

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

February 24, 2014

1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bert Stedman, Chair
Senator Peter Micciche, Vice Chair
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Johnny Ellis

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Pete Kelly

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 169

"An Act establishing in the Department of Health and Social Services a statewide immunization program and the State Vaccine Assessment Commission; creating a vaccine assessment account; requiring a fee assessment from health care insurers and other program participants for statewide immunization purchases; repealing the temporary child and adult immunization program; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 169(HSS) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 162

"An Act authorizing a licensed optometrist to prescribe a pharmaceutical agent containing hydrocodone."

- MOVED SB 162 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 131

"An Act adding to the powers and duties of the State Commission for Human Rights; and relating to and prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 169

SHORT TITLE: STATEWIDE IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) GIESSEL

02/10/14 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/10/14 (S) HSS
02/21/14 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
02/21/14 (S) Heard & Held
02/21/14 (S) MINUTE(HSS)
02/24/14 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 20

BILL: SB 162

SHORT TITLE: HYDROCODONE PRESCRIPTION BY OPTOMETRISTS
SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) OLSON

02/07/14 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/07/14 (S) HSS
02/21/14 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
02/21/14 (S) Heard & Held
02/21/14 (S) MINUTE(HSS)
02/24/14 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 20

BILL: SB 131

SHORT TITLE: SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION
SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) GARDNER

01/22/14 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/14 (S) HSS, FIN
02/24/14 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 169.

DAVID SCOTT, Staff
Senator Donny Olson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Reviewed SB 162 on behalf of the sponsor.

SENATOR BERTA GARDNER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 131.

THOMAS PRESLEY, Staff
Senator Berta Gardner

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 131 on behalf of the sponsor.

JOSHUA DECKER, Interim Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

MICHAEL DUNSMORE, representing himself
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

GLENN CRAVEZ, representing himself
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

MELANIE LINDHOLM, Graduate Student
University of Alaska, Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

NICOLE CONDIFF, Member
Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

VICTORIA GREEN, representing herself
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

JOSH HEMSATH, Regional Development Organizer
Pride Foundation
Eagle River, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

FELIX RIVERA, representing himself
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

THEDA PITTMAN, representing herself
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

SUSAN TOW, representing herself
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

DREW PHOENIX, representing himself
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

JULIE SCHMIDT, representing herself
Eagle River, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

GAYLE SCHUH, representing herself
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

CAMDEN YEHLE, representing herself
Alaskans Together for Equality
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

DIANE MEAD, representing herself
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

MILDRED BOESSER, representing herself
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

KIMBERLY HUBBARD, representing herself
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

MARGUERITE LAURI, representing herself
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

TERRI LAUTERBACK, representing herself
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

MARY GRAHAM, representing herself
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

JEFF ROGERS, representing himself
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

JOHN ROXBURGH, representing himself

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

LAUREN TIBBITTS, representing herself

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

LIN DAVIS, representing herself

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

MAUREEN LONGWORTH, M.D., representing herself

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

MARY NANUWAK, representing herself

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against of SB 131.

JANET FORBES, representing herself

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

CAREN ROBINSON, Lobbyist

Alaska Women's Lobby

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 131.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:32:30 PM](#)

CHAIR BERT STEDMAN called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Ellis, Micciche, and Chair Stedman. He noted that three bills were before the committee.

SB 169-STATEWIDE IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM

[1:33:38 PM](#)

CHAIR STEDMAN announced that the first order of business would be SB 169. He said this is the second hearing on the bill. The first hearing was on February 21, where the committee adopted version P, heard the sponsor introduce the bill, and took public testimony. The intent today is to have the sponsor review the bill and hear the will of the committee.

SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 169, explained that the bill is part two of a statewide vaccine program, legislation she introduced two years ago. The program would use state funds to create a statewide vaccine assessment council and operate under the auspices of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) and the commissioner of that department. The council would consist of eight members who would serve without compensation or reimbursement of expenses. It would manage funds that will be assessed to statewide insurance companies who will pay in advance for vaccines that will be distributed around the state to help care providers who will participate in the program. The state of Alaska will use its buying power through the contract with the Centers for Disease Control to get the lowest cost possible for the vaccines and expand the program so that all Alaskans will be covered.

CHAIR STEDMAN noted there were no changes in the five fiscal notes.

CHAIR MICCICHE moved to report [CS] for SB 169 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal notes.

CHAIR STEDMAN announced that without objection, CSSB 169(HSS) is reported from the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

CHAIR STEDMAN announced the arrival of Senator Meyer.

SB 162-HYDROCODONE PRESCRIPTION BY OPTOMETRISTS

[1:37:13 PM](#)

CHAIR STEDMAN announced that the next order of business would be SB 162. He related that it is the second hearing on the bill. It was heard for the first time on February 21. The committee also heard from the sponsor and took public testimony.

DAVID SCOTT, Staff, Senator Donny Olson, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, reviewed SB 162 on behalf of the sponsor. He said the bill does not expand the scope of the practice of optometry or their ability to prescribe hydrocodone. It would ensure there is not a lapse in their ability to prescribe a limited amount of hydrocodone. He shared that the FDA is proposing to reschedule hydrocodone from Schedule III to Schedule II.

CHAIR STEDMAN noted one fiscal note from Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

[1:39:05 PM](#)

CHAIR MICCICHE asked why other pain relievers are not used, considering the risks with hydrocodone.

MR. SCOTT did not know. He offered to find further information about that issue.

CHAIR MICCICHE wished to understand the reason.

[1:40:22 PM](#)

SENATOR MEYER moved to report SB 162 from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note.

CHAIR STEDMAN announced that without objection, SB 162 is reported from the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

SB 131-SEXUAL ORIENTATION DISCRIMINATION

[1:41:18 PM](#)

CHAIR STEDMAN announced that the final order of business would be SB 131. He said this is the first hearing on the bill. The intent is to allow the bill sponsor to introduce the bill, take public testimony, and set the bill aside.

SENATOR BERTA GARDNER, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 131, explained that the bill is a civil rights bill and people all over the state are watching with great interest and concern. It is about the right of individuals to pursue their constitutional right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, without fear - without fear that their deeply felt personal gender identity and gender expression, can result in the loss of employment or the loss of housing. She opined that SB 131 is a very, very simple piece of legislation with deep meaning. She suggested if one is inclined to feel differently about it, inserting, in place of sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression, the words female gender, Norwegian heritage, or Native Alaskan heritage. She said that might bring home the real importance of the legislation.

THOMAS PRESLEY, Staff, Senator Berta Gardner, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, introduced SB 131 on behalf of the sponsor. He said that SB 131 expands current anti-discrimination statutes to include sexual orientation and gender identity. The

Alaska State Commission on Human Rights would be charged with enforcing those protections.

He noted the sectional analysis in members' packets. He said, in general, the sections make conforming amendments to the Alaska State Commission on Human Rights statutes by inserting the words "sexual orientation" and "gender identity" to statutes with regards to fair employment, housing, and financing. He noted a definition section in the bill.

MR. PRESLEY referred to a document containing a brief description on what the Alaska State Commission on Human Rights does. The Commission was created in 1963 and it currently protects from discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, physical and mental disabilities, age, marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood. The Commission is charged in statute with eliminating discrimination in employment, places of public accommodation, the sale or rental of real property, financing and credit, and practices by the state in its political subdivision.

He turned attention to the Anchorage LGBT Discrimination Survey done by University of Alaska researcher Melissa Green. The survey is probably the most comprehensive look at self-reports of discrimination in Anchorage.

[1:45:14 PM](#)

MR. PRESLEY reviewed the findings in the survey. About 76 percent of the sample of respondents, and 68 percent of the sample that had lived in Anchorage for less than five years, have reported either verbal abuse or name-calling. He said that 73 percent of that sample reported hiding their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender transition to avoid job discrimination and 44 percent reported having been harassed by their employer or other employees. In housing, a little over 18.5 percent of respondents reported having been harassed by landlords or other tenants. In school and educational settings, 41 percent reported having been bullied or harassed. The report also includes statistics about discrimination in child custody hearings and access to public services.

He noted that transgender respondents reported much higher rates of discrimination, including verbal and physical abuse. He related that the largest national survey done in 2010 asked transgender respondents about harassment at work and found that 78 percent had experienced discrimination in their workplace.

He encouraged the committee to read the personal letters in their packets.

[1:47:41 PM](#)

MR. PRESLEY said 19 states currently protect against discrimination with regards to sexual orientation and 16 have statutes that reflect the bill before the committee today. Both Alaska Senators have voted for passage of SB 815, which is the United States Employment Non-discrimination Act of 2013. The effect of that bill in employment reflects what SB 131 is doing today.

MR. PRESLEY highlighted two studies from Utah and Iowa that discuss discrimination and show results consistent with the Anchorage LGBT Community Survey. The Ohio study also looks into wage inequality for men in same sex couples and shows that laws such as SB 131 do reduce discrimination against LGBT people.

He indicated that the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce recently focused on a presentation called the "Commerce of Diversity." The Chamber partnered with the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation for the "One Anchorage, One Economy Initiative." He added that a number of Fortune 500 companies have adopted nondiscrimination policies.

[1:50:41 PM](#)

MR. PRESLEY concluded by commenting that discrimination is taking place in Alaska and it affects people's ability to enjoy fair employment, housing, and credit opportunities. The bill would give victims of discrimination recourse. The Alaska State Legislature has a strong tradition of protecting minority rights. He noted the House passed HB 211, an act relating to education and employment of individuals with disabilities. He stated that there are benefits with non-discrimination policies that are economic and otherwise. He said he has received letters of support from around the state and over 300 postcards in support of the bill.

[1:52:17 PM](#)

CHAIR STEDMAN noted one fiscal note from Governor's office on behalf of the Human Rights Commission for \$58,500 in general funds for an additional half-time investigator.

He opened public testimony.

[1:53:01 PM](#)

JOSHUA DECKER, Interim Executive Director, American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. He noted that he has submitted written testimony to the committee. He remarked that Mr. Presley's information demonstrates that discrimination is real and there is a factual need for the bill. He maintained that it is unconstitutional to discriminate against minorities and to deny LBGT individuals benefits of marriage, employment, or civil rights. The bill will bring the protection of those individuals under the protection of Alaska's non-discrimination law.

[1:54:20 PM](#)

MICHAEL DUNSMORE, representing himself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. He said he would benefit from the bill, even as a heterosexual. He said it affects the entire community when members of it are being discriminated against. He spoke of a dilemma for LBGT individuals when interviewing for a job, whether to share their sexual identity with the employer. Currently, there is not protection against that type of discrimination in Alaska. He opined that the bill is not about morality; it is strictly about not discriminating against members of the community. The bill would also allow the state to collect information and investigate discrimination.

[1:57:00 PM](#)

GLENN CRAVEZ, representing himself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. He said he is a parent of one straight son and one gay son. He wants both sons to be treated the same in the eyes of the law, to have the same opportunities, and to be judged on the quality of their work and the content of their character. He referred his support for the Live, Work, Play Initiative of the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, as well as the One Anchorage - One Economy Initiative, which he helped establish with the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce. He said SB 131 works hand in hand with the efforts of those business organizations to strengthen the community and economy. Non-discrimination will help grow the economy and attract new businesses.

[2:00:12 PM](#)

MELANIE LINDHOLM, Graduate Student, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She said she is a member of Gender and Sexuality Alliance and Gender Pioneers. She wished to see equal rights in employment and housing for everyone in the groups she represents.

[2:01:15 PM](#)

NICOLE CONDIFF, Member, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She said many people other than LGBT individuals are affected by discrimination, such as family and friends. She shared that she has personally seen the effects of discrimination against individuals and families, due to their sexual orientation, in housing and employment matters. She addressed additional stressors on community agencies and programs as a result of discrimination.

2:02:28 PM

VICTORIA GREEN, representing herself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared her background as an Alaska resident, federal government employee, U.S. veteran, recently retired after 30 years in the Air Force and International Guard, full-time student, parent of four children, as well as a person in a committed relationship. She spoke of her advocacy for foster and adopted children. She noted she and her partner were nominated by Senator Lisa Murkowski in 2012 as Angels in Adoption for their work with children in foster care and for their role with adoption in Alaska. She said she is a member of the PTA, of a local church, a property owner, and an educator, and also a lesbian.

She stated that her designation as a lesbian is at stake today. She said at stake are her freedom and her children's freedom to live, work, and enjoy the liberties afforded every other citizen in this country. She noted she is safe from discrimination as a federal employee, but at the end of a work day, those rights end. She stressed that the bill is a step in the right direction. All Alaskans have the right to live safely, securely, and without fear of discrimination based on who they love and who they have chosen as their life partner.

2:05:25 PM

JOSH HEMSATH, Regional Development Organizer, Pride Foundation, Eagle River, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. He urged the committee to add sexual orientation, gender identity and expression to Alaska's Human Rights Act. He spoke of his role with Pride Foundation in promoting equality for all. He said the Pride Foundation will continue to work tirelessly with community partners to ensure that all Alaskans are protected. He maintained that equality is good for business and spoke of 88 percent of Fortune 500 companies' policies of prohibiting sexual discrimination. He encouraged making Alaska welcoming to all kinds of people in order to remain competitive. He pointed out

that the committee can help to create a safe and inclusive environment for all Alaskans.

2:08:07 PM

FELIX RIVERA, representing himself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. He called the bill common sense legislation. He provided an example of a friend who was fired for her lifestyle. He said this type of discrimination is a detriment to business. He concluded that there is a need for SB 131 in communities.

2:09:52 PM

THEDA PITTMAN, representing herself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She said it is an easy bill to understand and it adds to the list of "classes" against which it is illegal to discriminate. She shared two events which demonstrate the need for the legislation. The Anchorage Assembly passed an anti-discrimination ordinance for private industry which was vetoed by Mayor Sullivan. Yet, an administrative order from 2002 provides protection against sexual orientation discrimination for state employees, and in 2010 a University of Alaska policy was amended to do the same. She urged the committee to pass SB 131.

2:12:01 PM

SUSAN TOW, representing herself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She said she represents herself and all LGTB community members who are threatened by discrimination. She listed several incorrect statements made in the news regarding LGTB individuals. Many families are afraid of losing jobs, housing, and their livelihood. She shared her experience as a retired disabled U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant and as a LGTB individual. She said she now works for a company that values her for herself. She concluded that during twenty-two years of military service she had to hide her identity and her family. The repeal of Don't Act/Don't Tell has corrected that situation. She urged equality for all Alaskans and support for SB 131.

2:15:45 PM

DREW PHOENIX, representing himself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. He explained that he is a transgender male and he has experienced a history of discrimination. He shared a personal story of his attempts to rent. When he explained that he was transgender he was denied housing. Other LGBT Alaskans have been discriminated against simply for being who they are. He urged support for SB 131.

[2:17:42 PM](#)

JULIE SCHMIDT, representing herself, Eagle River, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared that she is representing herself and her wife, who have been married for 35 years, as well as friends and acquaintances. She said the bill will have a tremendous positive impact on Alaskans. She provided information about Article 3, civil rights under the Alaska State Constitution. She stressed that it is time for the legislature to guarantee that all Alaska citizens have equal rights and correct the omission of LGBT individuals.

[2:20:24 PM](#)

GAYLE SCHUH, representing herself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared a personal story of discrimination when disclosing who she is. Ten years ago she said she had to make a decision before disclosing her identity. She suggested that Alaska make a law that encourages respect for everyone.

[2:22:21 PM](#)

CAMDEN YEHLE, representing herself, Alaskans Together for Equality, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She spoke of the positive consequences of the bill; keeping the best and brightest in the state in order to prevent brain drain, and maintaining a thriving and competitive state.

[2:23:32 PM](#)

DIANE MEAD, representing herself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared personal stories of discrimination in renting and at a hospital as a transgender individual. She said the bill is central to protecting people from discrimination for perceived differences.

[2:25:33 PM](#)

MILDRED BOESSER, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared her personal story as a parent and as a Christian. She said she is saddened that a person can be fired, evicted, and denied credit and financing because of who they love. She said she could not imagine what it would be like to keep secret her orientation out of fear of the consequences if she "came out." She said at issue is the ability to live "freely and openly, without abuse or harassment or reprisal, as the person you really are."

[2:28:12 PM](#)

SENATOR ELLIS thanked Ms. Boesser for her years of bravery, courage, and support for equality in Alaska.

[2:28:47 PM](#)

KIMBERLY HUBBARD, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She spoke of her personal experience of discrimination in the private sector and the safety net as a state employment. She spoke of the anxiety, stress, and fear she has experienced having to hide her identity as a lesbian because there is no legal protection or recourse. She said that Administrative Order 195 enacted 12 years ago assuaged some of those concerns. She noted Governor Parnell said that it is the continued goal of Alaska to choose respect. She pointed out that SB 131 is a very clear opportunity to end discrimination against LBGT.

[2:30:26 PM](#)

MARGUERITE LAURI, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She said as state of Alaska employees, she and her wife are fortunate to be protected under former-Governor Tony Knowles' Administrative Order 195. She urged the committee to advance equality in Alaska. All persons have a natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the enjoyment of the rewards of their own industry. All persons are entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law.

[2:32:23 PM](#)

TERRI LAUTERBACK, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared her personal story as a parent and as a state worker for 30 years. She spoke of how she could not cover her and her partner's children with health insurance benefits. She noted that she does not know the modern arguments against a bill such as SB 131. She pointed out that the Human Rights Act covers parenthood, marriage, and religion, divorcees and unwed mothers. All should have fair opportunities to have a job and a home and a loan from a bank.

She brought up the idea that some legislators fear constituents may not be pleased with a vote in favor of SB 131. Those are the constituents who will decide to discriminate or not over jobs and housing of future generations. She emphasized that all Alaskans must be judged fairly on qualifications and on merit. She said SB 131 would be a great step in that direction.

[2:35:57 PM](#)

MARY GRAHAM, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She said she has been testifying on this issue since 1982 and it is time to pass the bill to bring Alaska

into the 21st Century. She said it would make Alaska a strong place where people want to raise their families and where businesses can attract the best and brightest people.

[2:36:58 PM](#)

JEFF ROGERS, representing himself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. He said he does not benefit from this legislation because he is a state employee, nor does his partner who is a small business owner. He shared his personal story and he related it to discrimination legislators might see toward their own family members. He shared his father's story about earning a wage through a person's own efforts. He hoped the committee would correct the situation where a person might be fired from a job because of who he or she loved.

[2:39:03 PM](#)

JOHN ROXBURGH, representing himself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. He shared his personal story. He pointed out the fragility in the lack of protection against discrimination. He noted legal protections since the mid-60's against discrimination for race and gender and said it is clear that protection is needed for sexual orientation and gender identity. He opined that SB 131 is riding the crest of the wave of history.

[2:41:34 PM](#)

LAUREN TIBBITTS, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared her personal story as a young LGBT member of the Alaskan community. She said 100 years ago she would have been denied opportunities because she is a woman. Also, 75 years ago she could have been discriminated against because she is Korean. Today, she can be discriminated against for jobs, housing, and other things. She shared a personal story from when she was 15. She said Alaska has been at the forefront of civil rights; however, today there is still a need to end discrimination of LGBT individuals. She said it is important that SB 131 is passed because it provides a legal buffering from people who don't agree.

[2:45:53 PM](#)

LIN DAVIS, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared her personal story. She said she worked at the Juneau Job Center for 15 years where she heard many stories of LGBT discrimination, many of whom were preparing to leave the state. She said Alaska is not yet a welcoming state for LBGT and it communicates disfavor. She said many people confided that they did not understand Alaska's civil rights

issues. Now, after the Windsor case, many Americans wish LGBT to have the same rights. There is a hunger now in Alaska to make things right and equal for the LGBT community.

She described three special information projects in the works. One is a three-volume encyclopedia on the LGBT history in all states. The second project is statewide Alaskan LGBT archiving of personal records and journals. The third project is historical research of the Juneau blue and pink tickets, one-way tickets handed out in the 60's to those who were gay or deemed to be gay. She concluded that now is the perfect time for SB 131 to go forward.

[2:49:36 PM](#)

MAUREEN LONGWORTH, M.D., representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared her life as a physician. She said the American Academy of Family Physicians agrees that legislation that furthers equality increases a healthy environment and lessens disease. All Academies have national guidelines to support equal rights to LGBT members. She shared several personal stories of discrimination against LGBT individuals. She asked the committee to be "pro-life" and pass SB 131.

[2:53:22 PM](#)

MARY NANUWAK, representing herself, Anchorage, Alaska, testified against SB 131. She voiced concern that Alaska Natives are not getting services they deserve. She maintained that people in rural areas are going to suffer if LGBT people receive services.

[2:56:09 PM](#)

JANET FORBES, representing herself, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She spoke of her career in the Criminal Justice System and her wife's career in Child Services. She shared that when her wife was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, she was denied Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and was fearful for her job. She said she was not protected. She urged the committee to pass the bill.

SENATOR ELLIS asked what FMLA stood for.

MS. FORBES said Family Medical Leave Act.

[2:58:12 PM](#)

CAREN ROBINSON, Lobbyist, Alaska Women's Lobby, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 131. She shared a personal story of her parents and their neighbors who were gay. She said she was

proud of her parents for becoming aware of how bad discrimination is. She requested that the committee move the bill.

[3:00:32 PM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER voiced appreciation for all of the moving testimony.

[3:01:07 PM](#)

CHAIR STEDMAN held the SB 131 in committee.

[3:01:38 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Stedman adjourned the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee at 3:01 p.m.