

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
February 26, 2009  
2:11 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Stoltze called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 2:11 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair  
Representative Bill Thomas Jr., Vice-Chair  
Representative Allan Austerman  
Representative Harry Crawford  
Representative Anna Fairclough  
Representative Les Gara  
Representative Reggie Joule  
Representative Mike Kelly  
Representative Woodie Salmon

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Mike Hawker, Co-Chair  
Representative Richard Foster

ALSO PRESENT

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

SUMMARY

#hb63

HB 63 "An Act relating to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault."

CSHB 63 (FIN) was REPORTED OUT of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and a new zero fiscal note from the Department of Health and Social Services and two previously published fiscal notes: FN1 (DOC), FN2 (DPS).

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HOUSE BILL NO. 63

"An Act relating to the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault."

Representative Fairclough introduced herself as the former Executive Director of Standing Together Against Rape. She expressed her passion to help those who often can not speak

for themselves. Alaska has the dishonorable distinction of being number one in the nation for sexual violence against women for 28 out of the last 30 years. Ninety-eight percent of the victims are women; ninety-eight percent of the perpetrators are men. Last year's rape statistics for Anchorage moved from number nine to number four in the nation. The Council for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault deals with domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse in Alaska. In 2007, the legislature formed a task force with recommendations to oversee the Council. House Bill 63 does not implement every recommendation because some recommendations required a large fiscal note. Representative Fairclough signified that HB 63 changes the number of council members from seven to nine, adding one additional public member and one from the Department of Corrections.

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Representative Fairclough explained that one public member must be from a rural community. House Bill 63 changes the public member's term of office from two to three years. The bill also changes language from "shall" to "may" in regards to the Governor's consultation with the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA) in the appointment of a public member to the Council. House Bill 63 also clarifies that public members may not be State of Alaska employees.

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Representative Fairclough continued that HB 63 modifies the requirements for a quorum from four to five members. Staff positions are also changed to non-exempt.

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Representative Austerman requested clarification that of the nine council members, four would be public and five would be government employees. Representative Fairclough agreed that was correct. Representative Austerman asked why the bill sets up fewer public members and more state employees. Representative Fairclough responded that it maintains the current balance.

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Vice-Chair Thomas quoted that the written definition of a rural area contains the language "not connected by road or rail to Anchorage or Fairbanks" (page 2, line 17-19). He observed that Haines and Skagway are connected by road, but pass through a foreign country. He wanted to know how this was being addressed in the definition of a rural area. Representative Fairclough responded that legislative legal gave the rural definition specific to this bill to ensure no

community is left out of serving as a public member of the council.

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Co-Chair Stoltze mentioned that, in addition to Haines and Skagway, the small community of Hyder is connected by road.

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Representative Salmon cited two meetings where he received information on alcohol and drug abuse in the communities of Alaska which gave him a new awareness and belief that domestic violence is an acute problem in the state and this bill moves in the right direction. He stressed that more information and funding on this subject needs to be delivered to the villages. He remarked that another problem is the small number of state troopers assigned to the villages.

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Co-Chair Stoltze agreed that it is very positive to have members from the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Corrections on this council.

Representative Fairclough encouraged support for HB 63.

Co-Chair Stoltze closed public testimony.

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Representative Fairclough MOVED to ADOPT Amendment #1, 26-LS0138\C.1, Bullard:

Page 1, line 8, following "the"  
Insert "Alaska"

Page 2, line 17:  
Delete "5,500"  
Insert "7,500"

Page 2, line 19:  
Delete "1,500"  
Insert "3,500"

Co-Chair Stoltze OBJECTED for discussion.

Representative Fairclough reported that inserting "Alaska" before "Network" would match the actual title of the network. The population threshold for a rural community would rise from 5,500 to 7,500; small communities connected

by roads would have the population base moved from 1,500 to 3,500.

Co-Chair Stoltze WITHDREW his OBJECTION. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

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Co-Chair Stoltze referred to the zero fiscal notes from the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Public Safety. The Department of Corrections fiscal note for \$7,900 reflected travel costs for new members to attend four meetings per year. Representative Fairclough announced she checked the Department of Correction's travel budget to confirm this amount was not being duplicated. Co-Chair Stoltze mentioned this amount was below minimum.

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Representative Fairclough MOVED to report CSHB 63 (FIN) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being NO OBJECTION it was so ordered.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 PM