

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

January 30, 2007

8:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Lynn, Chair
Representative John Coghill
Representative Kyle Johansen
Representative Craig Johnson
Representative Andrea Doll
Representative Max Gruenberg

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bob Roses, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 109

"An Act relating to the requirement for candidates, groups, legislators, public officials, and other persons to submit reports electronically to the Alaska Public Offices Commission; relating to disclosures by legislators, public members of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics, legislative directors, public officials, and certain candidates for public office concerning services performed for compensation and concerning certain income, gifts, and other financial matters; requiring legislators, public members of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics, legislative directors, public officials, and municipal officers to make certain financial disclosures when they leave office; relating to insignificant ownership interest in a business and to gifts from lobbyists for purposes of the Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act; relating to certain restrictions on employment after leaving state service for purposes of the Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 37

"An Act establishing the first Saturday of every March as Susan Butcher Day."

- MOVED HB 37 OUT OF COMMITTEE

OVERVIEW(S): DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY; DEPARTMENT OF
MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 109

SHORT TITLE: DISCLOSURES & ETHICS

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/25/07 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/25/07 (H) STA, JUD
01/30/07 (H) STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 37

SHORT TITLE: ESTABLISHING SUSAN BUTCHER DAY

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) GUTTENBERG, KERTTULA, NEUMAN

01/16/07 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/5/07
01/16/07 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/07 (H) STA
01/30/07 (H) STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

JOHN BITNEY, Legislative Director
Office of the Governor
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 109 as sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID GUTTENBERG
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 37 as sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR BOB LYNN called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at [8:03:29 AM](#). Representatives Johnson, Gruenberg, Doll, and Lynn were present at the call to order. Representatives Coghill and Johansen arrived as the meeting was in progress.

[8:04:27 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN noted that he sent a letter to Governor Sarah Palin regarding the House State Affairs Standing Committee's formation of a subcommittee to discuss possible language for an ethics bill. He discussed the calendar of the day.

HB 109-DISCLOSURES & ETHICS

8:05:57 AM

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN announced that the first order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 109, "An Act relating to the requirement for candidates, groups, legislators, public officials, and other persons to submit reports electronically to the Alaska Public Offices Commission; relating to disclosures by legislators, public members of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics, legislative directors, public officials, and certain candidates for public office concerning services performed for compensation and concerning certain income, gifts, and other financial matters; requiring legislators, public members of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics, legislative directors, public officials, and municipal officers to make certain financial disclosures when they leave office; relating to insignificant ownership interest in a business and to gifts from lobbyists for purposes of the Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act; relating to certain restrictions on employment after leaving state service for purposes of the Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act; and providing for an effective date."

8:06:05 AM

JOHN BITNEY, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Governor, introduced HB 109 on behalf of Governor Sarah Palin. He said the bill was crafted for the purpose of fulfilling the governor's campaign promises, including: filing political campaign reports electronically, asking for more detail in terms of financial disclosure, banning gifts from lobbyists, and tightening restrictions regarding who can become a lobbyist after working for the legislature.

MR. BITNEY explained that the bill would require lawmakers paid more than \$1,000 for work to specify how much they were paid, how many hours they worked, and describe in detail what kind of work they did to earn that money. The bill also would require those lawmakers leaving office to report all financial and business interests within 90 days upon leaving office.

MR. BITNEY stated that under the bill, those who work for the executive branch would have standards defining when the value of their stock or ownership interest in a business is significant. The bill would set the amount at \$5,000. Regarding the ban on gifts from lobbyists, he noted that gifts from immediate family or a neighbor at Christmas time, for example, where there is no intent to influence, would not come under this language.

MR. BITNEY said the bill tightens the restriction regarding who can become a lobbyist after leaving service. He drew attention to Sections 10 and 11. Section 10 addresses whether or not someone can go to work for compensation after leaving service, and where the conflict may exist in terms of where that person is allowed to work. Current language in state law makes an exception for those who worked on consideration of matters for legislative bills, resolutions, or regulations, while in public service. The proposed legislation would not make that exception. Mr. Bitney noted that current law prohibits certain officials going into lobbying for up to one year after service, and he said Section 11 would add the following positions to that prohibition: deputy commissioners and employees of the governor who are in a policy-making position. He stated that both [Sections 10 and 11] are designed to create more confidence in the public that those in office are looking out for the best interest of the state and its citizens.

[8:14:58 AM](#)

MR. BITNEY noted that the effective date would be July 1, 2007, for electronic filing, in order to give the Division of Elections time to implement the system.

[8:15:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHANSEN, regarding Section 11, stated his concern that the definition of lobbyist and consultant is a grey area.

[HB 109 was heard and held.]

HB 37-ESTABLISHING SUSAN BUTCHER DAY

[8:17:05 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN announced that the final order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 37, "An Act establishing the first Saturday of every March as Susan Butcher Day."

CHAIR LYNN stated that he regrets he never met Susan Butcher.

[8:17:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAVID GUTTENBERG, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 37 as co-sponsor. He indicated that Ms. Butcher's accomplishments speak to the bill. He stated, "More people have walked on the moon than have won the Iditarod four times." He noted that the level of Ms. Butcher's accomplishment was illustrated by those who spoke at her memorial, including George Lucas, and Bill and Melinda Gates. He shared anecdotes related to her life and noted that in the committee packet is an outline of her greatest accomplishments. The proposed legislation would honor Ms. Butcher by naming the first Saturday of March - the traditional starting day of the Iditarod - "Susan Butcher Day".

REPRESENTATIVE GUTTENBERG said he hopes that schools and civic organizations honor her. He highlighted her accomplishment of having taken a team of dogs to the summit of Mt. McKinley. He revealed that he has been a dog musher in the past and is amazed at what Ms. Butcher did with her dogs. He relayed that the Iditarod [committee] is planning events this year to commemorate Ms. Butcher's life, and he asked the legislature to consider adopting HB 37 as a way of recognizing the woman's accomplishments and her ability and persistence in doing the things she did.

[8:21:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN said the dignity with which Ms. Butcher fought her final fight [with cancer] was another remarkable accomplishment.

[8:21:41 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL expressed appreciation of the bill.

[8:22:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL moved to report HB 37 out of committee with individual recommendations and [the accompanying zero fiscal note].

REPRESENTATIVE GRUENBERG asked that the motion be amended to ask that the committee move the bill with unanimous "do pass."

CHAIR LYNN asked if there was any objection [to moving HB 37 unanimously, with a recommended "do pass," out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee]. There being no objection, HB 37 was reported out of committee.

[8:22:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LYNN explained that due to weather, the scheduled overviews would not be heard.

[8:22:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COGHILL offered an update regarding the House State Affairs Standing Committee's ethics subcommittee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at [8:23:46 AM](#).