

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

January 31, 2007

1:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bettye Davis, Chair
Senator Joe Thomas
Senator John Cowdery
Senator Kim Elton
Senator Fred Dyson

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

Committee Orientation

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No action to consider

WITNESS REGISTER

Tom Obermeyer, staff to Senator Davis
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented orientation

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR BETTYE DAVIS called the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at [1:31:23 PM](#). Present were Senators Thomas, Cowdery, Elton, Dyson, and Chair Davis.

COMMITTEE ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION

CHAIR DAVIS announced that the committee was assembled that day simply for the members to meet each other and share their goals for the committee. She said that she felt her chairmanship of the committee had been a long time coming, because she had been in the minority of the Senate for six years. She asked to hear from the members about the actions they would like to see taken,

and added that she thought nothing was more important than investing in children and she hoped the committee would conduct itself in that light.

[1:33:51 PM](#)

SENATOR COWDERY said that SB 28, regarding overtime for registered nurses, came to his attention and asked if it referred to nurses being paid triple-time if they worked overtime.

TOM OBERMEYER, staff to Chair Davis, replied that the bill would not change overtime laws, but that it has a penalty providing for triple-time payment if the employer knowingly violates the law.

[1:34:55 PM](#)

SENATOR COWDERY asked if the nurse would have any say in the amount of overtime worked.

[1:35:04 PM](#)

MR. OBERMEYER replied that yes, the nurse does have a say. Overtime is sometimes required because of short-staffing, but if the nurse feels that it is putting either the patient or herself at risk he or she may request to be removed from the situation.

[1:35:44 PM](#)

SENATOR COWDERY said that he thought that the nurses could not be forced to work overtime, or they were automatically given triple-time pay.

[1:36:13 PM](#)

MR. OBERMEYER replied that the triple-pay sanction is only in cases where the employer knowingly violates the law. The penalties vary if the offenses are repeated.

[1:36:54 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS reminded the committee that information packets would be put together about the bills and the questions the committee members may have before the bills would be considered, and that the current meeting was not meant as an overview. She asked the committee if it had any priorities, and added that the

committee would be having a lot of overviews on the education and social services areas.

1:38:08 PM

SENATOR ELTON remarked that he was startled by the range of snacks provided by Chair Davis' aide. He added that he was proud of the committee for discussing a broad range of topics, and that he was particularly interested in health care issues and hoped that the committee would be able to consider the actions of other states in the course of its meetings. He then introduced his staff.

1:41:16 PM

SENATOR THOMAS asked for the committee to keep the budget in mind. He said that he thought pre-kindergarten was an important issue as well as vocational-technical education, in terms of interesting kids in school. Health care is also one of his major concerns. He added that he hoped the committee would attempt to find solutions rather than cutting programs altogether.

1:43:34 PM

SENATOR THOMAS then introduced his staff.

1:44:29 PM

SENATOR DYSON introduced his staff. He said that he was interested in health care issues as well, particularly in consumer-directed health care and the possibility of portable benefits. He also is interested in heightened investigation of child exploitation.

1:47:09 PM

CHAIR DAVIS said that she planned on bringing out-of-state speakers to present other states' health care plans, particularly California and Massachusetts. She added that she was interested in coming up with a committee resolution on preventative care.

1:50:09 PM

CHAIR DAVIS said that the committee would be having two overviews in the near future, on the No Child Left Behind act

and the school funding foundation formula. She also asked for the committee members to be on time for meetings and timely in their actions.

[1:52:19 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS said that there were some bills before the Senate Special Committee on Education that she wished to see before the HES committee, and she planned to ask to see those.

Seeing no other business before the committee, Chair Davis adjourned the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting at [1:53:41 PM](#).