

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 22, 2013
1:35 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Austerman called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Alan Austerman, Co-Chair
Representative Mia Costello
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Les Gara
Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Lindsey Holmes
Representative Cathy Munoz
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair
Representative Mark Neuman, Vice-Chair
Representative Steve Thompson

ALSO PRESENT

Michael Paschall, Staff, Representative Eric Feige; Daniel George, Staff, Representative Bill Stoltze; Representative Dan Saddler, Sponsor.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Jeff Tucker, Alaska Fire Chiefs Association, North Pole; Edward Athey, President, Alaska State Firefighters Association, Seward.

SUMMARY

HB 84 MILITARY TRAINING CREDIT/TEMP. LICENSE

CSHB 84(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one new zero

fiscal note from the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and three previously published zero fiscal notes: FN1 (EED), FN2 (LWF), and FN3 (UA).

HB 113 ALASKA FIRE STANDARDS COUNCIL

HB 113 was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one new zero fiscal note from the House Finance Committee for the Department of Public Safety.

#hb113

HOUSE BILL NO. 113

"An Act relating to the membership of the Alaska Fire Standards Council."

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MICHAEL PASCHALL, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE ERIC FEIGE, communicated that HB 113 had been requested by the Alaska Fire Standards Council. He disclosed that he is an assistant fire chief in Alaska. The bill would adjust the membership of the council and would change the membership appointment qualifications.

Mr. Paschall detailed that the council currently had 11 members including two chief administrative officers or fire chiefs from local government, four representatives of fire fighters (including one from the Alaska State Fire Fighters Association (ASFA)), two volunteer fire fighters (one from a community of 2,500 or less and one from a community with a population greater than 2,500), two members of the public (one from a community of 2,500 or less and one from a community with a population greater than 2,500), and the state fire marshal or designee. The bill would require one of the four fire fighters to be a representative from the Alaska Professional Firefighters Association (APFA); the association represented approximately 500 career fire fighters. The bill would also add an additional member who would represent the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association (AFCA); AFCA represented fire chiefs throughout the state. The legislation specified that the organizations would recommend three individuals to the governor and the governor would appoint a member from each of the organizations.

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Mr. Paschall explained that the purpose of the process was to allow the statewide organizations to have a voice on the council.

Representative Costello MOVED HB 113 before the committee.

Co-Chair Austerman OBJECTED for discussion.

Representative Holmes pointed to Section 2 of the bill related to how the members were elected. She asked how members were currently selected.

Mr. Paschall deferred the question to the executive director of council.

Co-Chair Austerman noted the public testimony would be held shortly.

Representative Holmes referenced Section 2 related to the governor appointment of a member from a list of at least three nominees. She noted that some of the subsections referred to [fire] associations and some did not. She looked at the subsections related to public members, volunteer firefighters from communities, and the state fire marshal; she wondered where the list of nominees would come from for appointment.

Mr. Paschall replied that the current members were appointed through public notice. He relayed that all of the members would submit their names in a formal application and would then be selected through the governor's vetting process. He furthered that the AFCA, ASFA, and APFA would submit a list to the governor for the appointment of a representative from the three organizations.

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Representative Holmes asked if it was standard for the governor to have the ability to reject a list and request a new one.

Mr. Paschall answered that he could not speak for all organizations, but he had seen the language used in other board nomination processes. He stated that the provision

gave the governor the power to refuse the suggested members.

Representative Gara wondered about support for the legislation.

Mr. Paschall replied that the packet should contain a letter of support from AFCA. There were testifiers online to speak in support of the legislation. He was not aware of opposition to the bill from any of the fire fighter organizations.

JEFF TUCKER, ALASKA FIRE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION, NORTH POLE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the legislation. He explained that the bill would give AFCA, ASFA, and APFA a seat at the table and a greater voice on the council.

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Representative Gara asked about Mr. Tucker's affiliation. Mr. Tucker replied that he represented AFCA. He clarified that Edward Athey was also online and represented the ASFA.

Co-Chair Austerman CLOSED public testimony.

Representative Gara asked to hear from ASFA.

EDWARD ATHEY, PRESIDENT, ALASKA STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, SEWARD (via teleconference), testified in favor of the legislation. He stated that the council had a tall order to fill and ASFA would be happy to be a part of the process.

Representative Gara asked if ASFA was the statewide organization representing fire fighter unions. Mr. Athey replied in the negative. He relayed that ASFA represented the volunteer component of fire fighters statewide.

Representative Gara requested to hear from the paid fire fighters organization. Mr. Paschall responded that Tom Wescott had testified in support for the legislation to the previous committee. Representative Gara asked who Mr. Wescott worked for. Mr. Paschall replied that Mr. Wescott worked for APFA, the organization representing the unions. Representative Gara requested a copy of Mr. Wescott's testimony. Mr. Paschall replied in the affirmative.

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Representative Edgmon surmised that the consensus behind the bill was to make the council more diverse and to make it more oriented towards volunteer fire fighters. He referred to testimony that the bill would take away the requirement of two fire chiefs tied to local government. Mr. Paschall answered that he had raised the issue with the council. He pointed to Chief Tucker as an example; he was a fire chief of a non-profit organization under contract with the Fairbanks North Star Borough to provide fire services. The bill would remove the question of whether or not Mr. Tucker was the fire chief of a municipal fire department.

Co-Chair Austerman directed attention to the fiscal note.

Representative Costello pointed to the zero fiscal note from Department of Public Safety.

Representative Costello MOVED to REPORT HB 113 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

HB 113 was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one new zero fiscal note from the House Finance Committee for the Department of Public Safety.

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AT EASE

[1:55:12 PM](#)

RECONVENED

#hb84

HOUSE BILL NO. 84

"An Act relating to applying military education, training, and service credit to occupational licensing and certain postsecondary education and employment training requirements; providing for a temporary occupational license for qualified military service members; and providing for an effective date."

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DANIEL GEORGE, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE BILL STOLTZE, explained the changes in the CS for HB 84. The language "during regularly scheduled meetings that are" was inserted on page 5, lines 28 through 31 of the legislation. The CS also changed the effective date on page 5, line 31 to 2014.

Representative Costello MOVED to ADOPT the proposed committee substitute for HB 84, Work Draft 28-LS0357\U (Mischel, 3/21/13).

Co-Chair Austerman OBJECTED for discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER, SPONSOR, pointed to a concern that had been raised in the previous meeting. He clarified that the bill would not give military servicepersons the right to a temporary license unless the training they received leading to a degree, diploma, or certificate met the standards for an equivalent license or certificate of technical training. He referred to testimony from the prior meeting that the issue was not a problem. He detailed that the Alaska Nurses Association had testified that military nurses were licensed Registered Nurses. Military trained Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) qualified for equivalent temporary civilian LPN licenses and military medics received certification as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT).

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Representative Costello asked for clarification that the CS would allow for a zero fiscal note because it moved the effective date to a future date when all boards and commissions that were required to have two meetings to write regulations would happen on a regularly scheduled timeframe as opposed to a quicker timeframe under the original bill.

Representative Saddler replied in the affirmative. He added that language on page 5 of the legislation directed the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development to do what it could to write regulations when it could (or to lay the groundwork).

Representative Gara asked for the difference between the two classifications of nurses. Representative Saddler replied that RNs were highly trained and that LPN requirements were slightly less stringent.

Representative Gara asked if the certificates were completed in four years and two years for RNs and LPNs respectively. Representative Saddler was unsure about the time required for certification.

Representative Costello discussed the four zero fiscal notes from the Departments of Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Department of Education and Early Development, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the University of Alaska.

Co-Chair Austerman WITHDREW his OBJECTION to the adoption of the CS. There being NO OBJECTION, Work Draft 28-LS0357\U was ADOPTED.

Representative Costello MOVED to REPORT CSHB 84(FIN) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSHB 84(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one new zero fiscal note from the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development and three previously published zero fiscal notes: FN1 (EED), FN2 (LWF), and FN3 (UA).

Co-Chair Austerman discussed the schedule for the following week.

Representative Wilson clarified that HB 74 (the companion bill to SB 23) had been changed to address Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, (AIDEA) powers; whereas SB 23 continued to address a liquid natural gas trucking project.

ADJOURNMENT

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The meeting was adjourned at 2:02 p.m.