

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 20, 2014

8:06 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bob Lynn, Chair
Representative Wes Keller, Vice Chair
Representative Lynn Gattis
Representative Shelley Hughes
Representative Doug Isaacson
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Charisse Millett

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 262

"An Act exempting the Public Defender Agency and the office of public advocacy from certain provisions of the State Procurement Code; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HB 262 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 217

"An Act establishing November 14 each year as Dr. Walter Soboleff Day."

- MOVED HB 217 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 262

SHORT TITLE: PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION: PDA, OPA

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) HOLMES

01/21/14	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/17/14
01/21/14	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/14	(H)	STA
02/20/14	(H)	STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

BILL: HB 217

SHORT TITLE: DR. WALTER SOBOLEFF DAY

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) KREISS-TOMKINS, P.WILSON, MUNOZ, KERTTULA

01/21/14 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/14
01/21/14 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/14 (H) STA
02/20/14 (H) STA AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE LINDSEY HOLMES
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HB 262.

MIKE BARNHILL, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Administration (DOA)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained the reason behind the proposal under HB 262 to exempt the Office of Public Assistance (OPA) and the Public Defender Agency (PDA) from a requirement related to the procurement code.

RICK ALLEN, Director
Anchorage Office
Office of Public Advocacy (OPA)
Anchorage, Alaska
Department of Administration

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 262.

QUINLAN STEINER, Director
Central Office
Public Defender Agency (PDA)
Department of Administration (DOA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered a brief comment during the hearing on HB 262.

ROBERT MARTIN, Vice-Chair
Board of Trustees
Sealaska Heritage Institute
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Had his written testimony paraphrased by his brother, William Martin, on behalf of the Sealaska Heritage Institute, during the hearing on HB 217.

WILLIAM MARTIN, Grand President
Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 217.

SELINA EVERSON, Member
Executive Committee
Alaska Native Sisterhood (ANS)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 217.

PETER NAOROZ, President/General Manager
Kootznooowoo, Inc.
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 217.

SUSETTNA KING
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 217.

ROSS SOBOLEFF
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified on behalf of himself in support of HB 217.

JANET (SOBOLEFF) BURKE
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 217.

WALTER SOBOLEFF, JR.
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 217.

SASHA SOBOLEFF
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 217.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:06:31 AM](#)

CHAIR BOB LYNN called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:06 a.m. Representatives Keller, Isaacson, Gattis, Hughes, and Lynn were present at the call to order. Representative Kreiss-Tomkins arrived as the meeting was in progress.

8:06:33 AM

HB 262-PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION: PDA, OPA

8:06:59 AM

CHAIR LYNN announced the first order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 262, "An Act exempting the Public Defender Agency and the office of public advocacy from certain provisions of the State Procurement Code; and providing for an effective date."

8:07:10 AM

REPRESENTATIVE LINDSEY HOLMES, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 262. She explained that the proposed legislation would clarify how the state's procurement code applies to the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) and the Public Defender Agency (PDA). She said those are the state agencies that act as defense attorneys representing indigent clients in criminal cases. They are paid by the state through the Department of Administration. She said in most cases, "the other side" is the Department of Law (DOL). She said there is question as to when those agencies are subject to the procurement code and when they are not. Under Section 1, of HB 262, neither OPA nor PDA would have to obtain permission from the attorney general to hire expert witnesses or counsel, which would put both agencies on a level playing field with DOL.

8:09:56 AM

MIKE BARNHILL, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Administration (DOA), said prior to his current three years as deputy commissioner, he was an assistant attorney general (AG) with the Department of Law. While there, he said, he used the procurement code frequently to retain the services of outside counsel. He stated that in the field of law, one attorney does not equal another attorney. He explained that the field is highly specialized; one cannot get a defense attorney as representation on a tax case, for example. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of tailoring the procurement to apply in highly specialized situations.

MR. BARNHILL said Section 2, of HB 262, is the limited competition provision. He said normally, for all state agencies, permission must be obtained from the chief procurement officer in the Division of General Services, within the

Department of Law. For legal service, one must go to the AG to get permission to use the limited competition statute. He said that is very effective for retaining specialized counsel. He said under HB 262, OPA and PDA could go to the AG to get the permission for "limited competition procurement." Deputy Commissioner Barnhill said he used the limited competition procurement many times. He said it was very effective; he got great counsel to represent the state. He continued as follows:

The most significant one was the counsel we retained in the lawsuit against Mercer for actuarial negligence. And I can tell you with a high degree of certainty that the outcome of that case was entirely dependent on the counsel we selected. The ability to get the right counsel to fit the case you have is entirely consistent with our rules of professional responsibility. If we just had a generic procurement code that required us to go the lowest bidder without consideration of specialization, we would routinely be hiring the wrong counsel for the wrong case.

[8:12:26 AM](#)

MR. BARNHILL said under HB 262, OPA and PDA would be in the exact position as DOL with respect to retention of counsel, professional services under the limited competition statute, and the retention of expert witnesses. He explained that under the existing procurement code, DOL is exempt when it comes to hiring expert witnesses. He emphasized that "if the field of law is specialized, the field of professional witnesses is extremely specialized." For example, he said some witnesses are experts on tire treads, while others are blood splatter experts. He said he believes that is why DOL has had that exemption. He suggested that when AS 36.30 was enacted, it was probably an oversight that the criminal defense side of the equation was overlooked. The proposed legislation would restore that by exempting both OPA and PDA so that those agencies can get whatever expert they need without having to go through the procurement code. He noted that the bill has a zero fiscal note.

[8:14:02 AM](#)

MR. BARNHILL, in response to Chair Lynn, said in order to get representation by either OPA or PDA at the public's expense, a person would have to be indigent. If that indigent person

needed an expert witness in order to determine the facts in a case, he would then be provided with one.

[8:15:22 AM](#)

MR. BARNHILL, in response to a question from Representative Keller, offered his understanding that the point at which someone would be considered indigent is decided by the courts.

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER said it is not clear how changing the authority for the contracting addresses some of the concerns of the audit and how it relates to the fiscal note.

[8:16:53 AM](#)

MR. BARNHILL said the audit found that OPA was not complying with the procurement code. Further, the audit found that there was failure in contract oversight. He said the latter is not addressed in HB 262, and DOA filed a response with the Division of Legislative Audit and could provide that response to the committee. He said DOA's oversight is broad; it includes the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV), OPA, PDA, and the core administrative entities. Within this, he said, DOA has the Division of Administrative Services, which provides services including contract oversight to a number of its divisions. In this particular context, DOA's Division of Administrative Services was not providing contract management oversight, and the recommendation of the Division of Legislative Audit is that it do so. He related that DOA has begun to provide more oversight, but it is a large task to do so for every division. He stated that DOA believes it is important to effectively monitor and manage contracts "across the departments," but it will have to observe the oversight to determine its effectiveness.

[8:19:04 AM](#)

MR. BARNHILL, with respect to procurement, stated his belief that OPA and PDA did not interpret the procurement code in the same way that the Division of Legislative Audit did. He explained that [OPA and PDA] took the position that the AG could not control how they procured legal counsel or how they would procure expert witnesses. He said, "I mean, as a matter of professional responsibility, as the sponsor indicated, if you're adverse to a party, you would never dream of going to the adverse side to ask for permission to retain counsel." Further, he stated that retaining an expert witness who is not the best

for a particular case could have implications with respect to "your duty of zealous advocacy." He said, "I think it just simply didn't occur to them that the procurement code wouldn't apply in this way." He concluded, "So, what we're doing is we're changing the law so we have a common understanding of how the procurement code applies with respect to outside counsel, with respect to conflict counsel, with respect to expert witnesses."

[8:20:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER said it makes sense, because DOA handles the defense and the prosecutors are in DOL; [the state] must do everything it can to avoid a conflict of interest. He indicated that legislators realize that "we end up paying for the defense and the prosecution," as well as the judge and court room. He emphasized the importance of not making changes without following to proper process.

MR. BARNHILL noted that Rick Allen, the director of OPA, had instituted an initiative to help control costs better within the office, particularly when it comes to retention of outside counsel; he has had regulations drafted that provide case caps by type of case, with legitimate escape clauses. He said he thinks it is an excellent approach.

[8:22:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HUGHES asked if Mr. Allen might have anything to add to the subject of cost control.

[8:23:18 AM](#)

RICK ALLEN, Director, Anchorage Office, Office of Public Advocacy (OPA), stated that the implementation of the aforementioned regulations has been a "game changer" for OPA. He said when he became director of OPA he found there were no controls in place on how much contractors were being paid on cases, which posed a series of problems, one of the major ones being that without parameters on contractors, it is impossible for anyone serving as director of OPA to maintain budgetary predictability. He said the caps have been in place for about a year now, which has been a big change for the contractors; however, he said he thinks everyone has "settled in" and realizes "this is the way we're going to do business now," and it has made a big difference for OPA's bottom line. In response to a follow-up question from Representative Hughes, he said he

thinks the quality of the expert witnesses and legal counsel is adequate with the caps in place. He echoed Mr. Barnhill's notation that there is always a release valve on the caps, which makes it possible to adjust the money spent on a case. He offered an explanation of the adjustment process.

[8:25:38 AM](#)

MR. ALLEN, in response to Chair Lynn, said when the state pays for a person's services, then that person does not get to choose who his/her expert witness or lawyer is, although OPA will take the input of its clients into consideration. Most of the decisions about how the criminal case proceeds are made by the attorney.

CHAIR LYNN surmised that a poor person "is not going to get the dream team."

MR. ALLEN responded that he has practiced in other parts of the United States before coming back home to Alaska, and he emphasized he is "very, very comfortable with the standard we are able to provide." He expressed pride in the work that OPA's staff and contractors do. He ventured that Mr. Steiner from the Public Defender Agency would say the same. He stated that some of the finest criminal defense attorneys and appellate writers work for OPA or PDA; therefore, an indigent person will be assigned a quality attorney and the resources needed to properly defend the case.

[8:28:13 AM](#)

QUINLAN STEINER, Director, Central Office, Public Defender Agency (PDA), opined that Deputy Commissioner Barnhill had articulated the concerns address through the proposed HB 262.

[8:28:51 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 262.

[8:29:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS said HB 262 seems like a simple bill that would clean-up "what we already do." She said experts in their field representing those who cannot afford representation seems to make sense, and "it directs it." She stated her support of HB 262.

[8:29:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER pointed out that the House State Affairs Standing Committee is the only committee of referral for HB 262, which he opined is appropriate, because this is an issue about contract management and administration.

[8:30:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER moved to report HB 262 out of committee with individual recommendations and the attached zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HB 262 was reported out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

[8:30:41 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:31 a.m. to 8:33 a.m.

HB 217-DR. WALTER SOBOLEFF DAY

[8:32:57 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN announced the final order of business was HOUSE BILL NO. 217, "An Act establishing November 14 each year as Dr. Walter Soboleff Day."

[8:33:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS, as joint prime sponsor, introduced HB 217, which he said would designate November Fourteenth as Dr. Walter Soboleff Day. He said the proposed legislation is similar to legislation that the committee heard last year recognizing the late former Governor Jay Hammond, because both pieces of legislation honor great Alaskans. He said the late Dr. Soboleff is a revered figure in Southeast Alaska and throughout Alaska in Native communities. He said he thinks the testimony that the committee will hear today from family members and other people who knew Dr. Soboleff will speak to that.

[8:34:27 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GATTIS said she means no disrespect to Dr. Soboleff, but wants to know if Southeast Alaska could honor a great Alaskan without proposing a bill.

8:34:55 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS explained that there was a grassroots movement in Southeast Alaska to create this particular means of honoring Dr. Soboleff, who was a towering figure in the Native community. He said there are other ways to honor someone; there is a building currently being erected in downtown Juneau by the Sealaska Center, which will be called the Dr. Walter Soboleff Cultural Center.

8:35:42 AM

REPRESENTATIVE HUGHES asked what might happen on November 14 if Dr. Walter Soboleff Day is established.

8:36:00 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KREISS-TOMKINS gave the example of Elizabeth Peratrovich Day, which is in November, and which prompts schools to study the history of anti-discrimination legislation in the state or territory of Alaska. He said it could be a way for schools and institutions to honor and observe what the person represented.

8:36:56 AM

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER related that he had the honor of meeting Dr. Soboleff, and he was impressed by the man's "peaceful, wise demeanor." He thanked the bill sponsor for bringing forward HB 217. In response to the chair, he said he had met Dr. Soboleff at his home in Juneau on a social occasion.

8:38:42 AM

ROBERT MARTIN, Vice-Chair, Board of Trustees, Sealaska Heritage Institute, had his testimony paraphrased by his brother, William Martin, on behalf of the Sealaska Heritage Institute. Mr. Robert Martin's written testimony read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

My name is Robert Martin, and I am a member of the Board of Trustees of Sealaska Heritage Institute.

In some ways, it's difficult to explain why Walter Soboleff was a great man. We just know that he was. He wasn't a lawmaker who passed landmark legislation or a maverick who changed the financial future of the

state. Rather...he was a person who quietly led by example and whose small acts of kindness made profound and lifelong impressions on the people he touched.

He was wise, humble, and kind and as Alaska's first native ordained priest, he used those gifts to bring comfort to people across the state - and to unite people during difficult times. He was the kind of person we might all aspire to be - an ideal human being.

He was dear to the Sealaska family. He served as Sealaska Heritage Institute's chair almost as long as the institute has been around. His guidance prompted the institute to make Native language revitalization a priority 20 years ago. As a fluent Tlingit speaker, he worked with language students up until the last days of his long life.

He cherished his countless non-Native friends and belonged to many civic organizations. He was the first pastor in Juneau to open his church to all people - Natives and non-Natives alike - at a time when segregation was the norm. His delivery was low key and his message simple: "love your fellow folk, for love is God." This cost him dearly: his church proved so popular with non-Natives a political decision was made to shut it down. But as one person said: Dr. Soboleff found other ways to minister to the people. He was a spiritual leader who didn't need a building.

We named a building in his honor anyway. At his memorial in 2011, we announced that Sealaska Heritage Institute's new cultural center would be named for him. We see the Walter Soboleff Center as a physical manifestation of the things he held dear - the perpetuation and teaching of Native languages, history, and cultures - in a place where all people - Natives and non-Natives alike - will be welcome.

Please support HB 217 and make November 14 Dr. Walter Soboleff Day.

WILLIAM MARTIN, Grand President, Alaska Native Brotherhood (ANB), recollected that as a young man, growing up in Kake, Alaska, his parents and grandparents would sit by the radio on

Sunday mornings and listen to Dr. Walter Soboleff's message, which was delivered in Tlingit. He said the people in all the villages of Southeast Alaska would make time to listen to Dr. Soboleff's message.

[8:42:33 AM](#)

MR. W. MARTIN, in response to Chair Lynn, offered his understanding that the reason for the shutdown of Mr. Soboleff's church, referred to in Mr. R. Martin's testimony, was because it became so popular that "the regular church that the Non-Natives went to wasn't doing quite as well" as a result.

[8:42:58 AM](#)

SELINA EVERSON, Member, Executive Committee, Alaska Native Sisterhood (ANS), explained that her membership in the Executive Committee means that she once served as grand president. She said Dr. Soboleff was originally from Killisnoo, Alaska, outside of Angoon, and he meant everything to the Native communities. She said she grew up knowing Dr. Soboleff, who performed the marriages of the Native people and offered comfort to those in sorrow. She said, "He stood by us." She acknowledged that there is a building in downtown Juneau that is being erected in his name, but said all Native Alaskans bear Dr. Soboleff's name in their hearts. She emphasized her thanks to the sponsors of [HB 217]. She added, "It's like somebody uplifted our heads like he did by his very birth, his dedication to his church and his people." She thanked the committee in Tlingit.

[8:45:17 AM](#)

MS. EVERSON, in response to Chair Lynn, said Dr. Soboleff was 102 when he died.

[8:45:53 AM](#)

PETER NAOROZ, President/General Manager, Kootznoowoo, Inc., said Kootznoowoo, Inc., is the village corporation for the community of Angoon, Alaska. He related that in the past he had been recruited by Byron Mallott to leave the Virginia retirement system to come work for the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation. He said he did not know how much Alaska meant to him until he met Dr. Soboleff, who he said was a past president of Kootznoowoo, Inc., and is its president emeritus. He said Kootznoowoo, Inc., has approximately 1,000 shareholders, a third of which live in Juneau. He said Dr. Soboleff mentored him and

set one goal for him to accomplish: to make sure the energy costs in Angoon were low enough that a bakery could be built, in which bread would be baked for all of Alaska; a lofty goal he indicated stood for providing "the economic engine to contribute to the overall state in a meaningful way." Mr. Naoroz noted that Dr. Soboleff was born in 1908, shortly after the Tongass was made a national forest. He commented that the Tongass has much changed.

[8:49:01 AM](#)

MR. NAOROZ referred to a piece written by Dr. Soboleff for the Juneau Empire, [dated Tuesday, April 8, 2008, and included in the committee packet], in which he talks about the economics of building homes and societies. He indicated that Dr. Soboleff wrote the piece after asking him how he could help him reach his goals. He said Dr. Soboleff also introduced him to John Sandor, a person interested in the resources of the state. He talked about the Tongass, in terms of broken promises and moving "from here to there in a positive way." He concluded, "I would take this day and mark it on the calendar very boldly, so everyone can remember ... where we come from and what we still need to do."

[8:51:45 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HUGHES speculated that those living in Southeast Alaska would be aware of the aforementioned building being constructed to honor Dr. Soboleff, but people in the rest of the state may not. She said she thinks what she has heard Dr. Soboleff stood for would be good for children around the state to learn about. She said for that reason she supports HB 217.

[8:52:25 AM](#)

MR. NAOROZ added that not only was Mr. Soboleff a gentle person, civil rights advocate, and spiritual leader, he was also a businessman.

[8:53:29 AM](#)

SUSETTNA KING said she is originally from Angoon, Alaska; her parents are John and Theresa Howard. She said, "We spent a lot of time with Dr. Soboleff and his wife and some of the grandkids that went over to Tenakee."

[8:54:36 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 8:55 a.m.

8:55:08 AM

MS. KING said a person growing up in a village does not really know what is happening until he/she steps outside the village. She said Dr. Soboleff prepared her village for what it needed to do when he got older and moved away. She said he put God first. She related a story about taking speed boats to Tenakee and choosing not to race one year, because she had always won in the past, to which Dr. Soboleff asked her what she would have done if she had raced and someone had beat her. She told him she probably would have come back the next year and beat that person, to which Dr. Soboleff pointed out that she had not put herself "out there."

MS. KING said she entered into the Alaska Native Sisterhood when she moved to Juneau. She talked about issues that Alaska Natives deal with and opined that it is nice when people come together to deal with those issues. She said at one ANS convention, Dr. Soboleff invited her to share her thoughts. When she told him she still had a lot to learn, he told her that it helps to surround oneself with good people. She said Dr. Soboleff told her that she "is not here by accident" and one day she would be ready to run for office.

8:59:31 AM

MS. KING talked about how great Dr. Soboleff was and how he lived to serve others without regard to the color of anyone's skin. She indicated that she takes comfort from knowing he believed in so many people and saw the best in them. She said everyone should know that; Dr. Soboleff's history should be shared "so everybody could want that." Regarding discrimination, she said, "We've come a long way, but it's still so silent." She said she wished she would have asked Dr. Soboleff how people can move away from the silent discrimination. She said in her heart she knows Dr. Soboleff "left a lot of himself in a lot of all of us." One way to carry on his legacy, she said, is to allow the entire state to know what kind of man Dr. Soboleff was.

9:01:49 AM

CHAIR LYNN concurred with the statement that Ms. King said Dr. Soboleff had made that no one is here by accident.

9:03:32 AM

ROSS SOBOLEFF relayed that [although he is staff to a legislator] he was testifying on behalf of himself. He shared his Tlingit and Haida names. He introduced his siblings present and expressed thanks for the proposed legislation's hearing and sponsorship. He said he provided a copy of Dr. Soboleff's obituary to give the committee a sense of what his statewide impact was. Mr. R. Soboleff quoted Abraham Lincoln as follows: "If you would win a man to your cause, first convince him that you are his sincere friend." He said Dr. Soboleff was a great admirer of President Lincoln, and he suggested considering what Dr. Soboleff's cause was.

MR. R. SOBOLEFF said Dr. Soboleff served as minister of Memorial Presbyterian Church - considered a Native church - until 1962, and he ventured that the proposal to have Dr. Walter Soboleff Day would not be a consideration today if the man's reach had ended there. He contended that by the end of Dr. Soboleff's ministry, the church had become a church where all were welcome. He said Dr. Soboleff told him a person has to feed his/her spirit, and he thinks Dr. Soboleff did that in many walks of life: in his church, through his service, and sometimes as chaplain at the legislature.

MR. R. SOBOLEFF stated, "In the diverse society of Alaska, he cast a wide net and a long shadow." He suggested Alaskans remember that Dr. Soboleff was welcoming, inclusive, and lived his life in many communities, including: Native, Non-Native, university and academic, military, business, and government. He further suggested that the proposed day would be used to remember how Dr. Soboleff lived his life with tolerance, grace, and courage, and to talk about how Alaskans are living and working together.

9:08:06 AM

MR. R. SOBOLEFF said Walter Soboleff put together a list of what has popularly become known as "Native values." It was an articulation of the values and standards by which Dr. Soboleff observed the Alaska Native community had lived for generations. He said he had given a copy of the list to the committee, and he recommended anyone looking at the list should read it out loud, because "that's the way that he wrote." He said he has heard many stories in the halls of the capitol of people who have done great or small things that have left a mark on the person

telling the story. He posited that everyone has those people in their lives; people who taught them something or meant something. He said, "We have a term for these people - a compliment that we give ... in our state [to those] that we consider the best of the best: We call them 'true Alaskans.'" He suggested revisiting the list of Native values and considering it an articulation of some of the values and standards by which a "true Alaskan" is measured. He stated that Dr. Soboleff believed that good values are good for everyone. He said perhaps on Dr. Walter Soboleff Day, Alaskans can also remember and honor "the great men and women who shaped the human landscape of our great state" and "transformed Alaska into the place that we so passionately call our home."

[9:10:48 AM](#)

JANET (SOBOLEFF) BURKE opined that the proposed legislation is "wonderful," and said "we" would be honored if the state would recognize [Dr. Soboleff's] birth date. She said toward the end of Dr. Soboleff's life, he moved in with her and her husband. She said there are many funny stories, because Dr. Soboleff had a great sense of humor. She related a story in which he made her sister and her laugh. She said he was not bashful about speaking "at anything." She said she knew Dr. Soboleff as "Daddy," and she also was aware that "he knew everybody and everybody knew him." In response to Chair Lynn, she related that she is the eldest of four children, followed by her brothers, Sasha, Walter, Jr., and Ross.

[9:13:15 AM](#)

WALTER SOBOLEFF, JR., asked, "What more can you say about the good doctor?" He added, "I just want to thank you for supporting my dad." He said thank you in Tlingit.

[9:13:43 AM](#)

SASHA SOBOLEFF expressed thanks for the bill hearing and its sponsors. He acknowledged those who ask why Dr. Soboleff should be honored as proposed under HB 217 as having asked a good question. He said, "It does merit some understanding about the depth of this person or any person." He said he would spend the month of July with his father in Tenakee, and one time, John Rockefeller and his family showed up at the doorstep for a visit. He said Dr. Soboleff served on the United States Air Force Academy Board, which screened candidates for the Air Force. He indicated that [he and his siblings] learned to

behave themselves, because no matter where they went, their father was approached and welcomed. He said the University of Alaska Fairbanks offered a professorship to Dr. Soboleff, to be the director of its first Native Studies program, and he touched the lives of the many students who traveled from their homes to learn from him. He opined, "And that says something about the gravity, the insight, that this particular individual has." He opined that [setting aside November 14 as Dr. Walter Soboleff Day] says, in today's society, that the man was a person who stood for something. In conclusion, Mr. S. Soboleff talked about Dr. Soboleff's belief in God and his encouragement to people to pray and read the Holy Bible. He said his father loved God and stood for the doctrine of ["Love your neighbor as yourself."]

[9:18:03 AM](#)

CHAIR LYNN, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 217.

[9:18:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KELLER moved to report HB 217 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection, HB 217 was reported out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

[9:19:11 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:19 a.m.