

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ON HB 19

April 17, 2011
4:36 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Lynn, Chair
Representative Lindsey Holmes
Representative Paul Seaton

Senator Kevin Meyer, Chair
Senator Linda Menard
Senator Bill Wielechowski

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Dan Saddler

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 19

"An Act relating to special request registration plates; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CCS HB 19 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 19

SHORT TITLE: SPECIAL REQUEST LICENSE PLATES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) LYNN, GATTO

01/18/11	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/11
01/18/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/11	(H)	STA, FIN
02/08/11	(H)	STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/08/11	(H)	Moved Out of Committee
02/08/11	(H)	MINUTE(STA)
02/09/11	(H)	STA RPT 7DP
02/09/11	(H)	DP: JOHANSEN, P.WILSON, KELLER, GRUENBERG, SEATON, PETERSEN, LYNN
02/22/11	(H)	FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
02/22/11	(H)	<Bill Held Over to 2/24/11>
02/24/11	(H)	FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
02/24/11	(H)	Moved Out of Committee
02/24/11	(H)	MINUTE(FIN)

02/25/11 (H) FIN RPT 8DP 1NR
02/25/11 (H) DP: FAIRCLOUGH, GARA, T.WILSON,
GUTTENBERG, NEUMAN, DOOGAN, STOLTZE,
THOMAS
02/25/11 (H) NR: COSTELLO
03/23/11 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
03/23/11 (H) VERSION: HB 19
03/25/11 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/25/11 (S) STA, TRA
04/12/11 (S) STA RPT SCS 1DP 4NR SAME TITLE
04/12/11 (S) DP: WIELECHOWSKI
04/12/11 (S) NR: PASKVAN, KOOKESH, MEYER, GIESSEL
04/12/11 (S) TRA REFERRAL WAIVED
04/12/11 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
04/12/11 (S) Moved SCS HB 19(STA) Out of Committee
04/12/11 (S) MINUTE(STA)
04/13/11 (S) VERSION: SCS HB 19(STA)
04/15/11 (H) TAKE UP CONCUR WITHDRAWN
04/16/11 (H) CONFERENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTED
04/16/11 (H) LYNN (CHAIR), SEATON, HOLMES
04/17/11 (H) HB19 AT 4:30 PM CAPITOL 120

WITNESS REGISTER

No witnesses to record

ACTION NARRATIVE

[4:36:02 PM](#)

CHAIR BOB LYNN called the Conference Committee on HB 19 meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. Representatives Holmes, Seaton, and Lynn, and Senators Menard, Wielechowski, and Meyer were present at the call to order.

HB 19-SPECIAL REQUEST LICENSE PLATES

[4:36:32 PM](#)

CHAIR LYNN announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 19, "An Act relating to special request registration plates; and providing for an effective date."

[Contains discussion of SB 93.]

[4:37:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON explained the process that would be taken during the conference committee.

[4:39:02 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER asked for an explanation of the two versions of the bill before the committee.

[4:39:26 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI stated his understanding that HB 19 proposed one license plate, which read, "In God We Trust." He said [SB 93, which he sponsored,] sought to eliminate the need for any further license plate bills. He relayed that in SCS HB 19(STA), the Senate amended HB 19 to include all the license plates that were proposed in 2011, as well as to add language from SB 93, which would give the Division of Motor Vehicles the authority to issue specialty license plates - something that currently is done in 24 other states.

CHAIR LYNN offered his understanding that the committee is unanimous in being weary of hearing license plate bills.

The committee took an at-ease from 4:41 p.m. to 4:42 p.m.

[4:42:41 PM](#)

SENATOR MENARD moved to accept SCS HB 19(STA).

[4:43:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON objected for the purposes of discussion.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI expressed his support of the motion.

CHAIR LYNN stated for the record that he supported the motion made on the House floor to concur with the changes made by the Senate, but 28 of the 40 House members did not.

[4:43:53 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER said the Senate had voted unanimously in support of SCS HB 19(STA), but the conference committee must come up with a solution upon which both bodies can agree.

REPRESENTATIVE HOLMES pointed out that although the three House members on the conference committee supported SCS HB 19(STA) when it came across the House floor, they are responsible for representing the will of the entire body.

[4:44:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON maintained his objection.

[4:44:39 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Holmes, Seaton, and Lynn voted against the motion to accept SCS HB 19(STA). Senators Menard, Wielechowski, and Meyer voted in favor of it. Therefore, the motion to accept SCS HB 19(STA) failed with a vote of 0-3 from the House members and 3-0 from the Senate members. [Please note that a majority of the membership of the committee from each house must be in agreement in order to take action in a conference committee.]

[4:45:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON moved to accept HB 19.

[4:45:21 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER objected. He explained that HB 19 only includes one license plate, and all the license plates have merit. So, too, does Senator Wielechowski's idea of "getting out of the plate business," he added.

[4:46:12 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Holmes, Seaton, and Lynn voted in favor of the motion to accept HB 19. Senators Menard, Wielechowski, and Meyer voted against it. Therefore, the motion to accept HB 19 failed with a vote of 3-0 from the House members and 0-3 from the Senate members. [Please note that a majority of the membership of the committee from each house must be in agreement in order to take action in a conference committee.]

[4:47:23 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 4:47 p.m. to 4:50 p.m.

[4:50:36 PM](#)

CHAIR LYNN explained that during the at-ease, the committee had signed a conference committee report showing that committee members had failed to agree to accept either HB 19 or SCS HB 19(STA).

[4:50:55 PM](#)

SENATOR MENARD asked which license plates included in SCS HB 19(STA) were objected to by the House.

[4:51:27 PM](#)

CHAIR LYNN related his understanding that there had been some disagreement regarding the "Choose Life" and ["Pro-Family, Pro-Choice"] plates. However, the major issue and, he ventured, the main reason SCS HB 19(STA) was not supported on the House floor was that it would give authority to the DMV to control the issuance of specialty plates. He noted that in private conversation, some members had thought of terrible license plates that might be allowed by the DMV.

SENATOR MENARD asked if these awful examples were seen in other states or concocted in the members' imaginations. She said she was comfortable with the restrictions that were in place for the DMV in SCS HB 19(STA).

CHAIR LYNN said he does not recall any comments on the House floor about [distasteful] license plates allowed in other states.

[4:53:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLMES relayed that a handful of Representatives had indicated that they would not support further license plate legislation. She echoed Chair Lynn's comment that the main reason for objection to SCS HB 19(STA) was that it would give too much authority to the DMV. She told Senator Menard that the examples heard of bad license plates in other states were hypothetical. She relayed that after the conference committee was assigned, some members came to her expressing concern about the "Choose Life" and "Pro-Family, Pro-Choice" license plates.

[4:55:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON recollected that it was three people who objected to further license plate bills. The rest of the

debate, he said, was the question about the authority that would be granted to the DMV.

[4:56:43 PM](#)

SENATOR MENARD indicated that some legislators, including herself, had given up their own license plate legislation to support [SB 93], and she questioned whether the handful of legislators reported to have objected to further license plate bills would have [held the same opinion] if those bills had been their own. She further indicated that [SB 93] would have still given room for [the specialty license plates] that she and others had supported, because the DMV would be in charge of monitoring specialty license plates. She stated her support of that transpiring.

[4:58:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON said he agrees with Senator Menard; he said he does not want to deal with the issue. He offered his understanding that the three members of the House who spoke against license plate bills, were not specifically saying they would not vote for another legislator's license plate bill but were saying that they would never propose one themselves. He said he does not think the legislature should be dealing with individual license plate bills, but that opinion was contradicted by the majority of House members.

[4:58:38 PM](#)

CHAIR LYNN noted that the issue of giving power to the DMV was part of SB 93 and was debated in the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting and not really anywhere else. He noted that SB 93 is currently in the House Finance Committee.

SENATOR MEYER said when he first heard the concept he was worried about giving so much power to the DMV; however, he said he thinks Senator Wielechowski put enough safeguards in place in SB 93. He indicated that educating other members may alleviate their concerns on that issue. He said he does not know if the co-chair of the House Finance Committee has scheduled a hearing so that more House members can discuss SB 93.

[5:00:43 PM](#)

CHAIR LYNN said that a co-chair of the House Finance Committee had expressed willingness to hear SB 93, but that he, Chair

Lynn, had opined that there was no need because HB 19 was going to the House floor and had parts of SB 93 incorporated within it. He explained he did not want the load of the House Finance Committee increased.

[5:01:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON clarified that "this wasn't a brief conversation." He offered further details. He stated, "The education process in the House would have to go through the committee process, I think, to do ... that, and that's what we've been set here to do is to negotiate, if we can, a solution to go forward."

[5:02:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON moved to adopt Amendment 1, as follows:

Page 3, beginning on line 1:
Delete subsection (hh)

[5:02:46 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER objected for the purposes of discussion.

[5:03:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLMES pointed out that paragraph (25) on page 5 should also be deleted.

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON moved to adopt an amendment to Amendment 1, to also delete paragraph (25) on page 5, lines 16-21.

SENATOR MEYER objected for the purposes of discussion.

[5:04:08 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said he thinks SCS HB 19(STA) was the compromise, and he would object to the motion.

[5:05:33 PM](#)

SENATOR MENARD said no matter the outcome of the motions, she would like to see legislation addressing this license plate issue heard next year.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said he is not wed to the bill, but thought it was something that would create some efficiency and give constituents what they want. He maintained his objection.

[5:07:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLMES said she likes the idea of getting the legislature out of the license plate business. She relayed that she would support the motion, but wants strong consideration given next year. She stated, "I really applaud Senator Wielechowski's efforts in trying to get this off our plates, and I will be a strong supporter of that next year."

[5:08:32 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SEATON said he is pleased to hear that [SB 93] is still alive and that the co-chair of the House Finance Committee had offered to hear it, because he said he thinks that is what is needed. He opined, "I think moving ahead without the complications of having both the ... individual plates and the issue tied together ... will be easier to limit controversy."

[5:10:03 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER removed his objection to the motion to amend Amendment 1.

[5:10:29 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 5:10 p.m. to 5:12 p.m.

[5:12:01 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER said he will support the motion, [as amended], although he thinks that Senator Wielechowski and the Senate did the right thing by giving the authority to the DMV. He said he has a personal interest in the bill, as does Senator Menard, because of certain license plates that are included in it. He said he would personally speak with Representative Stoltze. He said, "This is the only way you can get rid of the license plates is to have somebody else deal with it." He said this is the process by which to help constituents who are in favor of certain license plates. He concluded, "It is with concern that we do not include the DMV director at this time."

[5:14:07 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Holmes, Seaton, and Lynn voted in favor of the motion to adopt Amendment 1, as amended. Senators Menard and Meyer voted in favor of the motion to adopt Amendment 1, as amended, and Senator Wielechowski voted against it. Therefore, the motion to adopt Amendment 1, as amended, passed with a vote of 3-0 from the House members and 2-1 from the Senate members. [This language was adopted pending the granting of limited powers of free conference, which was granted.]

[5:16:24 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the Conference Committee on HB 19 meeting was adjourned at 5:16 p.m.