

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

April 5, 2013
8:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Senator Mike Dunleavy, Vice Chair
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Berta Gardner

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Bert Stedman

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 82

"An Act providing for public school funding for telecommunications or Internet services."

- MOVED CSSB 82(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 87(FIN)

"An Act relating to the governing board and duties of the special education service agency; relating to allocations to the special education service agency; extending the special education service agency; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SCS CSHB 87(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 6

"An Act providing for funding for school lunch and breakfast; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SB 6 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 91

"An Act relating to hazing."

- HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 180

"An Act relating to the Alaska Challenge Youth Academy; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD AND HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 82

SHORT TITLE: BROADBAND DISCOUNTS FOR SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) OLSON

03/19/13	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/19/13	(S)	EDC, FIN
03/25/13	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/25/13	(S)	Heard & Held
03/25/13	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/03/13	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
04/03/13	(S)	Heard & Held
04/03/13	(S)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/05/13	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HB 87

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) HIGGINS

01/28/13	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/28/13	(H)	EDC, FIN
02/15/13	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/15/13	(H)	Scheduled But Not Heard
02/18/13	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM CAPITOL 106
02/18/13	(H)	Moved CSHB 87(EDC) Out of Committee
02/18/13	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
02/22/13	(H)	EDC RPT CS(EDC) NT 5DP
02/22/13	(H)	DP: SEATON, P.WILSON, LEDOUX, SADDLER, GATTIS
02/22/13	(H)	LETTER OF INTENT WITH EDC REPORT
03/14/13	(H)	FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
03/14/13	(H)	Heard & Held
03/14/13	(H)	MINUTE(FIN)
03/19/13	(H)	FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519
03/19/13	(H)	Moved CSHB 87(FIN) Out of Committee
03/19/13	(H)	MINUTE(FIN)
03/20/13	(H)	FIN RPT CS(FIN) NT 8DP 2AM
03/20/13	(H)	DP: HOLMES, MUNOZ, NEUMAN, THOMPSON, T.WILSON, COSTELLO, STOLTZE, AUSTERMAN
03/20/13	(H)	AM: KAWASAKI, GARA
04/02/13	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)
04/02/13	(H)	VERSION: CSHB 87(FIN)
04/02/13	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/02/13	(S)	EDC, FIN

04/03/13 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
04/03/13 (S) Heard & Held
04/03/13 (S) MINUTE(EDC)

BILL: SB 6

SHORT TITLE: FUNDING FOR SCHOOL MEALS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) WIELECHOWSKI

01/16/13 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/13
01/16/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/13 (S) EDC, FIN
04/01/13 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
04/01/13 (S) Heard & Held
04/01/13 (S) MINUTE(EDC)
04/05/13 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 91

SHORT TITLE: HAZING

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) FAIRCLOUGH

03/29/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/29/13 (S) EDC, JUD
04/05/13 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HB 180

SHORT TITLE: MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY

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

03/20/13 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/20/13 (H) MLV
03/26/13 (H) MLV AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 106
03/26/13 (H) Moved Out of Committee
03/26/13 (H) MINUTE(MLV)
03/27/13 (H) MLV RPT 7DP
03/27/13 (H) DP: REINBOLD, HUGHES, HIGGINS,
GRUENBERG, SADDLER, LEDOUX, FOSTER
04/01/13 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)
04/01/13 (H) VERSION: HB 180
04/02/13 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/02/13 (S) STA
04/03/13 (S) STA REFERRAL WAIVED
04/03/13 (S) EDC REFERRAL ADDED
04/05/13 (S) EDC AT 8:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

DAVID SCOTT, Staff

Senator Donny Olson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained the changes in version 0 of SB 82 on behalf of the sponsor.

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 82, HB 87, and SB 91.

LINDA THIBODEAU, Director
Division of Libraries Archives, and Museums
Department of Education and Early Development (DEED)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 82.

TIM LAMKIN, Staff
Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information about three changes made by the SCS for HB 87.

PATRICK PILLAI, Executive Director
Special Education Service Agency (SESA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information related to HB 87.

ERIC GEBHART, Chair
Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
Nenana, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the discussion of HB 87.

REPRESENTATIVE PETE HIGGINS
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 87.

MIKE COONS, representing himself
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 6.

DEAN HAMBURG, Chair
Alaska School Nutrition Association
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 6.

LEDONNE DRUCE, Vice President
NEA Alaska
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 6.

SENATOR ANNA FAIRCLOUGH
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 91.

GARY MATHEWS, Director
Alaska School Activities Association
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 91.

RYAN ULSEP, Principal
Juneau Douglas High School
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 91.

NORM POLLARD, Dean of Students
Alfred University
Alfred, New York

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented information related to SB 91.

REPRESENTATIVE TAMMIE WILSON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of HB 180.

MCHUGH PIERRE, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Addressed changes to the fiscal note for HB 180.

ADJUTANT GENERAL THOMAS KATKUS, Commissioner
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information related to HB 180.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:00:30 AM](#)

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Gardner, Huggins, Dunleavy, and Chair Stevens.

SB 82-BROADBAND DISCOUNTS FOR SCHOOLS

8:00:49 AM

CHAIR STEVENS announced the consideration of SB 82. He noted that CSSB 82, version O, was before the committee. He said the fiscal note was updated and is now about \$11 million.

8:01:06 AM

DAVID SCOTT, Staff, Senator Donny Olson, explained the changes in version O of SB 82 on behalf of the sponsor. He stated that one-third of all schools in Alaska are below 10 mega-bits per second, roughly 170 schools. The fiscal note reflects the expense of roughly \$7.3 million to bring those schools up to the minimum of 10 mega-bits per second. Under the current E-rate Program, for every dollar spent in Alaska, the Universal Service Fund pays \$4. That totals about \$29 million leveraged for additional internet services for schools.

He stated that the increase in broadband is necessary to assist with distance delivery courses and on-line state assessments. He concluded that SB 82 would bring all schools in Alaska to a minimum level of internet service and allow them to better educate Alaska's children.

8:03:47 AM

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), answered questions related to SB 82.

LINDA THIBODEAU, Director, Division of Libraries, Archives, and Museums, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), answered questions related to SB 82.

MR. MORSE requested that Ms. Thibodeau explain the federal funding component of the bill.

MS. THIBODEAU explained that the E-rate Program provides a percentage discount for internet services.

MR. MORSE noted that federal dollars are not subject to sequestration.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked what percentage E-rate provides.

MS. THIBODEAU replied that the Alaska discount ranges from 60 percent to 90 percent with an average of 75 percent.

CHAIR STEVENS removed his objection.

[8:05:59 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY SENATOR moved to report CSSB 82, version 28-LS0637\0 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note.

CHAIR STEVENS announced that without objection, CSSB 82(EDC) was reported from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[8:06:14 AM](#)

At ease

HB 87-EXTEND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCY

[8:10:39 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS announced the consideration of HB 87 and noted the new Senate Committee Substitute (CS), version Y, in the packets. [CSHB 87(FIN) was before the committee.]

SENATOR DUNLEAVY moved to adopt the Senate CS for CSHB 87, labeled 28-LS0392\Y, as the working document.

CHAIR STEVENS objected for discussion purposes.

TIM LAMKIN, Staff, Senator Gary Stevens, provided information about three changes in version Y. He said Senate CS restores the governance of the Special Education Service Agency (SESA) to the Governor's Council on Disabilities. Section 2 modestly increases SESA's funding, a change made in the Senate Finance Committee. The sunset date is changed to four years instead of eight years.

[8:13:08 AM](#)

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), addressed the fiscal note for HB 87. He said he did not know the exact amount of the Senate Finance Committee fiscal note, which would now apply to version Y.

CHAIR STEVENS understood that there would no longer be the need for additional staff, now that the governance is returned to the Governor's Council.

MR. MORSE said that was correct.

MR. MORSE explained the Commissioner's preference for leaving SESA under the Governor's Council program. There is an emphasis on strong communication between DEED and SESA. All stakeholders are heavily involved with the Governor's Council on Special Education and Disabilities and are organized as a non-profit under that structure with a board that costs \$30,000, currently.

He related he regularly communicates with SESA's executive director and DEED's school finance director. Also, the special education administrator attends and participates in every SESA governance meeting. He concluded that SESA works well as it is currently set up.

[8:16:46 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS requested that Mr. Pillai address the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill.

PATRICK PILLAI, Executive Director, Special Education Service Agency (SESA), presented information related to HB 87. He said he concurs with the previous speakers. He voiced appreciation for the increase in funding for SESA, after 15 years of flat funding. It enables SESA to continue its work. He said he sincerely appreciates the legislature's work on behalf of SESA.

[8:18:19 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if there were any representatives from the Governor's Council on Disabilities.

ERIC GEBHART, Chair, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, testified during the discussion of HB 87. He agreed that the current governance is working well since the last audit. He said there has been good communication with DEED. He commented that the special education administrator attends Council meetings and is a voting member of the SESA Board.

CHAIR STEVENS thanked Mr. Gebhart for his service on the Council. He asked if the sponsor wished to comment.

[8:20:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PETE HIGGINS, Sponsor, encouraged the committee to move HB 87.

CHAIR STEVENS closed public testimony.

CHAIR STEVENS removed his objection.

[8:22:03 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY moved to report Senate CS for [CSHB 87], labeled 28-LS0392\Y, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note.

CHAIR STEVENS announced that without objection, SCS CSSB 87(EDC) was reported from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[8:22:21 AM](#)

At ease

SB 6-FUNDING FOR SCHOOL MEALS

[8:23:59 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS announced the consideration of SB 6, version A.

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI, sponsor of SB 6, noted that the fiscal note for SB 6 was inaccurate. There is a sunset date of 2015, therefore the fiscal cost after that date is zero.

SENATOR GARDNER inquired if there are students on the military base that qualify for free and reduced lunches.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI replied that are.

[8:25:43 AM](#)

MIKE COONS, representing himself, testified in opposition to SB 6. He said the program receives no federal funding. He protested against entitlement programs.

[8:29:44 AM](#)

DEAN HAMBURG, Chair, Alaska School Nutrition Association, testified in support of SB 6. He described the legislation as having meaningful support for Alaska's school children. He shared statistics about the number of families that qualify for free or reduced meals. He listed the educational benefits of nutritious meals provided by SB 6.

[8:33:13 AM](#)

LEDONNE DRUCE, Vice President, NEA Alaska, testified in support of SB 6. She related that a similar bill was before the legislature last year. She shared a story about parents who cannot or do not provide appropriate nutrition for their children. She said that data from Florida shows that the higher the poverty rate, the lower the test scores in school districts.

[8:36:05 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS closed public testimony.

SENATOR DUNLEAVY asked Senator Wielechowski to address the fiscal note.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI answered that the current fiscal note is \$2.3 million. He noted the bill has a sunset date of 2015, so there would be no cost after that date.

CHAIR STEVENS clarified that the fiscal note currently shows a sunset date of 2019. The fiscal note is for \$2.334 million.

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI addressed the issue of federal support for the free and reduced price school breakfast and lunch program. He corrected that it was passed by Congress in 1946 and was introduced by President Truman. The purpose was stated as being for national security because kids were not receiving proper nourishment. He said that the state contributes nothing to the program currently and the federal government contributes \$35 million. Local contributions total \$15 million. The state contributes nothing.

He agreed that parents should feed their kids. Unfortunately, many children are not fed adequately. He noted there are many Title I schools in his district. He recalled many stories about children who only received good nutrition in school.

He stated that studies clearly show that kids who are hungry do worse in school, are less likely to attend school, graduate, and get a job, and are more likely to commit crime.

[8:40:13 AM](#)

At ease

[8:41:43 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS called the meeting back to order.

SENATOR HUGGINS moved to strike the dates 2016-2019 from the fiscal note. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

SENATOR GARDNER commented that the program could be simply extended within the language of the bill.

CHAIR STEVENS agreed. He said it was his intention to move the bill from committee and on to the Senate Finance Committee.

[8:43:09 AM](#)

SENATOR DUNLEAVY moved to report SB 6, version A, from committee with individual recommendations and the attached [amended] fiscal note.

CHAIR STEVENS announced that without objection, SB 6 was reported from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[8:43:30 AM](#)

At ease

SB 91-HAZING

[8:44:36 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS announced the consideration of SB 91.

[8:44:52 AM](#)

SENATOR ANNA FAIRCLOUGH, sponsor of SB 91, related that the bill raises the issue of hazing in Alaska. She noted in 2007 she requested school districts and Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) to provide numbers about bullying and harassment in schools. She emphasized that the numbers are large. She said she wished to see hazing defined as a crime and as an option for kids to report to their teachers. She said hazing creates physical and emotional harm.

She spoke of the connection between suicide and bullying and hazing. She said the bill attempts to say hazing is wrong and hurtful and people will be held accountable.

[8:47:26 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked where the line is drawn between hazing versus normal actions.

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH replied that initiations are ways people are accepted into groups or teams. Hazing is an initiation gone wrong.

She explained Section 1 of SB 91 outlines the definition of hazing. She said you commit a crime if you "knowingly engage in an act or it causes a situation that subjects a student to risk of physical injury for the purposes of initiation into an affiliation or organization operating in connection with an elementary, junior high, secondary, or post-secondary school." She said it does not apply to things in the military that makes one a better team member. She added that people are "at risk" when they experience emotional harm or degrading or disrespectful behavior.

[8:49:11 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER said she wished to co-sponsor the bill. She also addressed the difficulty of determining where the line should be drawn. She noted that hazing might also take place within athletic teams, clubs, and private leagues.

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH agreed and offered to work with the committee, as well as with the Senate Judiciary Committee about those concerns. She emphasized that hazing depends on whether a student is willingly participating in an action. She noted the need for regulations to be written to protect students from not being labeled as criminals if their actions do not constitute hazing.

[8:51:08 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked for examples of hazing.

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH replied that public testimony will provide examples. She recalled a personal experience.

LES MORSE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), testified in support of SB 91. He said the bill adds to a definition around work that the department already does. He noted the department submitted a zero fiscal note. He related that the department currently provides training and e-modules to train staff on the issue of bullying. He said information about hazing could be added.

[8:53:22 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if the department would provide training for districts.

MR. MORSE said the department currently provides training tools and assistance with policies.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked about the difference between bullying and hazing.

MR. MORSE replied that hazing is a form of bullying. He opined that the statute would provide a clear definition which would assist the department with training materials.

[8:55:25 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS agreed that hazing was a subset of bullying. He wondered if educators really need additional training. He questioned how bullying crimes could be expunged later on.

[8:57:23 AM](#)

MR. MORSE said there are rules for juveniles who have committed criminal offenses. He said he could not speak to the issue.

SENATOR GARDNER also agreed that hazing is a subset of bullying. She asked if hazing is generally a part of an initiation by a team.

MR. MORSE replied that was a good way of characterizing it. He stressed the importance of staff having the training to deal with these issues. He said more important is how to train students in what is right and wrong.

SENATOR HUGGINS suggested that hazing could happen on the school bus or in other informal environments.

[9:00:53 AM](#)

GARY MATHEWS, Director, Alaska School Activities Association, testified in support of SB 91. He addressed hazing issues related to school activities, most of which are never exposed to the public. He said hazing is a national problem.

He noted he was concerned at first about the definition of hazing found on page 4. The terms "normal and customary" are not clear. He suggested the first two lines of Section 4 provide some clarification.

He opined that an educational campaign would be in order to instruct students about the implications of hazing.

[9:04:24 AM](#)

RYAN ULSEP, Principal, Juneau Douglas High School, testified in support of SB 91. He agreed that hazing is a national issue. He applauded the sponsor and the committee for addressing the issue of hazing because it will help schools stop it. He said Juneau's policy specifically mentions hazing. He pointed out that hazing is significantly underreported and difficult to enforce. He said many initiation behaviors can be considered as hazing.

He concluded that SB 91 provides schools with additional support to deal with hazing.

[9:07:25 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked what Mr. Ulsep would do as a principal to help students understand the definition and consequences of hazing.

MR. ULSEP replied that the school needs to education students about why hazing is wrong. He said any time a person is making another person do something they do not want to do, it is hazing. He stressed that the community must be educated, also.

SENATOR GARDNER agreed. She said it is difficult for one person to go against a group's behavior. She recalled one of her children's coaches who encouraged members of the team to choose three things that they would give up for the entirety of the season. This gave the team a support system and a chance to practice "going against the grain."

MR. ULSEP agreed.

[9:10:05 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS said he supports the ideas behind SB 91. He asked Mr. Ulsep how long he has been a principal.

MR. ULSEP said he has been an administrator for eight years and a teacher prior to that, as well as a football and track coach. He pointed out that hazing is not done just by teams and is often not reported.

SENATOR HUGGINS requested examples of hazing.

MR. ULSEP replied that paddling is an example of hazing.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked if paddling is a crime.

MR. ULSEP specified that paddling by a group of students on one kid is a crime and a form of bullying. He hoped SB 91 helps schools send a message that hazing is wrong. He said any action of a sexual nature is hazing, as well as forcing kids to shave their heads if they don't want to have it done.

[9:14:54 AM](#)

NORM POLLARD, Dean of Students, Alfred University, Alfred, New York, presented information related to SB 91. He spoke of his experience as a counselor and a researcher of national studies on hazing of NCAA athletes and high school students. He spoke of his involvement in hazing prevention and working with victims of hazing.

[9:16:24 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked for comments about the differences in thinking of today's generation versus yesterday's regarding initiation and hazing.

MR. POLLARD noted the fundamental difference between bullying and hazing is that bullying is where individuals are targeted to be picked on and humiliated, whereas with hazing, the individual wishes to join a group. When that person is subjected to hazing, the issue is about power and control and ends up having tragic consequences. He agreed it is difficult to draw the line between what is and is not a crime. He said hazing is typically done in private.

[9:19:51 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER said she visited Mr. Pollard's website, hazingprevention.com, which provided guidelines to determine what hazing is and is not. She called them good guidelines.

MR. POLLARD agreed. He noted previous testimony by Mr. Matthews from Alaska School Activities Association and said that organization is an excellent source for information related to hazing, as is the national organization.

[9:21:01 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS asked about school jurisdiction as it relates to hazing.

MR. POLLARD explained that hazing occurs outside of school and athletics. He listed places it can occur. He said he hoped by schools adopting some of these measures, students can be educated about hazing, even when it takes place outside of the school's authority.

[9:23:20 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS held SB 91 in committee.

SENATOR FAIRCLOUGH thanked the committee for hearing the bill. She gave an example of hazing in Southeast Alaska.

[9:24:14 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS said that public testimony would continue at a later date.

HB 180-MILITARY YOUTH ACADEMY

[9:24:26 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS announced the consideration of HB 180.

REPRESENTATIVE TAMMIE WILSON, sponsor, described the two changes in HB 180. She said the name changes to the Alaska Military Youth Academy and removes the word "Challenge". It also provides that students no longer receive base student allocation, but now receive funding suggested by the budget sub-committee for Military and Veterans Affairs.

CHAIR STEVENS noted that the committee has previously heard the bill.

MCHUGH PIERRE, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, addressed changes to the fiscal note for HB 180. He related that he worked with Legislative Finance to correct an error, which did not include the Governor's request in the budget that has been passed in both bodies. He said it is a zero fiscal note. The fiscal note now shows the general fund match.

[9:26:40 AM](#)

ADJUTANT GENERAL THOMAS KATKUS, Commissioner, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, provided information related to HB 180. He related that two days ago the department started a new academy of 200 students with an intended graduation rate of over 75 percent.

SENATOR HUGGINS noted that several legislators have children that graduated from the Academy. He asked if the current funding is right for the Academy.

MR. PIERRE replied that the current funding is "the maturation of the process" and is "getting it right." It is a match program with the National Guard Bureau and is budgeted for the goal of the program.

[9:28:45 AM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER asked if the funding is comparable to the way it is done in other places.

MR. PIERRE said yes.

REPRESENTATIVE WILSON said she was proud to be carrying the bill. She thanked the committee for its time.

[9:30:06 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS held HB 180 in committee.

9:30:34 AM

There being no further business to come before the Senate Education Standing Committee, Chair Stevens adjourned the hearing at 9:30 a.m.