

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

February 13, 2012

1:35 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bettye Davis, Chair
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Fred Dyson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Dennis Egan
Senator Johnny Ellis

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 127

"An Act establishing September 9 each year as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Awareness Day."

- MOVED SB 127 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 20

Designating February 2012 as American Heart Month.

- MOVED HCR 20 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PRESENTATION: ALASKA YOUTH POLICY SUMMIT

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HCR 20

SHORT TITLE: AMERICAN HEART MONTH

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) P.WILSON

01/25/12	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/25/12	(H)	HSS
01/31/12	(H)	HSS AT 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106
01/31/12	(H)	Moved Out of Committee
01/31/12	(H)	MINUTE(HSS)
02/01/12	(H)	HSS RPT 4DP
02/01/12	(H)	DP: DICK, MILLER, HERRON, KELLER
02/03/12	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)

02/03/12 (H) VERSION: HCR 20
02/06/12 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/06/12 (S) HSS
02/13/12 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 127

SHORT TITLE: FETAL ALCOHOL DISORDERS AWARENESS DAY
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) MEYER

04/14/11 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/14/11 (S) HSS
02/13/12 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

KATE BURKHART, Executive Director
Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse
Alaska Mental Health Board
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 127.

BECKY ROONEY, Staff
Representative Peggy Wilson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HCR 20 on behalf of the sponsor.

DR. BOB URATA, Family Physician
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HCR 20.

AMANDA METIVIER, Director
Alaska Youth Policy Summit
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the presentation of the Alaska Youth Policy Summit.

SLADE MARTIN
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the presentation of the Alaska Youth Policy Summit.

FHERRON HINES
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the presentation of the Alaska Youth Policy Summit.

STEPHANIE KILPIETZ MCPEEKS

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the presentation of the Alaska Youth Policy Summit.

REBECCA SHIER

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the presentation of the Alaska Youth Policy Summit.

ILINA SAUCEDO

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the presentation of the Alaska Youth Policy Summit.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:35:06 PM](#)

CHAIR BETTYE DAVIS called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dyson, Meyer, and Chair Davis.

SB 127-FETAL ALCOHOL DISORDERS AWARENESS DAY

[1:35:37 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS announced that the first order of business would be SB 127.

SENATOR KEVIN MEYER, sponsor, introduced SB 127, which would proclaim September 9 as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) Awareness Day. He said that FASD is caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol. FASD Day is observed internationally on September 9. He noted that in previous years he had introduced FASD Awareness Day and he felt that now was the time to put it into statute. He explained that the bill supports a good effort to bring attention to a condition that has a devastating effect on Alaska, which has the highest rate of FASD in the nation. He pointed out that FASD can result in brain damage, birth defects, learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and the loss of an individual's potential; however it is preventable. He stressed that education is key to solving the problem of FASD.

CHAIR DAVIS opened public testimony.

[1:39:02 PM](#)

KATE BURKHART, Executive Director, Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, Alaska Mental Health Board, testified on behalf of the boards in support of SB 127. She spoke of the advantages of having a day that highlights the risks of FASD. She shared statistics regarding risky behavior during pregnancy. Alaska has one of the highest rates of binge drinking among women of child-bearing age. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, women from 18-44 consumed five or more drinks in one sitting in the past 30 days at a rate of 18 to 26 percent. She termed the bill "imperative to prevention efforts."

SENATOR DYSON moved to report SB 127 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, SB 127 was reported from the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

CHAIR DAVIS commented on the importance of the legislation. She referred to a handout about things a person should know about FASD.

SENATOR DYSON pointed out that years ago there was no awareness of the dangers of FASD. He stressed that it is preventable. He shared a personal story about one woman that has had seven FASD children. He spoke of the difficulties experienced by children with FASD. He suggested ways to support those with FASD.

[1:46:19 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER brought attention to the fact of alcohol's devastating effect on pregnancies.

CHAIR DAVIS noted that Senators Ellis and Egan were excused from the meeting.

At ease from 1:46 p.m. to 1:48 p.m.

HCR 20-AMERICAN HEART MONTH

[1:48:24 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS said that the next bill before the committee would be HCR 20.

BECKY ROONEY, staff, Representative Peggy Wilson, introduced HCR 20 on behalf of the sponsor. She read from the following sponsor statement:

HCR 20 raises awareness of the nation's leading cause of death: cardiovascular disease. This unfortunate

disease causes an average of one American death every 39 seconds or nearly 2,200 deaths each day. It is the costliest disease in the nation, with direct and indirect costs estimated to be \$297,700,000 a year. The American Heart Association's 2020 impact goal seeks to improve cardiovascular health of all Americans by 20 percent while reducing deaths from cardiovascular disease and stroke by 20 percent through research, population-level and community-level interventions, and public health and policy measures. The passage of this resolution would join Alaska and the American Heart Association in raising awareness of this disease by celebrating February 2012 as "American Heart Month" and promoting education and awareness by encouraging citizens to learn the warning signs of heart attack and stroke.

1:51:26 PM

DR. BOB URATA, Family Physician, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of HCR 20. He pointed out that it is clear that heart disease and stroke are major causes of death and disability in the United States, and yet they are diseases that can be prevented. Avoiding key risk factors and treating those that are abnormal, are important to reducing these deaths and disabilities. According to the National Institute of Health, 1.6 million lives have been saved since 1977, and there is an estimate that the 44 percent decrease in heart disease deaths was a result of prevention through the reduction of risk factors.

He shared information about a new threat - obesity - and a study about the lack of knowledge about the disease. He said that 27 percent of Alaskan high school students are overweight or obese. Obesity leads to an increase in high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. In addition, a 2005 study reveals that only 27 percent of respondents knew the signs of heart attacks and would call 911 first if someone was having a heart attack or a stroke. He stressed that increasing awareness of risk factors and emergency care are the first steps toward reducing the risk of death and disability from cardiovascular disease. He concluded that HCR 20 is an important step in that direction.

SENATOR MEYER asked how Alaska compares to other states regarding heart attacks.

DR. URATA said that Alaska does better than most states because it has a relatively young population. Heart attacks are the second highest cause of death after cancer.

SENATOR DYSON voiced appreciation for Dr. Urata's efforts. He wondered if eating a lot of fish helps prevent heart disease.

DR. URATA said that some studies have come to that conclusion. He suggested eating fish for the Omega 3 oils.

[1:56:04 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER moved to report HCR 20 from committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HCR 20 moved from the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

At ease from 1:57:28 p.m. to 1:57:53 p.m.

Presentation: Alaska Youth Policy Summit

[1:57:53 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS announced that the next order of business would be a presentation by the Alaska Youth Policy Summit.

AMANDA METIVIER, Director, Alaska Youth Policy Summit (AYPS), related that AYPS was sponsored by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Alaska Mental Health Board, and the Advisory Board on Alcohol and Substance Abuse. AYPS is an event where youth from across Alaska come together to discuss their experiences with substance abuse, foster care, juvenile justice, behavioral health, and homelessness. They learn about legislative policymaking and how to impact change.

[2:00:30 PM](#)

SLADE MARTIN, shared his personal experience as a foster child. He spoke of the positives and negatives of being a foster child. He shared his story about being gay and his successes with coming to terms with his sexuality. He talked of his current experiences and goals as a college student. He requested continued support of foster parent training and for SB 82, which would improve the foster care system.

[2:03:40 PM](#)

FHERRON HINES, spoke of her experiences in foster care and when transitioning out of foster care. She testified in support of funding for transitional independent programs.

STEPHANIE KILPIETZ MCPEEKS, Anchorage, Alaska, testified about her personal experience in foster care and with mental health issues. She related the problems she had due to sexual abuse as a child. She also shared the successes she found and her journey learning coping skills. She requested support for peer support and early intervention programs, as well as for foster parent and parent training.

[2:07:30 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS asked Ms. McPeeks if she was in foster care.

MS. MCPEEKS said she was back with her mother.

REBECCA SHIER, Anchorage, Alaska, shared her personal story with foster care. She requested support for SB 82, which includes an effort to prioritize siblings staying together in foster care.

[2:09:22 PM](#)

ILINA SAUCEDO, Anchorage, Alaska, shared her personal story with substance abuse in her family. She requested support for evidence-based family therapy and transition independent process programs.

CHAIR DAVIS said she appreciated the testimony from the members of AYPS. She noted that the foster care system has changed over the years, and asked if any of the testifiers were currently in foster care.

MS. METIVIER explained that three of the testifiers were in foster care, but have since left the program.

SENATOR MEYER requested that the testifiers share their experiences in foster care.

MS. SHIER spoke of her foster care as a positive experience. She agreed that there have been many positive changes recently in the foster care system.

[2:13:52 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER inquired how many foster children are adopted.

MS. METIVIER reported that there is a high adoption rate for young children. She noted that SB 82 puts emphasis on reunification with parents, if possible, but would also ensure after care for youth who "age out" of foster care.

SENATOR MEYER asked how Alaska does with transitioning foster children out of the system.

MS. METIVIER related that there were a number of reforms passed recently that addressed that issue. She shared that there is now funding for housing support, career and college readiness, tuition waivers, and other support.

[2:16:37 PM](#)

MS. SHIRE reported on how she accessed funding for housing and tuition.

CHAIR DAVIS asked how many of the presenters were in college.

MS. MCPEEKS shared that she was finishing up high school and hopes to go to college. She said her goal is to be a trauma psychologist and she is currently helping with the Alaska Youth and Family Network.

CHAIR DAVIS asked how she was getting her diploma.

MS. MCPEEKS spoke of a program called SAVE.

CHAIR DAVIS asked if she was in the Anchorage School District.

MS. MCPEEKS said she was. She continued to explain her attempt to get her high school degree.

[2:20:01 PM](#)

MS. HINES related that she is a stay-at-home mom and is also a child care worker.

CHAIR DAVIS asked further questions about the day care children.

MS. HINES reported on her housing situation. She said she is working on becoming a licensed day care provider.

CHAIR DAVIS requested more ideas regarding ways the legislature could help foster children. She suggested that in future hearings on SB 82, the youth call in to testify in favor of the bill.

MS. METIVIER commented on the Youth Policy Summit schedule. She noted that SB 82 is a priority for the Summit. She stated opposition to SB 125.

CHAIR DAVIS requested a written summary of AYPS's proposals.

MS. SAUCEDO shared her school history. She said she is ready to return to college.

SENATOR MEYER encourage the youth to continue to speak for their causes.

[2:26:46 PM](#)

MS. MCPEEKS testified in support of the bill for early intervention for young children.

CHAIR DAVIS encouraged the youth to continue to speak out.

[2:30:09 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Davis adjourned the Senate Standing Health and Social Services Committee at 2:30 p.m.