such as specialized special education, although required by federal regulations, are difficult for a small state to fill. Chancellor Pugh assured the committee that all of the data was available as a part of the UA budget request procedures, and would be provided, including the projection of student enrollment for new programs.

[4:14:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA strongly suggested that the proposed legislation should model its purpose and that the language of the bill could be improved by amendments.

[4:14:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER asked for more information on the UA's involvement with the mentoring program.

[4:15:23 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH informed the committee that the mentoring program began at the request of the former commissioner of education. Funding, from federal and state sources, enables the UA to hire master teacher mentors, to adopt criterion standards for mentors, and to administer the program. The master teachers are not faculty, in fact, they come from K-12 school districts throughout the state. A UA faculty member is researching the effectiveness of the program so its impact on the retention of teachers will be known.

[4:16:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES added that the program was initially begun by former Commissioner Shirley Holloway with grant funds to the Teacher Enhancement Board. The intent was to establish and model best practices for teachers. The program began in Anchorage and after two years of development became the statewide mentoring program. Due to budget restraints, mentoring is only available to first and second year teachers. Representative Roses explained that the program is now supported by state funds.

[4:19:28 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked how many teachers are mentored and how long the program has been in effect.

[4:19:42 PM](#)

CHANCELLOR PUGH said that the program has been statewide for three years. Approximately seventy percent of teachers are mentored and the result is a higher retention rate for mentored teachers.

[4:20:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES stated that the ultimate goal is to mentor every first year teacher, principal, and superintendent. At this time, poor evaluations identify the teachers that will get a mentor and he opined that early intervention is the most effective.

[4:22:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA recalled that there was a grant in the 1990's.

[4:23:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES clarified that the grant was funded in 2000 and was specifically designed to determine what best teaching practices were and how to train teachers to use best practices to meet the goals and standards of the state. The UA then had to realign its curriculum to train teachers appropriately.

[4:24:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA stated that part of the importance of the bill is that it would continue the work underway.

[4:25:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER remarked:

I'm really struggling with the concept, ... I'm all for the report ... and I'm all for the idea of keeping the program going. But the section of law this is in is not programs, and this is more than a report. When you ask for plans, strategies, and budget, that fits into the program portion of the University of Alaska, and that's fair, and then we're talking, fiscal impact and everything else. ... It just seems like we're doing more, .190, the first part here that is being added to, part (b), is nothing more than a report on what the university is doing with its money and its facilities. There's nothing in there that says that we want a plan here, and we want what you are going to do, and we want a budget, it's not proactive. ... We're doing more than just a report. ... As I understand it, we're leaving [AS] 14.40.190 in there and that becomes (a) and this is a new (b). What I am questioning is whether it's a proper drafting practice here, to put something in here that is more than a report.

[4:27:52 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN stated that the decision was made by the drafter of the bill. He spoke on behalf of Senator Stevens and suggested

an amendment that would strike "accompanying budgets" and, or, "past plans." Mr. Lamkin then re-stated his opinion that there is value in having a review of the past.

[4:29:13 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON reminded Mr. Lamkin that the members of the committee would change every two years. She then announced that the bill would be held and asked Representative Keller to work out his concerns with the sponsor.

[4:29:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON indicated that he had an amendment.

[4:29:39 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH asked to see a letter of intent from the sponsor and proposed that the bill should have a fiscal note attached, to provide for options and measurements, instead of the integrated budget that can not be taken apart.

[4:30:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ROSES asked whether the sponsor would be submitting a committee substitute or amendments.

[4:30:52 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked the sponsor to work with committee members on amendments.

[SB 241 was held over.]

SB 119-SCHOOL LIBRARY GRANTS

[4:31:25 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that the final order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 119(RLS), "An Act relating to grant programs to support libraries."

[4:31:40 PM](#)

GINNY AUSTERMAN, Staff to Senator Donald Olson, Alaska State Legislature, introduced SB 119, on behalf of Senator Olson,

sponsor. She informed the committee that SB 119 establishes a library construction grant program and a school library collection development grant program. Both of these programs are subject to appropriation. The library assistance grant program allows for the state to match, up to 50 percent, the cost of new library construction, or major expansion, in communities with a population of 10,000 or less. Local government would be responsible for securing a match of at least 20 percent, with the remainder provided by private donors. The Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) would administer the grants and promulgate regulations to establish ranking criteria.

[4:32:31 PM](#)

MS. AUSTERMAN continued to explain that the public school library collection development grant program establishes a maximum grant of \$3,000 for a fiscal year to a public school library deemed eligible by the grants administrator. The grants administrator will be the person or division in charge of the state library. The funds are to be used for the expansion of the library collection materials, meaning books, magazines, reference and audio-visual materials, and electronic subscriptions that support school curriculum and student reading activities. Grant money may not be used to purchase classroom materials, textbooks, testing software, library automation software, computer hardware, operating software, or technology support. Grant recipients shall prepare an annual report to the DCCED to describe the effects of the grant and the distribution of funds.

[4:34:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to page 1, line 12, of the bill, that allows for a grant for library construction and major expansion. He pointed out that the definition of "major expansion" means an expansion of an existing library to increase the square footage of the structure by not less than 30 percent. Representative Seaton surmised that the grant money can only be used for construction and major expansion.

[4:35:39 PM](#)

MS. AUSTERMAN clarified that Sec. 3 provides for public school library collection development grants.

CHAIR WILSON passed the gavel to Vice Chair Roses.

[4:36:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON observed that grant funds for community libraries are only for the square footage expansion of the building and funds for materials are only for school libraries.

[4:36:37 PM](#)

MS. AUSTERMAN indicated yes.

VICE CHAIR ROSES asked whether a school library could be considered the public library in small communities.

[4:37:21 PM](#)

MS. AUSTERMAN said yes. In many small communities the school libraries are the public libraries.

VICE CHAIR ROSES than asked whether, in that case, construction costs for a school library would qualify for matching funds from the state under the school construction label.

[4:37:38 PM](#)

DARWIN PETERSON, Staff for Senator Bert Stedman, Alaska State Legislature, confirmed that school libraries qualify for construction funds under other sections of the statute, if there is no public library. The intent of Sections 1 and 2 of SB 119, was to encourage small communities to attract outside private funds to construct public libraries that are not part of the school system.

[4:38:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FAIRCLOUGH pointed out a discrepancy between the sponsor statement and the bill and stated her support for the language in the bill, such that "available funding shall be awarded to the highest ranked applicants."

[4:39:40 PM](#)

MS. AUSTERMAN acknowledged the correction.

[4:39:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to page 2, line 11, of the bill and asked whether the definition of "publicly owned and operated" would allow something other than a municipal government to qualify.

[4:40:34 PM](#)

MR. PETERSON responded that any community, town, city, municipality, the state, or any public entity could own and operate the library if the other eligibility criteria were met.

[4:40:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON then asked whether non-profits automatically qualify as public ownership.

[4:41:20 PM](#)

MR. PETERSON said no.

[4:41:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON surmised that, unless a community is an incorporated municipality, it could not qualify, because there is no public ownership. He asked whether the intention is that community ownership is sufficient to qualify for a grant.

[4:42:03 PM](#)

MR. PETERSON indicated that the intent of the bill was to allow any community to partner with the state or private entities to construct a library. For example, Anchor Point could partner with the state, and others, to construct or to expand its existing library. Small communities would be eligible if they can contribute 20 percent and operate the facility.

[4:43:07 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR ROSES returned the gavel to Chair Wilson.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON then asked how to establish public ownership in a non incorporated community. This bill appears to eliminate tribal ownership.

[4:44:06 PM](#)

MR. PETERSON indicated that he would request a legal opinion on this question.

[4:44:32 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON assumed that there can be 50 percent matching funds from the state, and, for example, 30 percent more from a private source. He then asked whether a taxing mechanism was required to raise the 20 percent from the community or if that amount can also be a contribution.

[4:45:13 PM](#)

MR. PETERSON stated that the intent was to tax the community to generate its local contribution.

[4:45:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON further asked where the taxing authority would originate in a small, non incorporated community.

[4:46:08 PM](#)

MR. PETERSON explained that very small communities were not considered since they can not afford to own or operate a library.

[4:47:04 PM](#)

CHARLOTTE GLOVER, Youth Services Librarian, Ketchikan Public Library, related her experience as a librarian and as a coordinator of literacy activities. She stated that the Ketchikan library is part of a consortium of seven schools and a college and she knows how poorly funded the school libraries are. Ms. Glover stated that the public library has money for new books, but school libraries do not. She opined that school children want books, in fact, circulation has grown for the last 17 years, in spite of the Internet age. School libraries borrow 600 books per year from the public library; the public library can not meet the demand from teachers and school libraries. She concluded that kids do not have books at home and the bill would provide books for school libraries.

[4:50:27 PM](#)

ROSLYN GOODMEN, School Librarian; Library Consultant, related her experience as a school librarian and as a library

consultant. Her research indicates that school libraries in rural Alaska do not have the collections necessary to support education standards and to meet the informational and pleasure reading needs of students. Research in Alaska also supports a correlation between reading success and the library selection of books that students can, and want to, read. Ms. Goodman opined that every school would benefit from new books and other library resources. Most collections are outdated, do not meet school district standards, are not infused with new books, and lack current reference books. Furthermore, many collections contain discards from other libraries. She urged the committee to support SB 119.

[4:53:23 PM](#)

DEBBY EDWARDSON, Writer, informed the committee that she was speaking as a mother of seven, a children's writer, a school board member, and a resident of rural Alaska. Firstly, she opined that reading and a love of books is critically important to a child. Tattered books and empty shelves in village schools is a failure on a fundamental level and, through her research as a school board member, she learned that kids with well stocked libraries benefit in many ways. Ms. Edwardson reminded the committee that village schools are community centers, and there is no other source for books in villages. She recalled that the DEED reports that one-third of Alaska's students enter high school reading below grade level.

[4:56:45 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked witnesses to submit written testimony if possible.

[4:57:50 PM](#)

PATRICIA LINVILLE, Librarian, Seward Community Library, stated that the Seward Community Library is the only municipal library on the eastern Kenai Peninsula and it is used all day by residents and visitors in a variety of ways. The community of Seward has risen over \$100,000 for a desperately needed new library and museum. Furthermore, the city of Seward is applying for loans and grants, as there will be no federal funding available. She opined that Seward would apply for a matching grant from the state grant program established by SB 119 if given the opportunity. Ms. Linville concluded that SB 119 would help Alaska's school and public libraries become the information

sources and community centers that are needed in small communities to ensure an informed future for the state.

[5:00:22 PM](#)

SUE PAULSEN stated that she was a library user for over 50 years. She pointed out that there is a new library project in Petersburg that is supported by efforts from the community, the library board, and many other groups; however, the project needs the help of the legislature to complete construction of a cornerstone of the community. She thanked the legislators for their work and urged the committee to pass SB 119, with attached funding, as soon as possible.

[5:01:21 PM](#)

SHARON JUNGE, Physician, related her experience as a rural physician and opined that libraries are helpful in the prevention of mental illness and substance abuse by providing a place to go and opportunities for social interaction, and by functioning as a center of cultural events and sources of accurate information. She described the passage of SB 119 as an opportunity for legislators to improve the quality of life for constituents in small towns.

[5:01:57 PM](#)

PEARL BROWER, Special Assistant for External Affairs, Ilisagvik College, informed the committee that Ilisagvik College is a tribal college with a mission to educate and to preserve and promote its culture and heritage. The Barrow community library is managed by the college and functions as the school and public library in Barrow while providing extra library support to all of the villages on the North Slope. In addition, the library collects and disseminates cultural information worldwide. She noted that the library served 70,000 patrons in 2008 and a larger facility is necessary. She expressed her support for SB 119 in order to create more space for her community's youth and the library's archive collection.

[5:03:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON listed the eligibility requirements for a construction grant and asked whether Ilisagvik College would qualify.

[5:04:31 PM](#)

MS. BROWER explained that the library is a North Slope Borough facility that is managed by the college; therefore, the grant would be applied for by the municipal government and the library would qualify.

[5:04:51 PM](#)

DAVID ONGLEY, Representative, Tuzzy Library, reminded the committee of the national trend to cut school libraries and librarians. He recalled that the library budget formerly allowed a librarian to visit the villages on the North Slope; however, there is no budget now, even for books. He listed several library construction projects that are receiving different levels of state funding and opined that the construction portion of the bill will make funding throughout the state uniform.

[5:07:06 PM](#)

JUDITH MCQUERRY, Representative, Ketchikan Public Library, spoke of municipal public libraries, from Ketchikan to Barrow, that are in need of expansion or new facilities. She indicated that there has been no grant funding for decades; in fact, library construction money goes only to communities represented by powerful legislators. Ms. McQuerry urged the committee to support the library construction portion of SB 119. In addition, she expressed her support for the funding of school library collections, as school libraries have no other source of funds for books.

CAITLIN DIXON, School Librarian, Shoenbar Middle School, stated the need for a new public library in Ketchikan. She informed the committee that Shoenbar Middle School has a beautiful new library building and books; however, all of the other schools are in need of funds to fix their library collections. The present budgets for school libraries will not make up for the past lean years when insufficient additions were made.

[5:10:20 PM](#)

KARI SAGEL, Teacher, Blatchley Middle School; Librarian, Alaska Association of School Libraries, explained that library books and materials help to prepare students to meet Alaska's educational standards. In fact, she has been purchasing books almost exclusively to support the new eighth grade science testing. Other areas of the library collection have been

neglected, such as geology, weather, climate, botany, physics, and mythology, because these subjects are not covered by the curriculum standards testing. Ms. Sagel stressed the importance of a new and relevant collection in order to interest students in reading and research. She concluded that, to interest students in reading and to improve their success at reaching educational standards, the library must provide current and accurate books and materials that meet students' curricular and interest needs.

[5:12:17 PM](#)

BARB BRYSON, School Librarian; Board Member, Alaska Association of Libraries, related her experience as a school librarian for 27 years. She advised that school libraries that are properly funded, staffed, and resourced lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic or education levels of the community. In addition, based on 2004 and 2005 statistics, the median budget for school libraries nationwide was \$9,368.00, the average budget in the Pacific Northwest was \$19,211.00, and the average budget for Alaska was \$4,284.00. Ms. Bryson observed that replacing library materials is very expensive; in fact, the average cost of a children's hardback book is \$21.00. She opined that the funds proposed by SB 119 would allow an annual purchase of 142 books, which would improve any collection. Ms. Bryson reminded the committee that state standards cite the importance of libraries, but without funding librarians can not support the standards. She encouraged the passage of SB 119.

[5:15:24 PM](#)

CATHY BOUTIN, School Librarian; Member, Governor's Advisory Council on Libraries, stated that she is testifying as an individual. Ms. Boutin informed the committee that the new Harry Potter book cost \$34.99. She estimated that \$3,000 would go a long way to help school library collections. She gave several examples of out-dated books that are still in school collections, and pointed out the rising cost of publications and digital versatile discs (DVD)s.

[5:17:55 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON closed public testimony.

[SB 119 was held over.]

5:18:47 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 5:18 p. m.