

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 21, 2011  
8:04 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Alan Dick, Chair  
Representative Eric Feige  
Representative Paul Seaton  
Representative Peggy Wilson  
Representative Scott Kawasaki

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Lance Pruitt, Vice Chair  
Representative Sharon Cissna

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

PRESENTATION(S): GALENA SCHOOL DISTRICT

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 6

"An Act authorizing the governor to remove or suspend a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska for good cause; and establishing a procedure for the removal or suspension of a regent."

- MOVED CSHB 6(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 5

"An Act requiring a standardized statewide history of American constitutionalism curriculum and a secondary school history of American constitutionalism examination in public schools in the state; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PRESENTATION(S): LEGO LEAGUE ROBOTICS COMPETITION

- HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 104

"An Act renaming the Alaska performance scholarship and relating to the scholarship and tax credits applicable to contributions

to the scholarship; establishing the Alaska performance scholarship investment fund and the Alaska performance scholarship award fund and relating to the funds; making conforming amendments; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 6

SHORT TITLE: REMOVING A REGENT

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) GRUENBERG

01/18/11	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/11
01/18/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/11	(H)	EDC, JUD
02/11/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/11/11	(H)	Heard & Held
02/11/11	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/21/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 5

SHORT TITLE: CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY CURRICULUM

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) KELLER

01/18/11	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/11
01/18/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/11	(H)	EDC, FIN
02/09/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/09/11	(H)	Heard & Held
02/09/11	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/18/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/18/11	(H)	-- CANCELED - Rescheduled to 02/21/11 -
		-
02/21/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 104

SHORT TITLE: ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIPS

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/18/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/11	(H)	EDC, FIN
02/09/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/09/11	(H)	Heard & Held
02/09/11	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/14/11	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/14/11	(H)	Heard & Held

02/14/11 (H) MINUTE(EDC)  
02/21/11 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

CHRIS REITAN, Assistant Superintendent  
Galena, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided the presentation of the Galena School District.

JIM SMITH, Superintendent  
Galena School District  
Galena, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered comments, during the presentation of the Galena School District.

REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the committee substitute (CS) for HB 6.

REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the committee substitute (CS) for HB 5.

BRUCE JOHNSON, Executive Director  
Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 5.

CARL ROSE, Executive Director  
Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 5.

STEWART THOMPSON  
Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 5.

PAT RACE, Design Judge  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Directed the the presentation of the Lego League Robotics projects.

REBECCA PARKS

First Team  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Assisted during the presentation of the Lego League Robotics projects.

JAN CUMMINS, Parent Volunteer  
First Team  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided commentary, during the presentation of the Lego League Robotics projects.

NICHOLAS PENNINGTON, Teacher  
Kodiak Island School District  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 104.

TOM HEWITT, Student  
University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF)  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 104.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:04:22 AM](#)

**CHAIR ALAN DICK** called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Present at the call to order were Representatives Dick, Seaton, Wilson, Feige, and Kawasaki.

#### **PRESENTATION(S): Galena School District**

[8:05:00 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the first order of business would be a presentation from the superintendent of the Galena School District.

[8:06:13 AM](#)

CHRIS REITAN, Assistant Superintendent, explained that the Galena School District is one district with three distinct choices, which are the Galena Interior Learning Academy (GILA), the Interior Distance Education (IDEA) of Alaska program, and the Sidney C. Huntington School. He said that GILA is a high school facility, situated on the site of a decommissioned

airbase, which has served as a boarding school for 14 years. The academy has been successful and able to boast high AYP (adequate yearly progress) scores. The student body is currently at 198, and as a district run statewide boarding school, is serving students from 58 communities. He described the students as being 90 percent Native, and said many enroll because they are considered at risk of dropping out. The academy offers career and technical education (CTE) programs, allowing students to become certified in a number of fields, which include: aviation, culinary arts, cosmetology, automotive, small engines, welding, carpentry, electricity, and computer technology. The CTE courses are one of the primary reasons that students attend GILA, as well as being offered a fresh start. Describing the Interior Distance Education of Alaska (IDEA) program, he said it has also been in existence for 14 years, providing a K-12 education to home school students statewide. The IDEA program participants also attain high AYP scores, enjoy flexible course scheduling, achieve graduation at a laudable rate, and many students receive college credits, while completing high school requirements. He reported that IDEA is currently serving 3,510 students from 6 regions, including 200 rural Alaskan students from 24 communities. Preschool students are not solicited for the IDEA program, but families have been given the opportunity and a subsidy for enrollment; 186 students are in attendance. Named for a renowned Galena elder, the Sidney C. Huntington School is the district's flagship facility as an Alaskan "School of Choice." Huntington School, fully accredited in 1980, has made AYP every year since the inception of NCLB. The student base is 78 percent Alaska Native; 105 K-12 and 11 preschool students. He stressed that the Galena City School District provides three programs with one focus: providing educational choice, access and opportunity for families statewide. This endeavor means that the district serves students from over 70 rural Alaskan communities.

[8:11:43 AM](#)

JIM SMITH, Superintendent, Galena School District interjected that the district's system is based on the theory that one shoe does not fit all, and the model for choice has proven successful. Additionally, the IDEA approach represents a positive economic value to the state, at \$4,544 per student. Conversely, GILA is possibly one of the most costly programs, at approximately \$19,000 per student. However, considering the boarding school situation, the IDEA enrollees and the students at Huntington school, the average is \$7,000 that the state

contributes for each enrollee, which he opined, is a great value.

[8:15:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON noted that the state does not financially support the district's effort in the area of preschool, but the benefit of offering the option has been evident. She asked what services are provided.

MR. REITAN responded that the preschool and kindergarten have been combined to form a working program. He reported that, for 10 years, Galena hosted a Parents as Teachers (PAT) program, offering child care and preschool, until the grant funding was no longer available. The benefit of the PAT program was great enough to stimulate interest in folding the services into the school program. The IDEA program is available for preschool age children.

[8:18:57 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON queried how the graduation rate is measured.

MR. REITAN said that all students are tracked once they are enrolled. GILA receives a high percentage of students who are in the junior or senior class age bracket, but who have a limited number of credits for graduation. For many, GILA is considered to be the final resource. Many of these students study into a fifth year of high school, which is a costly for GILA, but, he opined, a worthwhile effort. A credit recovery program and online classes are frequently part of a student's day along with regular classroom attendance. The students who attend want to participate and succeed.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON stated his understanding that every student has an individual education plan (IEP) and possibly an advisor.

MR. REITAN responded that the intent is to have IEPs in place and provide advisors for every student; however, it is not available, in all programs, at this time.

#### **HB 6-REMOVING A REGENT**

CHAIR DICK announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 6, "An Act authorizing the governor to remove or

suspend a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska for good cause; and establishing a procedure for the removal or suspension of a regent."

[8:24:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MAX GRUENBERG, Alaska State Legislature, explained the substantive changes presented in the CS for HB 6. He said the language from page 2, lines 2-4, of the original bill has been retained in the CS and now appears on page 1, lines 12 and 13; indicating that the legislature has the power to pass laws that pertain to the University of Alaska. The second change occurs on page 3, line 8, which adopts the adjudicative chapter from the administrative procedures act, replacing language which empowered the governor to provide a due process procedure; the adjudicative chapter is well established under AS 44.62.330-.630. Specifically, this change designates that the proceedings in this section fall under the guidelines of the Administrative Procedures Act (APA). Finally, page 2, lines 27-31, allows a suspended regent to request a hearing to either defend against the grounds of suspension or to have it lifted.

[8:27:23 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK closed public testimony.

[8:27:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON moved to report CSHB 6, Version 27-LS0027\D, Mischel, 2/9/11, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB6 (EDC) was reported from the House Education Standing Committee.

The committee took an at-ease from 8:28 a.m. to 8:31 a.m.

#### **HB 5-CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY CURRICULUM**

[8:31:33 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 5, "An Act requiring a standardized statewide history of American constitutionalism curriculum and a secondary school history of American constitutionalism examination in public schools in the state; and providing for an effective date."

[8:31:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for HB 5, labeled Version 27-LS0018\D, Mischel, 2/10/11, as the working draft. There being no objection, Version D was before the committee.

[8:32:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER, Alaska State Legislature, reviewed HB 5, which he originally presented to the committee on 2/9/11, proposing American Constitutionalism as a required course in all high schools; spanning the development of governmental documents adopted between 1776 and 1791. He noted that in 1993, the standards established to teach government classes, in Alaskan schools, included this time period. The CS redesigns the bill to remove the \$1.75 million dollar fiscal responsibility from the Department of Education and Early Development (EED), and transfers it to the individual school districts. He acknowledged that the school districts may testify against this bill, and appealed to the committee to raise the bar for education on this topic. A mandate should be instituted, for teaching a one half credit course on American Constitutionalism, and requiring students pass it in order to graduate. He conceded that many districts may already be in compliance with this action.

[8:39:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON asked whether this information could be integrated into an existing course of study, or if the bill requires it to be a stand-alone class.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER stated his belief that currently there are no credit requirements for high school history. The content standards are in place, however, and American Constitutionalism could be incorporated, or expanded, into the existing curriculum. Additionally, internet access exists for obtaining American Constitutionalism information, which would not require funding.

[8:40:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON referred to the bill page 2, lines 26-28, and asked:

Isn't this really adopting a second high school qualifying examination. ... [The bill reads] [(b)] a district may not issue a secondary school diploma to a student who does not successfully complete the course and examination in this section.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER responded:

A high school qualifying exam is for state standards, for what we expect our students to know broadly in the state; where this standard would be set by each particular district. ... It is not one that is a common state standard. It is a requirement that they have to pass a test that demonstrates their capability according to the standards of the school district.

8:41:49 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON requested an opportunity to discuss specific points with the sponsor, outside of the committee, because the intent is clear but not the structure.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER emphasized that the proficiency of the students would need to be tested.

8:43:06 AM

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON noted that the bill makes a course requirement for graduation, and questioned why the test would not need to be standardized throughout the state.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER said that requesting EED to provide state standards would cost \$1.5 million; hence the CS eliminates that requirement and allows districts to establish proficiency standards and appropriate testing. He pointed out that there is not a penalty for a school district's non-compliance.

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON argued that a penalty does exist in disallowing graduation to the students of a non-compliant district.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER agreed and said a district could make that choice. He said:

I would ask the committee to keep in mind that this bill directs the requirement for testing on the districts; it is not a statewide standard.

8:46:07 AM

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON referred to the bill, page 2, lines 26-28, and paraphrased from the language, which read [original punctuation provided]:

(b) A district may not issue a secondary school diploma to a student who does not successfully complete the course and examination described in (a) of this section. A school district may not grant a waiver of this requirement.

8:46:50 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER concurred and identified the issue to be which entity has the authority to deny graduation. Authority should rest with the school district, not the state, he said, and, if not, the bill will need to be revised appropriately.

8:47:47 AM

BRUCE JOHNSON, Executive Director, Alaska Council of School Administrators (ACSA), stated opposition to HB 5, and questioned whether the credit concept, for this course of study, should be a requirement. A semester course is calculated in hours of study to be complied with by a student. Seat time is becoming a variable, in today's classroom as it shifts away from the Carnegie unit standard and students are allowed to challenge courses. The standards that the bill sets out are good, and the content should be taken seriously. However, when testing is mandated, the requirement becomes complicated; consideration must be given to special education students and English learners, for instance. Relative to other very important pieces that the ACSA is considering, it would be hard to include, and prioritize, this type of mandate on the plate. He reported his understanding that high school requirements include a half credit of American Government, and three credits of social studies, of which a one half credit course must be Alaskan history. The remaining two and one half credits are electives of district offerings. He said, "I can't imagine a school district leaving out American Government and civics." However, another mandate would not be productive, he opined. The national and state standards movement, which swept American schools twelve years ago, is now being recognized as a difficult process, and questioned. The importance of individual student needs is being realized and becoming a focal point, at the

district level. He finished stating that this bill is not necessary, and will require funding or redirection of money, as well as drawing down existing resources.

[8:52:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked, "A mandate that you teach a course in American Constitutionalism, what is it taking away from."

MR. JOHNSON stated that it may vary between districts depending on reprioritization, but local control would be important and supported by ACSA.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE queried whether it is important for graduates to understand the foundation and fundamentals of the U.S. government.

MR. JOHNSON said absolutely.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE asked whether it is already being taught.

MR. JOHNSON responded that it may not be taught as outlined in the CS, in every district; however, the vast majority of schools spend class time teaching the underpinnings of U.S. democracy.

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE suggested that it's a non issue if it's being taught.

MR. JOHNSON indicated that the material may not be brought as a one semester course, as required by the CS. He provided examples of how government concepts are taught and tested.

[8:55:52 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON maintained that the CS, in making this course a requirement for graduation but not including it in the structure of the current high school graduation qualifying exam, represents an additional graduation test, and asked for comment.

MR. JOHNSON speculated that perhaps it could be given as an end of course test, with opportunities to challenge the exam until graduation; perhaps longer if it represents a barrier to receiving a high school diploma. The high stakes issues would need to be regulated.

[8:58:24 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK opined that the stakes may be high if people lose, or have not learned, the fundamentals of the government of the country where they live, including those for whom English is a second language. The constitution provides a basic understanding of government rules. He stressed that mandates are not a welcome factor, but the best proof that this bill isn't necessary would be to show how the students are currently receiving and understanding the constitution. He suggested that many people might consider that individual rights are provided by the government, not the creator, which is contrary to what is stated in the constitution. Where a citizen's rights originate, and how the United States is run, may be missing in classrooms, hence the necessity for the introduction of HB 5.

[9:00:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE noted that the required class is stipulated to be taught in twelfth grade, and suggested eliminating that language to allow flexibility.

MR. JOHNSON said that in many of the rural facilities, high school classes are populated by students from every upper grade level. He agreed that this class should not be delayed, or restricted, to the final year.

[9:02:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE P. WILSON recalled having this course work taught in eighth grade, and agreed that it should not be delayed to the twelfth grade but determined by the district. Further, she expressed concern for making the class a requirement for graduation, and said it makes it difficult to support the bill.

[9:05:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FEIGE offered to propose an amendment.

[9:05:35 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:05 a.m. to 9:06 a.m.

[9:06:36 AM](#)

CARL ROSE, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), stated opposition to HB 5, and said AASB opposes unfunded mandates. He reported that he served on a citizen's advisory task force to create civics education policy, in recent

years. Every citizen has a responsibility to understand the U.S. Constitution and all that it represents, and how it relates to the state constitution, and down to the community level. He said civics is being taught, beginning in 8th grade. The intent of the bill is already being accomplished, he opined, and acknowledged that the bill sponsor is seeking evidence of that teaching. However, this bill represents a financial burden, and the zero fiscal note means that it will need to be redirected from the foundation formula receipts by each district.

[9:13:04 AM](#)

STEWART THOMPSON stated support for HB 5, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The need for statutory restraint against sabotage of comprehension of citizenship and our form of government is illustrated by this quote from the Mat-Su School Board Nov. 3rd, 2010 Meeting minutes: "Currently there are no sections of Civics being taught in the Mat-Su Borough School District. Elements of Civics are embedded in 8th grade US Studies; 11th grade US History; and 12th grade Government." This scarcity of educational opportunity naturally retards development of competent citizenship while more often developing the lazy irresponsibility of political apathy.

How can this be and be tolerated by adults who allegedly mean their Pledge of Allegiance? Thomas Paine, in his Rights of Man, suggests: "Reason and ignorance, the opposite of each other, influence the bulk of mankind. If either of these can be rendered sufficiently extensive, the machinery of government goes easily on. Reason obeys itself and (my emphasis) Ignorance submits to whatever is dictated to it."

Symptomatic of the decline of general comprehension of civics and citizenship is our grossly low voter participation - and its justifying whine "politicians do whatever they want no matter what I say or do." That is the correct mindset for being subject to elected aristocracy and, if you add an addiction to government protection from the trials of living itself, outright serfdom. That true political power does lie with the People acting together has just been

illustrated in Egypt. Current public education produces Americans who believe such defense of inalienable rights results from manipulation by America's enemies. This is while often believing government officials are there to make the hard, often secret, decisions for everyone. I'm serious!

I recommend three things:

1) Pass this bill with more specifically named references.

2) Have legislators themselves set a good example by openly attending public school civics classes to refresh THEIR comprehension of government fundamentals.

3) The ultimate test of education is application. Encourage gradient application of our political heritage by the young people themselves, as they naturally discover the necessity for self-governing their student society to make their education successful. Dictatorial control by an aristocracy of indoctrinating adults currently makes the public school experience a hypocritical attack on the very political heritage we're constitutionally charged to pass on.

My testimony is perhaps inadequate to express the urgency of truly arming our youth against the enemies of rational government and human civilization. Consider another Thomas Paine quote instead: "An army of principles will penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot. It will succeed where diplomatic management would fail. It is neither the Rhine, the Channel, nor the Ocean that can arrest progress. It will march on the horizon of the world and it will conquer."

[9:16:52 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:16 a.m. to 9:17 a.m.

[9:17:30 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the bill would be held, and public testimony would remain open.

The committee took an at-ease at 9:18 a.m.

**PRESENTATION(S): Lego League Robotics Competition**

[Audio was not captured and time stamps do not link to audio.]

[9:18:17 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK announced that the next order of business would be a presentation of projects from the Lego League Robotics competition.

[9:18:17 AM](#)

PAT RACE, Design Judge, said that learning how to create programs for moving robots is one method of teaching applied math. He stated his belief that this is a means to promote hands on science, and teaches engineering concepts.

[9:18:17 AM](#)

REBECCA PARKS, First Team, said a similar project has been successful in New York, and that she has been working with the program for three years. The team numbers have grown, and participation has been drawn from every school in Juneau. She pointed out that the program is student driven. Bio-medicine was the theme for this year's project, and she explained the tasks that each robot was to complete, which were mounted on a four foot by 8 foot display table. She then introduced a number of First Team students who built the display, and asked them to demonstrate their robots.

[9:18:17 AM](#)

JAN CUMMINS, Parent Volunteer, First Team, provided commentary for the various challenges as the students guided their robots through the display.

[9:18:17 AM](#)

MS. PARKS asked the students a series of questions, regarding the robots. The students explained the problems and solutions, which they encountered during the design phase. The robotics group meets after school three days a week, and occasionally on Saturdays.

The committee took an at-ease from 9:42 to 9:44.

[9:44:13 AM](#)

[Audio resumed.]

**HB 104-ALASKA PERFORMANCE SCHOLARSHIPS**

CHAIR DICK announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 104, "An Act renaming the Alaska performance scholarship and relating to the scholarship and tax credits applicable to contributions to the scholarship; establishing the Alaska performance scholarship investment fund and the Alaska performance scholarship award fund and relating to the funds; making conforming amendments; and providing for an effective date."

[9:44:38 AM](#)

NICHOLAS PENNINGTON, Teacher, Kodiak Island School District, stated support for HB 104, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

I am the student body president of the Kodiak Community College. I will keep this brief and concise. I have a very strong passion for success and believe that the lack of scholarship for needs-based students needs to be addressed and changed. I work 3 jobs and I am a full-time student. One of my jobs is working for the Kodiak Island Borough School District. I believe in the students and have faith in their success, however the financial deprive of my students is a huge deciding factor on whether or not to continue onto college upon graduation. It is with strong passion that I stand here to ask for your help and support for HB 104 so that my students can achieve their hopes and dreams, without going through the same financial struggles that I have been going through. Your support will keep retention within Alaska and help build the infrastructure that makes our beautiful state.

[9:45:57 AM](#)

TOM HEWITT, Student, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), stated support for HB 104, paraphrasing from a prepared statement, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

I'm a journalism and computer science student at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

I've been fortunate in my experience going to school at UAF. My parents don't have the money to help with my education but tuition when I started going to school here was relatively affordable. I worked in the summer and throughout the school year, and with that money plus a small but prudent investment in Apple stock about a dozen years ago, I've been able to get through school not only without outside aid, but also debt-free.

Not everyone who goes to school is as lucky as I am.

I have a friend named Nikki. She's smart, she's energetic, and she's exactly the kind of person who represents what's best about the University of Alaska. I'm not just saying that because she's my friend - a lot of other students think so too, and that's why we elected her president of the student body.

Nikki is a hard worker. Her parents haven't been able to give her much help with school either, so she holds down a job herself. Now keep in mind that this is a job on top of her job as student president, which is a full time job in itself. Nikki wasn't lucky enough to have a couple hundred shares of Apple stock, so she got a job as the morning news anchor for a local TV (television) station. That means she gets up at 3:00 a.m. every morning for work, and after working a full shift she goes to class, where she does her best to stay awake and learn. After class, she does her job representing the students as student body president. Now there are only so many hours in the day, and all of her work takes a toll. Nikki is stretched to her limit, and while she's a good student, as her friend I can tell you that all the work she has to do to pay for school absolutely has a negative effect on her ability to exercise her full potential in classes.

None of us here are looking for a free ride. We like working hard. But with tuition having doubled over the past 10 years, sometimes working hard enough doesn't get us all the way there.

So that's why I'm here. I'm not here for me. I'm here because of Nikki, and because I know that just about everyone at the university knows someone like her. And those are the people who need your help. Alaska is sorely in need of needs-based aid, and I would strongly urge you not only to support HB 104 but to include language that ties need-based into funding for students, as in the senate version of this bill.

[9:48:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON indicated that the CS for HB 104 includes a needs-based financial aid component, and reviewed the award limits.

[9:48:58 AM](#)

MR. HEWITT said any help is appreciated.

[9:49:47 AM](#)

CHAIR DICK said that public testimony would remain open and announced the next meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.