

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 9, 2012

9:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bill Wielechowski, Chair
Senator Joe Paskvan, Vice Chair
Senator Albert Kookesh
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Cathy Giessel

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 121

"An Act relating to the public employees' retirement system and the teachers' retirement system; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 16

Urging the United States Congress to approve legislation allowing members of the military to receive promised retirement benefits.

- MOVED SJR 16 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 129

"An Act relating to the approval and administration of child care services by the Department of Administration primarily for the benefit of state officers and employees; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 179

"An Act relating to missing vulnerable adult prompt response and notification plans."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 18
Establishing August 4, 2012, as Raoul Wallenberg Remembrance
Day.

- MOVED SCR 18 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 121

SHORT TITLE: TEACHERS & PUB EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PLANS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) EGAN

04/07/11	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/07/11	(S)	STA, FIN
04/14/11	(S)	STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
04/14/11	(S)	Heard & Held
04/14/11	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
09/15/11	(S)	STA AT 9:00 AM Anch LIO Rm 220
09/15/11	(S)	Heard & Held
09/15/11	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
10/13/11	(S)	STA AT 12:00 AM Fairbanks
10/13/11	(S)	Heard & Held
10/13/11	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
01/26/12	(S)	STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205
01/26/12	(S)	Heard & Held
01/26/12	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
02/09/12	(S)	STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SJR 16

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY PENSIONS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) WIELECHOWSKI

02/03/12	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/03/12	(S)	STA
02/09/12	(S)	STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 179

SHORT TITLE: MISSING VULNERABLE ADULT RESPONSE PLAN

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DAVIS

01/27/12	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/27/12	(S)	STA, FIN
02/09/12	(S)	STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 129

SHORT TITLE: CHILD CARE CTRS: STATE EMPLOYEES & OTHERS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) MCGUIRE

04/15/11 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/15/11 (S) STA, FIN
02/09/12 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SCR 18

SHORT TITLE: RAOUL WALLENBERG REMEMBRANCE DAY
SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DYSON

01/18/12 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/12 (S) STA
02/09/12 (S) STA AT 9:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

JESSE KIEHL, Staff
Senator Dennis Egan
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions about SB 121 on behalf of the sponsor.

MIKE BARNHILL, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Administration
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 121.

KENDRA KLOSTER, Staff
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SJR 16 on behalf of the sponsor.

CHRIS NELSON, Testifying on his own behalf
Moose Pass, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in favor of SJR 16.

SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 129.

GENEVIEVE WOJTUSIK, Staff
Senator Lesil McGuire
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 129 on behalf of the sponsor.

BLUE SHIBLER, Owner
Discovery Preschool
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in favor of SB 129.

SARAH LEONARD, Director of Marketing & Fund Development
Thread
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 121.

JOY LYON, Executive Director
Association for the Education of the Young Child
Southeast Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: encouraged support of SB 121.

LAUREN BROOKS, Family Services Coordinator
Association of Education of Young Children and
Thread
Southeast Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in favor of SB 121.

SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 179.

CELESTE HODGE, Staff
Senator Bettye Davis
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information on SB 179 on behalf of the sponsor.

MICHAEL O'HARE, Deputy Director
Homeland Security and Emergency Management
Department of Military and Veterans Administration (DMVA),
Fort Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 179.

MARIE DARLIN
AARP
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of SB 179.

LESLIE THOMPSON, Planner I
Alaska Commission on Aging
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 179.

LT. RODNEY DIAL
Alaska State Troopers
Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 179.

PATRICK CUNNINGHAM, Professor
University of Alaska, Anchorage

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 179.

NANCY BURKE, Trust Program Officer
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 179.

RANDI CHAPMAN, Director of State Affairs
National Alzheimer's Association
Washington, D.C.

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 179.

DULCE NOBRE, Executive Director
Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 179.

KATHRYN MONFREDA, Chief
Criminal Records & Identification Bureau
Department of Public Safety

POSITION STATEMENT: Addressed the fiscal note for SB 179.

DAVID GOTTSTEIN, Testifying on his own behalf
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke in support of SCR 18.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[9:02:19 AM](#)

CHAIR BILL WIELECHOWSKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Giessel, Kookesh, Paskvan, Meyer, and Chair Wielechowski.

SB 121-TEACHERS & PUB EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT PLANS

[9:03:25 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI noted the first order of business would be SB 121.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to adopt Amendment R.1 for CSSB 121 (STA):

27-LS0281\R.1
Wayne

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

TO: CSSB 121(STA), Draft Version "R"

Page 6, line 21:
Delete "contribution"
Insert "benefit"

Page 6, line 23:
Delete "board"
Insert "administrator"

Page 13, line 17:
Delete "contribution"
Insert "benefit"

Page 13, line 19:
Delete "board"
Insert "administrator"

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI objected.

JESSE KIEHL, staff, Senator Dennis Egan, explained that Amendment R.1 is a technical cleanup of a drafting error.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI requested the opinion of the Department of Administration.

[9:05:06 AM](#)

MIKE BARNHILL, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Administration, agreed that the amendment was a technical correction.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI withdrew his objection. Seeing no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to adopt Amendment 2:

27-LS0281\R.2
Wayne

AMENDMENT 2

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

TO: CSSB 121(STA), Draft Version "R"

Page 4, line 10:

Delete "a new subsection"

Insert "new subsections"

Page 4, line 30, following "more":

Insert ", but less than 30,"

Page 5, following line 3:

Insert new subsections to read:

"(h) On or after July 1, 2018, and every five years thereafter, the administrator shall adjust the percentages under (g)(2) and (3) of this section as needed to maintain, but not to exceed, over the succeeding five years, an employer normal cost rate for the members and survivors who first became members after June 30, 2006, that does not exceed the combined total of the rates under AS 14.25.350(a), (b), (d), and (e) minus the employer normal cost rate attributable to the members who first became members after June 30, 2006, for benefits under AS 14.25.009 - 14.25.167. An adjustment made under this subsection shall remain in effect for five years. In making an adjustment under this subsection, the administrator shall maintain the five percent differences between (g)(2)(A), (B), and (C) of this section and the five percent differences between (g)(3)(A) and (B) of this section.

(i) When a member is appointed to retirement, the member obtains a vested right to the applicable percentage under (g)(2) or (3) of this section, as adjusted under (h) of this section, that is in effect when the member is appointed to retirement. A member does not obtain a vested right to a percentage under (g)(2) or (3) of this section, as adjusted under (h) of this section, before the member is appointed to retirement."

Page 11, line 10, following "retirement":

Insert ";

(6) on or after July 1, 2018, and every five years thereafter, the administrator shall adjust the percentages under (3) and (4) of this subsection as needed to maintain, but not to exceed, over the succeeding five years, an employer normal cost rate for the members and survivors who first became members after June 30, 2006, that does not exceed the combined total of the rates under AS 39.35.750(a), (b), (d), and (e) minus the employer normal cost rate attributable to the members who first became members after June 30, 2006, for benefits under AS 39.35.095 - 39.35.530; an adjustment made under this paragraph shall remain in effect for five years; in making an adjustment under this paragraph, the administrator shall maintain the five percent differences between (3)(A), (B), (C), and (D) of this subsection and the five percent differences between (4)(A) and (B) of this subsection;

(7) when a member is appointed to retirement, the member obtains a vested right to the applicable percentage under (3) or (4) of this subsection, as adjusted under (6) of this subsection, that is in effect when the member is appointed to retirement; a member does not obtain a vested right to a percentage under (3) or (4) of this subsection, as adjusted under (6) of this subsection, before appointment to retirement."

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI objected.

MR. KIEHL explained Amendment 2 begins with a cleanup item. The substantive portion of the amendment deals with the sponsor's commitment to make this retirement choice bill "cost neutral" when compared to the defined contribution systems. He pointed out that the R version of the bill showed a savings to the state, as compared to the defined contribution system, but only for a period of time. In the combined PERS systems, the savings was for about 7 years; in the TRS systems, the savings was for about 12 years. Accelerating costs of pre-funding health care benefits overtook the savings in both cases.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI noticed that money is saved on pensions under PERS, but health care costs are higher. He asked for information about health care costs if they increase by 10 percent a year.

MR. KIEHL replied that in the combined PERS system, both numbers are higher.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI asked if the assumption is that health care costs would increase by 10 percent a year.

MR. KIEHL did not recall if the increase is 9.5 percent or 10 percent.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI shared his calculations regarding health care costs increasing.

[9:10:12 AM](#)

MR. BARNHILL discussed the FY 10 PERS valuation for Alaska health care costs. In 1978 the monthly premium was \$57; in 2011 it is \$1,176. This illustrates a 9 percent trend for over 30 years. Actuaries had projected a 9 percent cost growth up until 1990. If the gross domestic product (GDP) in the U.S. is growing at 3 to 4 percent a year, and health care is growing at 9 percent a year, eventually health care costs would use up the total economy. The actuaries determined that health care costs needed to be decreased and projections needed to be stepped down to about 4.5 percent per year in TRS. There was a tension between theory and actual experience.

MR. BARNHILL stressed that the U.S. economy and Alaska's economy should not be compared because the U.S. economy is mature and has little room for growth. Alaska economy, on the other hand, has room for GDP growth, which would allow health care to grow at a sustained, higher rate for a longer period of time. He stated that the health care growth rate that the state paid in the last 10 years was 9.4 percent.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI understood that the calculation going forward through 2042 was at 10 percent.

MR. BARNHILL said the Alaska Retirement Management Board (ARMB) assumptions were used, which start at 9 percent and grade down at a very slow rate over the course of a century.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI asked if by 2042, it would cost roughly \$100,000 per employee in health care costs.

MR. BARNHILL did not know, but thought costs would double every ten years.

MR. KIEHL discussed how the amendment "handles the question." He recalled the history of how decisions were made for the Defined Contribution (DC) system. He talked about the safeguards of having a neutral ARM Board and an annual actuarial review. Those safeguards have led to today's projections. The amendment asks employees to share the risk through a premium share percentage that matches the premium share percentage in the DC plan. It takes note of the cost growth assumptions and has actuaries evaluate every 5 years what it would cost to prefund health care benefits, thereby shifting the schedule based on actual experience. It would ensure that the state does not pay more for the new system than the old one.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI simplified the content of the amendment: it will keep the cost at or below the current system.

MR. KEIEHL agreed. He added that the department expressed an interest in clarifying the five-year adjustment to make sure that it is forward looking, which is agreeable to the sponsor. He noted that the premium share percentages may fluctuate during an employee's career, but benefits can be adjusted until the employee retires. At retirement the premium is fixed.

[9:18:55 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI said it seems like a good solution.

MR. BARNHILL related that the numerical analysis is being worked on. He voiced a concern about what happens at retirement.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI withdrew his objection to adopt Amendment 2. Seeing no further objection, Amendment 2 was adopted.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI said that SB 121 would be held over.

SJR 16-MILITARY PENSIONS

[9:21:32 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI stated that SJR 16 was before the committee. The resolution urges Congress to pass legislation guaranteeing members of the military promised retirement benefits.

KENDRA KLOSTER, staff, Senator Bill Wielechowski, introduced SJR 16 on behalf of the sponsor. She said the Defense Business Board recently released a suggested plan to convert the military retirement system from the current 20-year vesting system to a 401k due to pending budget cuts. The Department of Defense is looking at \$487 billion in budget cuts over the next ten years.

The resolution would "grandfather in" members in the current pension system. The resolution also urges the U.S. Congress to support HR 3520: Keeping Our Promises Act of 2011.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI said this issue is a huge concern for the military. It is about keeping a promise about pensions for military personnel.

[9:23:34 AM](#)

CHRIS NELSON, testifying on his own behalf, Moose Pass, Alaska, spoke in favor of SJR 16.

SENATOR PASKVAN asked if military veterans have access to health benefits when they retire.

MR. NELSON said they did. Military service members are covered by TriCare and those benefits continue upon retirement.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI spoke highly of Mr. Nelson.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to report SJR 16 out of committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal note.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced that without objection, SJR 16 moved from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

SB 129-CHILD CARE CTRS: STATE EMPLOYEES & OTHERS

[9:26:15 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced that SB 129 was before the committee.

SENATOR LESIL MCGUIRE, sponsor, introduced SB 129, which would allow child care centers to be located in office buildings that are owned or leased by the State of Alaska. The bill is designed to help address the child care shortage in Alaska. It does not address child care facilities in private businesses. She related the number of children, 35,000 under the age of six, in need of child care. Of those children, only 16,000 will have an opportunity to receive child care. She spoke of a task force eight years ago by the women in the House and Senate to create a day care center in the state capital. That center has become a model for other state governments wishing to support employees that have families.

SENATOR MCGUIRE explained that the bill does not require the state to pay for child care. She reported on businesses in the private sector that pay for child care; however, this bill would simply authorize the Department of Administration to take an application for consideration of putting child care program start-up operations together. The state would not be paying any costs; instead, families would pay for day care services. Many agencies agree with the benefits of on-site child care.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI pointed out that the child care center would be open to all state employees, as well as to the public.

SENATOR MCGUIRE agreed. She addressed the importance of Juneau's facility to the community. She recalled a time when there was a shortage of child care centers.

SENATOR PASKVAN asked if state employees would be given priority at the child care centers in SB 129, similar to how federal child care programs are run.

SENATOR MCGUIRE said the bill does not address who would be given priority. The federal requirements dictate that federal employees are given a priority. In Juneau's day care center, state employees and staff have first priority. In this bill, state employees are not necessarily given priority. The committee could amend the bill to change that.

SENATOR MEYER asked if there were any legal concerns about liability.

GENEVIEVE WOJTUSIK, staff, Senator Lesil McGuire, sponsor, answered Senator Meyer's question. She said the current contract states that the business assumes all liability and it has a \$1 million insurance policy.

[9:34:45 AM](#)

SENATOR MCGUIRE stressed that the state is not getting into the child care business. The current contract was obtained by putting out a request for proposal. Blue Shibler won the contract and carries insurance.

BLUE SHIBLER, owner, Discovery Preschool, Juneau, Alaska, spoke in favor of SB 129. She echoed the sentiments of the sponsor statement. She spoke of the advantage of having maintenance paid for by the state; child care workers are paid higher than average wages. Discovery Preschool serves about 40 families, most of which are legislative and state employees, but some are

also public employees and private sector families. Hours are extended to evenings and weekends, as well as drop-in care.

SENATOR GIESSEL asked if janitorial services are paid for.

MS. SHIVELER said she does not pay for rent, janitorial services, or utilities; therefore, she can pay workers higher wages.

[9:38:50 AM](#)

SARAH LEONARD, Director of Marketing & Fund Development, thread, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 121. She related that thread is Alaska's childcare resource and referral network. She shared what was contained in thread's letter of support. One of thread's core missions is to provide accessible, affordable, and quality child care.

JOY LYON, Executive Director, Association for the Education of the Young Child, Southeast Alaska, encouraged support of SB 121. She spoke of the advantages of investing in employer-sponsored child care. She shared statistics related to the need for child care in order for parents to work. She argued that care for children is a priority. The state would benefit in two ways from this legislation; employers would see returns on investments and the problem of inadequate availability of child care would be addressed. Less than half of children with parents in the work force have access to a licensed child care facility.

[9:44:51 AM](#)

LAUREN BROOKS, Family Services Coordinator, Association of Education of Young Children and thread, Southeast Alaska, testified in favor of SB 121. She shared statistics about the availability of child care centers. She listed the problems when quality child care is not available. She encouraged the adoption of SB 121.

SENATOR PASKVAN said asked about the range of costs for child care in Juneau.

MS. BROOKS said she did not monitor private facilities. The costs vary.

SENATOR PASKVAN asked what the minimum and maximum costs for child care are.

MS. BROOKS said the maximum cost is about \$1,000 per month and the minimum cost is about \$600 per month.

SENATOR MCGUIRE offered to provide statistics that answered Senator Paskvan's question.

SENATOR GIESSEL looked at page 3, lines 9-11, and asked if page 2, lines 22-24, present a conflict. She said she thought it was saying that the operator was not assuming financial responsibility.

SENATOR MCGUIRE responded that in the case of a legislative building, such as in Juneau, the costs are not passed on to the provider. She said she does not know what the fiscal note would be in other cases. She offered to find out if it costs the state more to cover janitorial services at the Juneau day care center.

SENATOR MCGUIRE maintained that page 3 of the bill was clear that the operator shall comply with all state and local standards for licensure of the child care facility. She stated that page 2 deals with facilities. If the child care center occupies a state-owned building, there may be a cost.

[9:53:57 AM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL spoke of extended liability and higher standards when dealing with children in regards to maintenance and janitorial services. She opined that the state may be taking on liability if high standards are not maintained.

SENATOR MCGUIRE thought Senator Giessel's comments were appropriate considerations. She said the partnership merits value and she thought it was worth it. An attempt was made to make the bill broad enough to allow for negotiations to take place.

SENATOR PASKVAN understood the policy choice of the state's absorbing costs. He took issue with the potential for a sliding fee schedule on page 3. He maintained that charging fees on the basis of household income goes beyond operational costs. He wondered how competitive that was with private enterprise.

SENATOR MCGUIRE noted that all sections are subject to removal. The cost of care provisions are "may's" not "shall's". It is a multi-tiered process and is purposely broad. The sliding scale is specifically for the public, not for state employees.

[9:59:56 AM](#)

SENATOR PASKVAN said he only wondered if there was a template or standard to follow.

SENATOR MEYER asked if private sector providers have been contacted about this legislation.

SENATOR MCGUIRE replied that the private sector was not contacted, but she said she sensed that people in the day care community would be in support of the bill because there is such a need for child care services. She thought the questions were fair. The rates in the bill are competitive. She stressed the need for providing more day care services.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI stated that SB 129 would be held in committee.

SB 179-MISSING VULNERABLE ADULT RESPONSE PLAN

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced the consideration of SB 179.

[10:04:18 AM](#)

SENATOR BETTYE DAVIS, sponsor of SB 179, said the legislation is similar to the Amber Alert, but is for vulnerable missing adults rather than children. About 20 states currently have similar legislation. The bill has a zero fiscal note.

[10:06:17 AM](#)

CELESTE HODGE, staff, Senator Bettye Davis, provided information on SB 179 on behalf of the sponsor. She read from the following sponsor statement:

SB 179 creates a new statewide alert system to help find vulnerable missing adults. The system, which is similar to the nationwide Amber Alert program, would help local law enforcement notify the public when a mentally or physically impaired Alaskan goes missing. According to the Alaska Commission on Aging, there were approximately 7,785 Alaskans suffering from Alzheimer's Disease and related dementia in 2010, and that number is expected to grow to more than 17,000 by 2030. Alaska has the fastest growing senior population in the nation.

Recently, in Fairbanks, a 63-year-old woman suffering from Alzheimer's Disease froze to death after she became disoriented while driving, ran out of gas, and tried walking several miles to seek help. This incident and several others like it demonstrate the need for an alert system to assist in the search for

missing vulnerable adults. When a vulnerable adult goes missing, his or her best chance of survival is if someone finds them within 24 to 48 hours. The bill calls for the Department of Military Affairs to coordinate with Department of Public Safety to create and implement prompt response and notification plans that would use a voluntary network of statewide and local newspapers as well as radio and television stations to rapidly alert the public that a vulnerable adult is missing. The bill also calls for both departments to establish standards on what triggers an alert and when a vulnerable adult is officially considered missing. This legislation would ensure the search for Alaska's most vulnerable citizens happens a lot faster. Currently, there are 28 states that have implemented or will implement Silver Alert programs, an increase in 10 states since the National Association of States for Aging and Disabilities last report.

MS. HODGES stated that the fiscal note has zero impact. She urged support of the bill.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI said there were ten people waiting to testify on the bill.

SENATOR GIESSEL asked if the alert system currently exists.

MS. HODGE said it did not.

10:10:00 AM

MICHAEL O'HARE, Deputy Director, Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department of Military and Veterans Administration (DMVA) Fort Richardson, Alaska, pointed out that there currently is an Amber Alert system in place in Alaska. It is a statewide relay system activated by the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

MR. O'HARE related that DMVA has no problem with the bill. The bill requires that DMVA cooperate with DPS to put together a Silver Alert plan. Both departments are on the Emergency Alert System (EAS) committee. The EAS is antiquated and may not work in remote areas; however, a new system is forthcoming which would allow for a regional alert approach.

SENATOR KOOKESH asked if DMVA supports the bill.

MR. O'HARE said absolutely.

[10:13:39 AM](#)

MARIE DARLIN, AARP, Juneau, Alaska, spoke in support of SB 179. She voiced concern about educating family caregivers about how to respond when an elderly person is missing.

[10:15:30 AM](#)

LESLIE THOMPSON, Planner I, Alaska Commission on Aging, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 179. She said that the number one concern of caregivers is what to do if a vulnerable adult goes missing. She noted that people with Alzheimer's are at great risk because they do wander.

LT. RODNEY DIAL, Alaska State Troopers, Ketchikan, Alaska, spoke in support of SB 179.

[10:18:22 AM](#)

PATRICK CUNNINGHAM, Professor, University of Alaska, Anchorage, testified in support of SB 179. He spoke of the benefits provided in the bill for adults with cognitive disorders, mental disabilities, and brain injuries.

NANCY BURKE, Trust Program Officer, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA), Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 179. She spoke of her organization's efforts to keep vulnerable adults who wander, safe.

[10:20:34 AM](#)

RANDI CHAPMAN, Director of State Affairs, National Alzheimer's Association, Washington, D.C., testified in support of SB 179. She emphasized the importance of local searching techniques.

DULCE NOBRE, Executive Director, Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, Palmer, Alaska, testified in support of SB 179. She spoke of the dangers of wandering behavior. The organization provides education and strategies for family care givers, but needs assistance with these situations.

[10:23:26 AM](#)

KATHRYN MONFREDA, Chief, Criminal Records & Identification Bureau, Department of Public Safety, offered to answer questions about the zero fiscal note for SB 179.

SENATOR GIESSEL noted the broadness of the bill with use of the language "vulnerable adults."

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI said a definition exists in statute.

MS. HODGE read the definition of vulnerable adult: "A vulnerable adult is classified under state law as a person who is at least 18 years old, and, because of a physical or mental impairment, is unable to meet the person's own needs or to seek help without assistance."

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI stated he would hold SB 179 in committee.

SCR 18-RAOUL WALLENBERG REMEMBRANCE DAY

[10:25:34 AM](#)

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced that SCR 18 was before the committee. The resolution designates August 4, 2012, as Raoul Wallenberg Remembrance Day.

SENATOR FRED DYSON, sponsor, SCR 18, introduced the resolution by quoting Solomon from 3,000 years ago, "If a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." He said that Raoul Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat who was responsible for saving over 100,000 Jewish people during the holocaust. The Guinness Book of Records says that no one in history saved more people than Raoul Wallenberg. August 12, 2012, will be the 100th Anniversary of Raoul Wallenberg's birth. Many Alaskans are interested in honoring this hero and no one objects to this proposal.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI noted that Raoul Wallenberg is one of only two persons to be made an honorary citizen of the United States.

[10:28:31 AM](#)

DAVID GOTTSTEIN, Anchorage, Alaska, testifying on his own behalf, spoke in support of SCR 18. He shared a personal story about Raoul Wallenberg.

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to report SCR 18 out of committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note.

CHAIR WIELECHOWSKI announced that without objection, SCR 18 moved from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

[10:30:32 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee adjourned at 10:30 a.m.