

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

April 7, 2015

3:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 79

"An Act relating to reemployment of persons who retire under the defined benefit plan of the teachers' retirement system."

- MOVED CSSB 79(EDC) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 89

"An Act relating to a parent's right to direct the education of a child; and relating to questionnaires administered in schools."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 37

"An Act relating to sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness and prevention efforts in public schools."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 79

SHORT TITLE: REEMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED TEACHERS & ADMIN

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DUNLEAVY

03/18/15	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/18/15	(S)	EDC, CRA
03/26/15	(S)	EDC AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

03/26/15 (S) Heard & Held
 03/26/15 (S) MINUTE(EDC)
 03/31/15 (S) EDC AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 03/31/15 (S) Heard & Held
 03/31/15 (S) MINUTE(EDC)
 04/02/15 (S) EDC AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/02/15 (S) Scheduled but Not Heard
 04/07/15 (S) CRA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
 04/07/15 (S) EDC AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 89

SHORT TITLE: PARENT RIGHTS: EDUCATION; SCHOOL ABSENCE

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DUNLEAVY

03/25/15 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 03/25/15 (S) EDC, STA
 03/31/15 (S) EDC AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 03/31/15 (S) Scheduled but Not Heard
 04/02/15 (S) EDC AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
 04/02/15 (S) Heard & Held
 04/02/15 (S) MINUTE(EDC)
 04/07/15 (S) EDC AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

SHEILA PETERSON, Staff
 Senator Mike Dunleavy
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained Amendment 1 to SB 79.

JOHN BOUCHER, Deputy Commissioner
 Office of the Commissioner
 Department of Administration
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions related to SB 79.

LISA SKILES PARADY, Executive Director
 Alaska Council of School Administrators and
 Alaska Superintendents Association
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 79, but against Amendment 1.

JACK WALSH, Superintendent
 Craig School District

Craig, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 79.

CHRIS REITAN, Superintendent

Galena City School District

Galena, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 79, but against Amendment 1.

PATRICK MAYER, Superintendent

Wrangell Public School District

Wrangell, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 79.

LINCOLN SAITO, Chief Operating Officer

North Slope Borough School District

Barrow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 79.

BETHANY MARCUM, Staff

Senator Mike Dunleavy

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained Amendments 1 and 2 to SB 89.

LINCOLN SAITO, Chief Operating Officer

North Slope Borough School District

Barrow, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against SB 89.

JON WATTS, representing himself

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 89.

MONICA WATTS, representing herself

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 89.

ALLISON CURRY, Staff

Planned Parenthood

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 89.

TARYN LUSKDEET, representing herself

North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 89.

DR. BARBARA HANEY, representing herself
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 89.

JACK WALSH, Superintendent
Craig City School District
Craig, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified against Amendment 2 in SB 89.

ED GRAY, representing himself
Sitka, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 89, including the two amendments.

MIKE COONS, representing himself
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 89 and the two amendments.

RACHELLE SIEBER, representing herself
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 89, including the amendments.

POISE BOGGS, representing herself
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 89.

SACHA PETTITT, Teacher
Mat-Su Borough School District
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 89.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:32:55 PM](#)

CHAIR MIKE DUNLEAVY called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:32 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Huggins, Giessel, Gardner, Stevens, and Chair Dunleavy. He noted that there were three bills before the committee, all of which have been previously heard.

SB 79-REEMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED TEACHERS & ADMIN

[3:33:42 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY announced the consideration of SB 79. The bill will allow school districts to hire retired educators. He said

this is the third hearing and a committee substitute (CS), labeled 29-LS0444\E was adopted on 3/31/15.

SENATOR HUGGINS moved to adopt Amendment 1, labeled 29-LS0444\E.1:

AMENDMENT 1

Page 1, following line 13:

Insert a new subsection to read:

"(c) A school district that reemploys a member under this section who is retired under the defined benefit retirement plan established in AS 14.25.009 - 14.25.220 is required to make contributions under AS 14.25.070."

Page 3, following line 2:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* **Sec. 5.** AS 14.25.070(a) is amended to read:

(a) Each employer shall contribute to the system every payroll period an amount calculated by applying a rate of 12.56 percent to the total of all base salaries paid by the employer to active members of the system **and to members who are retired from the plan and reemployed under AS 14.20.136,** including any adjustments to contributions required by AS 14.25.173(a)."

Renumber the following bill section accordingly.

Page 3, line 6:

Delete "and"

Page 3, line 7, following "Act,":

Insert "and AS 14.25.070(a), as amended by sec. 5 of this Act,"

CHAIR DUNLEAVY objected for discussion.

SHEILA PETERSON, Staff, Senator Mike Dunleavy, Alaska State Legislature, explained that Amendment 1 came as a result of a discussion between the sponsor and the Department of Administration. It requires school districts, when they hire a retired educator, to continue to pay the 12.56 rate toward the teacher retirement system, as if the educator was an active employee. This will prevent a drain on the Teacher Retirement System funds.

She noted that Amendment 1 is found in two sections in the bill:

Page 1, following line 13:

Insert a new subsection to read:

- Requires a school district that reemploys a retired educator to contribute to the Teacher Retirement System at a rate of 12.56 percent of the educator's salary.

Page 3, following line 2:

Insert a new bill section to read:

- Adds to current statutory language that an employer shall contribute to the Teacher Retirement System an amount of 12.56 percent of a retired and re-employed educator's salary.
- The contribution rate is the same as applied to active members of the system.

Page 3, line 6 and Page 3, line 7:

- Conforming language

[3:37:12 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY explained that the bill adds tools for school districts to expand a pool of educators and save costs. The discussion was about who pays into retirement. There was concern about the number of teachers who might want to retire and then get rehired under a special contract.

JOHN BOUCHER, Deputy Commissioner, Office of the Commissioner, Department of Administration, answered questions related to SB 79. He explained that the concern was that when there is a new large pool of retired workers who are not subject to regular contributions, the overall contributions to the retirement system would go down proportionately. It would end up shifting costs to the state. He said having the districts pay 12.56 percent into retirement is a solution.

[3:39:48 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS requested clarification. He gave an example of a person who retires and goes back to teaching and is no longer drawing more from the retirement system. He suggested that having the district pay the 12.56 percent into the retirement fund is an additional burden for the district.

MR. BOUCHER clarified that educators who would have had covered wages are being replaced by educators with uncovered wages. The

overall pool of retirement contributions is diminished and could shift costs to the unfunded liability.

SENATOR STEVENS understood the situation, but saw it as unfair to districts.

SENATOR GARDNER summarized that there is no direct impact to the employee, nor department, nor student, but there is a cost to the district in order to help with the underfunded liability of the retirement system.

MR. BOUCHER agreed and added that the districts save by not having to pay insurance benefits.

SENATOR GARDNER concluded that it also reduces the eagerness of the district to look for retirees that they can rehire, but it keeps open the option of hiring a qualified, experienced retired educator at some savings.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY added that the savings is less than 12.56 percent.

[3:43:12 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS spoke of the various retirement tiers that may retire soon.

MR. BOUCHER said when you remove long-time teachers, there is more of an impact on payroll savings.

SENATOR HUGGINS what is true today is less true every year due to fewer Tier I and Tier II retirees.

He asked if a retiree receives any longevity benefits from being rehired.

MR. BOUCHER said no.

SENATOR HUGGINS asked if the retirement benefits remain the same for rehirees.

MR. BOUCHER said yes.

SENATOR HUGGINS mentioned retirement incentives and this new program.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY provided an example of a teacher who retired and then was offered a contract by Department of Education and Early

Development (DEED). There have been district incentives in the past that have been offered, but there are no incentives under SB 79.

[3:48:13 PM](#)

MR. BOUCHER confirmed that it is not a factor in this bill.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY stated that the state gets a 12.5 percent cut to go along with this plan. It is much less expensive for districts to hire a retiree.

SENATOR GARDNER asked if the teacher continues to receive retirement benefits during the time they are on contract. She asked if it makes for a larger imbalance in the unfunded liability if they have retired sooner than planned, had the contract not been an option.

MR. BOUCHER said it would if that becomes a trend. He opined that the 12.5 percent will offset that situation. He said you are replacing wages with benefits, with wages that do not receive benefits.

[3:51:58 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS liked the idea behind the bill. He did not see the plan as someone working as a full-time teacher retiring and then working full time. He provided as an example one of his favorite professors. He saw the plan as part-time or short-term teaching positions. He opined that school boards lose under the 12.56 percent scenario and the "system" wins; he did not see the equity there.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY provided an extreme example. He restated the intent to provide a tool that does work for the district to provide economic relief. He said the bill is a result of his experience with the mentor project where experienced teachers give back to education.

SENATOR GARDNER said that is a new way of looking at the bill. She thought it was a tool to provide teachers for hard-to-fill positions, not a cost savings measure.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said it is for both.

SENATOR GARDNER asked if the wage scale would be the same in a rehire contract as it would be in a regular teaching contract.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said the mentor program had a set amount of pay that had no relationship to a district's pay scale.

[3:57:01 PM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER asked if districts are taking up 12.5 percent of the costs, whether they are coming out even.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY provided an example to show that a district would save money and get the benefit of a teacher's experience, and teachers would also benefit by teaching in a place they want to teach.

SENATOR GARDNER asked if school districts would be commenting on Amendment 1 to SB 79. She gave an example of a teacher who currently teaches, retires, and continues to teach in the same district.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said the bill would not prohibit that.

SENATOR STEVENS stated if there was a sound retirement system, Alaska would not have this problem. If the retirement system would have been well-managed, this bill would not be needed.

MR. BOUCHER thought it was a reasonable statement. He said the department is doing its best not to add to the unfunded liability.

[4:00:29 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS recalled a .49 limitation for rehires.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY explained that currently, an individual that retires can come back and work at a .49 position and collect retirement benefits. They can work full time on contract without benefits.

SENATOR HUGGINS commented on the advantages proposed in SB 79.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY agreed.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY removed his objection and Amendment 1 was adopted.

He opened public testimony.

[4:02:16 PM](#)

LISA SKILES PARADY, Executive Director, Alaska Council of School Administrators and Alaska Superintendents Association, testified

in support of SB 79, but not Amendment 1. She commented on the staggering shortage of teachers and administrators in Alaska. She maintained that it would be better to have the bill with the amendment than for the bill to not pass at all.

SENATOR GARDNER asked whether the amendment provides any cost savings to districts. She also asked if there is any concern about unanticipated consequences from people retiring early, when they otherwise wouldn't have, to take advantage of this option.

MS. SKILES PARADY said the concern for unanticipated consequences was part of the discussion with the Department of Administration. It is educators' perspective that retirement is a very serious decision. Also, there is a one-year break requirement before rehiring takes place.

Regarding cost savings, she noted that each district will be different and have different needs. She termed the retirees "at will employees" that do not take from, or add to, the retirement system. She opined that the amendment would reduce cost savings to districts.

[4:08:08 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS understood that the bill is a tool that appears to be a great way for districts to save.

JACK WALSH, Superintendent, Craig School District, testified in support of SB 79. He believed that the bill has many positive benefits, however, he suggested that the bill would eliminate some of the savings allowed for the .49 employees. The cost savings for teachers would be good for districts and there are advantages to hiring retirees. He spoke of hiring educators who have expertise to fill gaps in the district.

[4:11:54 PM](#)

CHRIS REITAN, Superintendent, Galena City School District, testified in support of SB 79, but not of the amendment. He concurred with the comments by Ms. Skiles Parady. He said he would like to see retired educators with Alaskan experience working in schools during these challenged economic times. He said he would rather not see the amendment, but approves the bill as a whole.

[4:14:01 PM](#)

PATRICK MAYER, Superintendent, Wrangell Public School District, testified in support of SB 79. He concurred with the two

previous testifiers that they would rather have the amended version of SB 79 than no bill at all. He saw the need for the bill due to the shortage of teachers in Alaska, especially in rural Alaska. He said hiring from a pool of experienced staff will be important to his district. He also saw the incentive for the retiree to be able to continue to work.

SENATOR STEVENS referred to the disadvantages from the .49 provision previously mentioned. He asked if Wrangell has any experience with that.

MR. MAYER said there was only one instance of that in his district. He said he wants to encourage new teachers to come to Wrangell. He didn't see it as being a huge deterrent, noting it's a case by case situation.

[4:18:07 PM](#)

LINCOLN SAITO, Chief Operating Officer, North Slope Borough School District, testified in support of SB 79. He said the bill is less attractive with the amendment, but still attractive. Not having to pay health insurance would save the district 25 percent of a person's salary. He said they want a larger pool to select from because they are having trouble filling 9 positions after going to 5 job fairs. He stressed the need for good teachers for their students.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY closed public testimony.

He noted a fiscal note is forthcoming. He wished to move the bill.

SENATOR HUGGINS commented that the bill has more merits than negatives and will provide a pool of educators for Alaska.

[4:21:59 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS moved to report CS for SB 79, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and a forthcoming fiscal note.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY announced that without objection, CSSB 79(EDC) is reported from the Senate Education Standing Committee.

[4:22:18 PM](#)

At ease

SB 89-PARENT RIGHTS: EDUCATION; SCHOOL ABSENCE

[4:25:34 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY announced the consideration of committee substitute for SB 89, version 29-LS0735\P, noting that it was adopted on 4/2/15.

SENATOR HUGGINS moved to adopt Amendment 1, labeled 29-LS0735\P.1:

AMENDMENT 1

Page 1, line 9, following "(1)":
Insert "recognizing the authority of and"

Page 1, line 11, following "(2)":
Insert "recognizing the authority of and"

Page 1, line 12:
Delete "performance standard,"

Page 2, line 4:
Delete "one month"
Insert "six weeks"
Delete "performance standard,"

Page 2, line 7:
Delete "performance standard,"

Page 2, line 8, following "(4)":
Insert "recognizing the authority of and"

Page 2, line 9:
Delete "performance standard,"

Page 2, line 15:
Delete "performance standard,"

Page 2, line 20:
Delete "performance standards,"

Page 2, line 22:
Delete "performance standard,"

Page 2, line 25, following "each":
Insert "separate"

Page 2, line 25:
Delete "performance standard,"

CHAIR DUNLEAVY objected for discussion purposes.

BETHANY MARCUM, Staff, Senator Mike Dunleavy, Alaska State Legislature, read the explanation for Amendment 1:

Replace "allowing" with "recognizing the authority of and allowing" on lines 9 and 11 of page 1, and line 8 of page 2 to reinforce that parental rights are inherent.

Remove the phrase "performance standard" in 8 places and keep it in 1 place to clarify awkward syntax.

Replace "one month" with "six weeks" on line 4 of page 2 to give school districts a more flexible duration of time for collecting permission from parents.

Add the word "separate" on line 25 of page 2 for clarity.

[4:28:26 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY asked if anyone had any questions.

[4:28:46 PM](#)

At ease

[4:30:10 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNLEAVY reconvened the meeting.

MS. MARCUM noted that the word "allowing" is the only major change in the bill.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY removed his objection and Amendment 1 was adopted.

[4:31:21 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGGINS moved to adopt Amendment 2, labeled 29-LS0735\p.2:

AMENDMENT 2

Page 1, line 1:
Delete "**and**"

Page 1, line 2, following "**school**":

Insert "; prohibiting a school district from contracting with an abortion services provider; and prohibiting a school district from allowing an abortion services provider to furnish course materials or provide instruction concerning sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases"

Page 3, following line 1:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* **Sec. 2.** AS 14.03.083 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(e) A school district and an educational services organization that has a contract with a school district may not contract with an abortion services provider."

Renumber the following bill section accordingly.

Page 2, following line 16:

Insert a new bill section to read:

"* **Sec. 5.** AS 14.30.360 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(c) A school district may not permit an abortion services provider or an employee or volunteer of an abortion services provider to offer, sponsor, furnish course materials, or provide instruction relating to human sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases."

CHAIR DUNLEAVY objected.

BETHANY MARCUM explained that Amendment 2:

Would prevent abortion service providers from contracting with school districts and educational service organizations.

Would prohibit abortion service providers from supplying materials to school districts on human sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases.

Abortion services providers would not be permitted to provide instruction on sexually transmitted diseases and sexuality to school districts.

[4:32:30 PM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER asked if would make more sense to tell a school district what issues they are allowed to address so they don't

authorize materials that contravene those issues. She suggested that a religious organization might provide materials that might be objectionable, in principle, under this amendment. She emphasized that the issue is not who provides the materials, it is the material being provided. She concluded that the underlying interest is in having control over what kind of materials and information are provided.

She asked if that is correct.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said yes, but also not having industry representatives in the school.

SENATOR GARDNER asked if the objection is to the industry or the materials.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said the objection is to the message in the school for a captive audience. He said parents believe their kids are going to school to learn the Three R's. He wants to have discussions regarding certain topics at home, not in school. He opined that school is not an appropriate venue for this topic or industry.

SENATOR GARDNER asked what happens if it were a condom manufacturer or birth control pharmaceutical company providing information about sexuality or sexually transmitted diseases.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said it is a good question.

[4:35:30 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL said they are talking about an industry coming into schools to market a product to a captive audience. She thought the same philosophy would apply to other companies.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said the topic is not shared by all parents of the captive audience.

SENATOR GARDNER maintained that it is not about the marketing of the product, which is not addressed by the language in the amendment, it is about the provider. She opined, given the strong language about options for parents to withdraw or not have children participate in any instruction concerning sexuality or sexually transmitted disease, and parents' right to review the materials beforehand, this language is not needed. A parent who has concerns can opt out.

She stated that the amendment clearly is targeted for one particular organization. If you object to the organization, that's one thing, but a bunch of different organizations might provide objectionable material for any number of reasons. Parents already have every opportunity to know what is happening and when it is happening and can choose to not provide active consent.

[4:37:53 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL referred to page 1, line 2, where it discusses contracting with a provider who provides medical service and promoting the medical services to minors. That would require parental consent. She concluded that medical intervention is being discussed.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY added, in some ways, we don't know what is being discussed. He said that he and others feel that schools are not an appropriate place for this industry's marketing. Kids need to learn content in schools. There is not enough time to do everything and some things should not be happening in schools.

[4:40:19 PM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER suggested saying schools may not provide materials or instruction about sexuality and sexually transmitted diseases at all.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY asked if Senator Gardner is offering an amendment.

SENATOR GARDNER said no. She opined that there are times when that information should be available to students, such as from school nurses. There is an appropriate time to discuss those issues. She emphasized that the subtext of what has been proposed is that those topics do not belong in schools and the focus should be on reading, writing, and arithmetic.

SENATOR HUGGINS spoke of schools needing written permission from parents for school nurses to dispense aspirin. He submitted that school staff should not act as medical practitioners. This bill reinforces that.

SENATOR GIESSEL stated that there is a distinct difference between an educator in the school and an individual from outside the school who works for a company or industry and promotes their business and industry. The bill attempts to address that in science class a teacher in presents unbiased facts and the

school would inform parents of controversial issues and there would be a consent procedure.

[4:44:01 PM](#)

SENATOR GARDNER stated that Amendment 2 is about keeping Planned Parenthood out of schools. She argued, "If you want students to not be provided information on materials about sexuality or about sexually transmitted diseases in schools, then just say that. If you want the material to comply to the unbiased and approved, say that. If you want parents to know about it and give written permission for it, the bill already does that, with or without this amendment." She stated that she does not see any point to the amendment.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said it was a good discussion.

SENATOR HUGGINS suggested there should be a separation of Planned Parenthood and school.

SENATOR GARDNER said that is a different discussion. If the goal is to prevent outsiders, or un-vetted material, or biased material, many organizations could be listed without really capturing what you want. What you want is that the material is approved, not unbiased, and provided by qualified, competent people, she said.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said it was a good discussion. He removed his objection to Amendment 2.

SENATOR GARDNER objected.

A roll call vote was taken. Senators Stevens, Huggins, Giessel, and Dunleavy voted in favor of adopting Amendment 2 to SB 89, and Senator Gardner voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 2 was adopted by a 4 to 1 vote.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY opened public testimony.

[4:47:28 PM](#)

LINCOLN SAITO, Chief Operating Officer, North Slope Borough School District, testified against SB 89. He said it encroaches on the local school board's rights. People from the Regional Corporation and non-profit corporations are welcome to come into the schools to speak to students and do demonstrations and surveys. It is the local school district's right to control who goes into schools. He also objected to requiring written permission for surveys.

[4:49:37 PM](#)

At ease

[4:49:56 PM](#)

JON WATTS, representing himself, testified in support of SB 89. He said he is a member of a group called Alaskans Against the Common Core. He spoke of privacy rights of parents and opposition to the sharing of data by districts with outside organizations.

[4:52:27 PM](#)

MONICA WATTS, representing herself, testified in support of SB 89. She voiced concern about Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) restrictions on parents to make decisions concerning their children.

[4:53:36 PM](#)

ALLISON CURRY, Staff, Planned Parenthood, testified in opposition to SB 89. She said, as a reproductive health care provider and a sexual health educator, Planned Parenthood sees the devastating effects of sexual abuse and sexually transmitted infections every day. While the bill appears to be about parental rights, it does have dangerous consequences that put the health and future of youth at risk, especially youth with absent or disengaged parents. Parental involvement in their children's education is vital and it should be encouraged. However, Alaska has a child sexual abuse rate that is six times higher than the national average. Alaska also continues to lead the nation with the highest sexually transmitted infection (STI) rates. Teens are at the highest rates for infection. In 2013, 63 percent of new cases of chlamydia were in 15 to 19 year-olds.

MS. CURRY said we should be working together to ensure that Alaska youth has the resources and information they need to lead healthy and productive lives. She opined that SB 89 does the opposite of that. The bill would affect access not only to sexual health education, but also extends to education on sexual assault and awareness like in Erin's Law.

She said that Planned Parenthood does work closely with some schools, community organizations, and other social service agencies in Alaska to provide a variety of educational opportunities that are tailored for each community. Subjects that Planned Parenthood teaches are prevention, healthy relationships, consent, values and boundaries, as well as pregnancy prevention. By targeting providers of a safe and legal

service, who are also qualified providers of sexual health education, this bill is cutting Alaska students off from the education and information they need to make smart choices about their health. Comprehensive sex education has consistently proven to delay the onset of sexual activity and lower rates of STI's, as well as lower teen pregnancy rates. She concluded that we cannot afford to limit access to the tools that kids need to make healthy choices. She asked the committee to consider the health and safety of all Alaskan youth and pull SB 89 from consideration.

SENATOR GARDNER asked about chlamydia and teen pregnancy rates in Alaska.

MS. CURRY said Alaska has twice the national average for chlamydia rates, and higher rates than that in some areas. She said she would have to follow up with teen pregnancy rate information.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY asked how long Planned Parenthood has been in Alaska.

MS. CURRY replied that it has been in Juneau since June 2009, but she did not know how long it has been in the state.

SENATOR GARDNER asked what the consequences of untreated, undiagnosed chlamydia are.

MS. CURRY said infertility is the direst impact. Chronic pelvic pain is another. She noted that chlamydia is asymptomatic, which is an issue.

[4:58:23 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL said despite Planned Parenthood's efforts, chlamydia is rising. She said she has seen the undercover videos of Planned Parenthood, which document inappropriate advice. She asked if it was an issue for Planned Parenthood Northwest.

MS. CURRY asked for an example of the evidence.

SENATOR GIESSEL said there were many examples, such as underage females being told not to disclose their age and abortion advice.

MS. CURRY said Planned Parenthood has a strict requirement for reporting sexual abuse of underage girls and no one would instruct a young girl to keep that to herself. She pointed out

that Planned Parenthood is not at liberty to promote abortion. The health care staff provides all pregnancy options and it is up to the patient to make that decision. They abide by Alaska state law regarding minors and notify parents if a minor were to request abortion services.

[5:01:25 PM](#)

TARYN LUSKDEET, representing herself, testified in support of SB 89. She said she is a part of the IDEA Action Group and a member of Alaskans Against the Common Core. She said she helped work on a version of the bill, which would affirm parents' natural rights. She did not think it was intended, but one version of the bill puts parameters on parents' rights. Parental rights trump local school boards' rights. She suggested changes to the bill, such as Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) shall recognize the natural rights of parents to direct the education of their children.

[5:06:02 PM](#)

DR. BARBARA HANEY, representing herself, testified in support of SB 89. She spoke strongly of parents' rights. She testified in favor of the amendments. She spoke of a case in Oregon related to Planned Parenthood where a teacher was fired. She said the Planned Parenthood curriculum ties to the Common Core standards.

SENATOR GARDNER asked how the national sexuality standards are tied to Common Core. She understood that Common Core standards deal with language arts and math only.

DR. HANEY said that embedded in those standards is something called "informational text." Planned Parenthood put together a reading curriculum that is tied to the informational text in the school district and they tie into the Common Core. She said other providers use informational text that are keyed to Alaska standards through the Common Core standards.

SENATOR GARDNER suggested that those materials have more to do with curriculum, but not standards.

DR. HANEY spoke of the Medicaid expansion curriculum.

[5:12:51 PM](#)

JACK WALSH, Superintendent, Craig City School District, testified against Amendment 2. He was hoping the providers would be defined so that the helpers who come into the school would not be banned. He said he does not wish to eliminate skilled providers from talking to kids about important issues.

SENATOR GARDNER asked Mr. Walsh and other school districts what the impact of all the provisions in the bill would be; the cost of providing notice and tracking permission slips, the validity of test results, particularly when they are used to measure student progress and to evaluate teachers. She asked if there were concerns about distorted data if parents pull their children out of testing and about the overall impact on student education and cost.

MR. WALSH said the Craig district is unique in that it serves 300 in Craig and 300 students across the state in a correspondence program. If too many parents opt out on assessments or surveys, the district doesn't get a good picture of the school's climate or connectedness as a small district. He added that mailing costs would be significant.

[5:17:11 PM](#)

ED GRAY, representing himself, testified in support of SB 89, including the two amendments. He shared his experience with the abortion industry. He said they have students make bad decisions. He asked the legislature to help protect his children.

[5:20:52 PM](#)

MIKE COONS, representing himself, testified in support of SB 89 and the two amendments. He spoke in favor of parental control regarding education. He spoke against a variety of other subjects taught.

[5:23:56 PM](#)

RACHELLE SIEBER, representing herself, testified in support of SB 89, including the amendments. She spoke in favor of parental rights and against Planned Parenthood. She recommended the undercover program called Live Action.

[5:25:35 PM](#)

POISE BOGGS, representing herself, testified in opposition to SB 89. She questioned the wording in Section 1 regarding test assessments. She question whether Section 1 would require teachers to show parents the content of the tests, which isn't allowed.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY said the intent is not to have anyone breach protocols or test security.

MS. BOGGS asked where the intent is.

MS. MARCUM said Legislative Legal chose the language because it is consistent with tests that are not measured by teachers.

[5:29:07 PM](#)

SACHA PETTITT, Teacher, Mat-Su Borough School District, testified in support of SB 89. She suggested a correction to the language to allow parents' natural rights. She pointed out that parents' opting out indicates a need for a revision in the curriculum.

CHAIR DUNLEAVY held SB 89 in committee.

[5:31:41 PM](#)

There being nothing further to come before the committee, Chair Dunleavy adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee at 5:31 p.m.