

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 4, 2017

3:07 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Chair
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Vice Chair
Representative Chris Tuck
Representative Adam Wool
Representative Chris Birch
Representative DeLena Johnson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Gary Knopp
Representative Andy Josephson (alternate)
Representative Chuck Kopp (alternate)

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 184

"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

HOUSE BILL NO. 173

"An Act establishing the Alaska Climate Change Response Commission; relating to the powers and duties of the Alaska Climate Change Response Commission; establishing the climate change response fund; and relating to the surcharge on oil produced in the state."

- HEARD & HELD

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR SENATE BILL NO. 54(FIN)

"An Act relating to crime and criminal law; relating to violation of condition of release; relating to sex trafficking; relating to sentencing; relating to imprisonment; relating to parole; relating to probation; relating to driving without a license; relating to the pretrial services program; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARING CANCELED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 184

SHORT TITLE: DISCRIMINATION: GENDER ID.;SEXUAL ORIENT.

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) JOSEPHSON

03/17/17 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/17/17 (H) STA, JUD
05/04/17 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 173

SHORT TITLE: CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) JOSEPHSON

03/10/17 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/10/17 (H) STA, RES, FIN
04/11/17 (H) STA AT 5:30 PM BARNES 124
04/11/17 (H) Heard & Held
04/11/17 (H) MINUTE(STA)
05/04/17 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 184 as prime sponsor.

MEGAN HOLLAND, Staff

Representative Andy Josephson

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sectional analysis for HB 184 on behalf of Representative Josephson, prime sponsor.

ALIZA KAZMI, Policy Specialist

Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (ANDVSA)

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 184.

MELISSA GREEN, Principle Investigator

Anchorage LGBT Discrimination Survey

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information during the hearing on HB 184.

MATTHEW SCHULTZ, Minister
Christians for Equality;
Alaska Christian Conference
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 184.

BILLY FARRELL, Executive Director
Identity Inc.
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 184.

MARTY BUSCAGLIA, Executive Director
Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (ASCHR)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 184

MEGAN HOLLAND, Staff
Representative Andy Josephson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the committee substitute (CS) for
HB 173 on behalf of Representative Josephson, prime sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB
173, as prime sponsor.

DANIELLE REDMOND
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

BUCK LINDEKUGEL, Conservation Attorney
Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

BOB SHAVELSON, Advocacy Director
Cook Inletkeeper
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

ELIZABETH RODERICK
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

KAREN CAMERON

P.E.P.P.A.

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

KRISTEN COLLINS, Organizer

Alaska Center

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

ANN RAPPOPORT

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

BJOMA OLSEN

Kachemak Bay Conservation Society (KBCS)

Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

MIKE SALLEE

Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

CEAL SMITH

Alaska Climate Caucus;

Alaska Climate Action Network

Eagle River, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

MOIRA INGLE

Chugiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

RAYMOND O'NEILL

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

MICHELLE O'NEIL PURYEAR

Talkeetna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

CARL WASSILLIE, Biologist

Alaska's Big Village Network (ABVN)

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

ERIC SHAETZLE

Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 173.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:07:01 PM](#)

CHAIR JONATHAN KREISS-TOMKINS called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:07 p.m. Representatives LeDoux, Tuck, Wool, Birch, and Kreiss-Tomkins were present at the call to order. Representative Johnson arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 184-DISCRIMINATION: GENDER ID.;SEXUAL ORIENT.

[3:08:40 PM](#)

CHAIR KREISS-TOMKINS announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 184, "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."

[3:08:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HB 184, stated that there have been various attempts at advancing the proposed legislation - both during the Twenty-Seventh Alaska State Legislature, 2011-2012, and the Twenty-Eighth Alaska State Legislature, 2013-2014. He mentioned key events in the civil rights movement in America: the Civil War, the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, the Women's Suffrage Movement, Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Fair Housing Act of 1968. He maintained that the "last frontier" of civil rights is anti-discrimination legislation nationwide. He referred to U.S. Supreme Court civil rights decisions - Lawrence v. Texas [2003], Romer v. Evans [1996], Bowers v. Hardwick [1986], and Obergefell v. Hodges [2015] - and asserted that no one believes that civil rights are fully implemented relative to race and gender or that the issue has been resolved. He maintained that the issue mostly has been resolved as a matter of law; what is "tricky" is the enforcement of civil rights.

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REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON stated that the proposed legislation would give the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (ASCHR) jurisdiction over discrimination in housing, lending, employment, and public accommodations - specifically as the discrimination relates to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. It would give the ASCHR power to investigate the discrimination and offer remedies. He said that ASCHR has requested that it be given these powers. Currently because of the lack of jurisdiction in these issues, ASCHR must turn away these matters and absolve itself of these kinds of discriminatory practices. He asserted that fundamentally there are important personal, liberty, spiritual, and economic interests at stake.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON explained that a religion exemption has been added to HB 184, which was not in the previous bills introduced. He maintained that such an exemption is compelled by the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Hosanna-Tabor Church v. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and would offer comfort to those concerned that they would be compelled to not discriminate when their faith dictated otherwise. He relayed that Alaska's largest city, the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA), has implemented a similar law, but only after a long fight, as has the capital city, Juneau. He maintained that "this is ... the place where the world is headed, and so we might as well nudge it along and help it get there."

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX relayed that she is curious about the "religion" defense. She referred to a case in Washington or Oregon: a woman who owned a cake shop refused to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex couple; she was sued by the couple; she alleged that her religious freedom was impacted; and she lost the case. She asked if under HB 184, this could happen in Alaska with the same results.

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REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON replied that Washington State Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the baker did not have such a right. He stated that even though HB 184 has a religious exemption, there may not be such a right under the proposed legislation either. He mentioned that he needs to spend more time contemplating the proposed legislation and its nuances, which includes the level of scrutiny that would be applied and the question of fundamental right. He expressed his belief that

similar [religious belief] claims were made relative to race and gender. He stated that it is his hope, notwithstanding the religious exemption, that the Alaska Supreme Court may be concerned about that sort of claim. He said, "To be clear, the cake may not be baked in the church kitchen, but it would be baked." He reiterated further research is needed on the proposed legislation.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked for a situation in which the issue of "religious freedom" would apply, if not in a situation like the one in Washington.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON referred to page 4, Section 5, of HB 184 and said that the proposed legislation would apply in a church hierarchy in which a person was applying to be a member of the clergy and wanted to assert a right to a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) lifestyle. He said in that circumstance, the exemption would apply, and the church could decline the person based on the person's sexual preference, gender, or other orientation.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX suggested that if Section 5 presents the only exemption, then the exemption only refers to hiring a minister or a priest.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON responded, "I think that is correct." He added that he believes that the reason the MOA ordinance was able to pass was because of its sensitivities to the need for a religious exemption.

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MEGAN HOLLAND, Staff, Representative Andy Josephson, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Josephson, prime sponsor of HB 184, paraphrased from the sectional analysis included in the committee packet, which read as follows [original punctuation included]:

Section 1: Amends AS 18.80.060 the powers and duties of the Human Rights Commission. The section adds "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the list of protected categories that include race, religion, color, national ancestry, physical or mental disability, age, sex, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood.

Section 2: Amends AS 18.80.200 to add "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the list of discriminations which are cause for public concern, and asserts the need for the state to prevent such discrimination in employment, credit and financing practices, public accommodations and sale, lease or rental of real property.

Section 3: Amends AS 18.80.210 to add "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the categories of protected civil rights.

Section 4: Amends AS 18.80.220 to add "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the prohibitions against unlawful employment practices.

Section 5: Creates a new section under AS 18.80.220 which provides a religious exemption for the prohibitions against discrimination under the area of employment, stating that section 4 does not apply to an employment relationship between a religious organization and a minister employed by the religious organization.

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REPRESENTATIVE WOOL asked if the exemption in Section 5 could apply to the protected categories in Section 1 [on page 1 of HB 184] - race, religion, color, national ancestry, physical or mental disability, age, sex, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood.

MS. HOLLAND answered, "Yes, that exemption does apply to those other categories." She stated that a church would be exempt from discriminating based on the protected categories when hiring someone for a "minister" type position

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL offered that there are certain human rights protections and asked if it would be totally within the law to state that someone was not being hired due to age or race, for example.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON relayed that his wife is a practicing Lutheran. There are three main Lutheran Church synods - the Wisconsin Synod, the Missouri Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The Missouri Synod does not allow for a woman to be a pastor; the Evangelical Lutheran Church synod does allow

a woman to be a pastor. He said he is confident that an exemption due to gender is allowed in that situation. He opined that an exemption due to race in a religious setting is concerning and offensive.

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL asked about a religious school using the exemption to not hire staff, such as teachers or janitors, because they are "x, y, or z."

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MS. HOLLAND replied that she believes that the U.S. Supreme Court case [Hosanna-Tabor v. EEOC], which created the exemption, addressed a specific type of employment that could compromise the internal governance of the institution. She maintained that the employment of a janitor may not compromise that governance, but the employment of a teacher might. She stated that it is a very specific exemption; she offered to research that question and provide a more definite answer.

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REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX offered that Section 5 of the proposed legislation only appears to exempt a minister, and a minister is clearly prescribed. She asked if under HB 184, a Jewish school would have to hire maybe a practicing Muslim who on his/her free time advocates for the end of Israel.

MS. HOLLAND replied that it would depend on the position for which that person was hired. She expressed her belief that if it were a ministerial type position, the exemption would apply, and if not, it would not apply. She agreed that it is a very narrow, specific exemption, and its purpose is to protect the internal governance of religious institutions.

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REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON mentioned that his wife attended a Lutheran college; for tax purposes, she is considered a "Minister of the Gospel." He maintained that the term "minister" may be broadly interpreted. He relayed that the language in the proposed legislation copies the language in the MOA ordinance; it may not be perfect, and it may not be language that the committee wants to adopt.

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MS. HOLLAND continued to paraphrase from the sectional analysis included in the committee packet, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 6: Amends AS 18.80.230 to add "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the prohibitions against unlawful practices in public accommodations.

Section 7: Amends AS 18.80.240 to add "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the prohibitions against unlawful practices in the sale or rental of real property.

Section 8: Amends AS 18.80.250 to add "sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression" to the prohibitions against unlawful practices in financing and extending credit.

Section 9: Amends AS 18.80.255 to add "sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression" to the prohibitions against unlawful practices by the state or its political subdivisions.

Section 10: Defines blockbusting, and amends AS 18.80.300 to add "sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression" to the prohibitions against unlawful practices in blockbusting, or practices by a real estate agents [sic] to close a transaction.

Section 11: Amends AS 18.80.300 to add definitions of "gender identity or expression," and "sexual orientation" to Alaska statute.

CHAIR KREISS-TOMKINS asked for a definition of "blockbusting."

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON suggested that blockbusting is an unlawful practice whereby a real estate agent, for example, tries to undermine the right of someone to live in a certain neighborhood by suggesting to the neighbors that there is reason to leave.

MS. HOLLAND stated that blockbusting is a practice of trying to keep certain people out of certain [residential] areas - a real estate version of segregation. She gave an example: raising the price for someone based on their ethnicity, religion, or sexual orientation. She added that there are various methods to

do that, which include convincing people in the neighborhood that there will be certain consequences of that person moving into the neighborhood.

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REPRESENTATIVE TUCK summarized by saying, "It's basically segregating neighborhoods."

[3:34:45 PM](#)

ALIZA KAZMI, Policy Specialist, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault (ANDVSA), began her testimony by saying that she and the membership of ANDSVA will need to further examine Section 5 regarding religious exemption. She said that of particular concern to the providers under ANDVSA's 19 member programs, which consist of the domestic violence shelters and victim services throughout the state, is the vulnerability of transgender ("trans") people to sexual and other types of violence.

MS. KAZMI paraphrased from her written testimony, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault strongly supports HB 184 ('Discrimination: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation'). We urge you to also support it and ensure that it passes. This important legislation needs to be a priority - it cannot wait.

Even with important policy gains, and gradual socio-cultural shifts towards understanding and tolerance, the LGBTQ community continuously faces very real discrimination and inequality. **This discrimination and inequality perpetuates high levels of violence against people who are LGBTQ. Responding to and preventing such discrimination and violence is a civil rights and human rights issue.**

The transgender community in particular, and specifically trans youth and trans women of color, face the threat of violence on a daily basis and need laws in place to protect them from discrimination. This vulnerability can be related to a lack of resources due to deeply imbedded disenfranchisement

and discrimination--in school, housing, employment, and access to health care.

To highlight just a few statistics

- **Statistics documenting transgender people's experience of sexual violence indicate horrific levels of sexual abuse and assault. One in two transgender individuals are sexually abused or assaulted at some point in their lives. More than half experienced some form of intimate partner violence.** (2010 report by National Center for Victims of Crime and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, 2015 US Transgender Survey)
- **Some reports estimate that transgender survivors may experience rates of sexual assault up to 66 percent, often coupled with physical assaults or abuse. This indicates that the majority of transgender individuals are living with the aftermath of trauma and the fear of possible repeat victimization** (2010 report by National Center for Victims of Crime and the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs)
- **12 percent of transgender youth report being sexually assaulted in K-12 settings by peers or educational staff; 13 percent of African-American transgender people surveyed were sexually assaulted in the workplace; and 22 percent of homeless transgender individuals were assaulted while staying in shelters.** (2011 *Injustice at Every Turn: A Report of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey*)
- **There was an 11% increase in anti-LGBTQ homicides in 2014. Looking at broad category of homicide victims, 50% were trans women of color** (2014 National Report on Hate Violence Against LGBTQ and HIV-Affected Communities, National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs)

As service providers, we encourage any legislative frameworks to support us as we continuously expand our LGBTQ cultural competence.

Discrimination compounds economic, health, and other disparities and is a root cause of violence that perpetuates the culture of violence against people who are LGBTQ; and the social acceptance of this violence. We join our colleagues who are victim advocates all around the country in saying: to create a social, political, and economic environment in which violence

against women no longer exists, we must support equality and safety for all.

Let's make sure that Alaska is on the right side of this issue. Please take a stand and show that Alaskans do not support discrimination and violence, and do support tolerance and peace. Support HB 184. Thank you.

[3:39:38 PM](#)

MELISSA GREEN, Principle Investigator, Anchorage LGBT Discrimination Survey, made reference to two previous studies she has been involved with that are relevant to the proposed legislation: "One in Ten: A Profile of Alaska's Lesbian and Gay Community," 1986, is a statewide survey of 734 gay, lesbian, and bisexual respondents on a wide variety of questions including experiencing discrimination, violence, and harassment; and "Identity Reports: Sexual Orientation Bias in Alaska," 1989, a report looking at housing discrimination in Anchorage and actual case studies of violence, harassment, and discrimination statewide. She stated that in 2009, when Anchorage began to consider its ordinance, the research she just mentioned was two decades old. After the 2009 attempt to pass the ordinance failed, it was decided that the research should be made current and that gender identity and expression should be included along with sexual orientation in the examination of discrimination. The result of that effort was the "Anchorage LGBT Discrimination Survey," which was conducted from January through March 2011.

MS. GREEN relayed that the key findings of the survey were disseminated in a preliminary report in November 2011, entitled "Anchorage LGBT Discrimination Survey: Preliminary Report," included in the committee packet. The final report, completed March 2012, presents the key findings in the executive summary along with detailed methodology and data, extended discussion of the findings of the two prior reports, comparisons with other types of discrimination in Alaska such as racial discrimination, examination of several years of case filings of both ASCHR and the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission (AERC) to date, and a comparison of the anti-LGBT discrimination findings in the 2011 survey with national LGBT data on anti-LGBT discrimination.

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MS. GREEN stated that the sample size for the survey was 268 LGBT men and women out of an estimated 11,000 LGBT residents in

MOA - an estimate based on the Williams Institute national estimates of 3.5 percent of Americans identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual and about [.3] percent identifying as transgender. She added that the Williams Institute estimates that statewide there are about 19,200 LGBT adults, of whom 13,100 are in the Alaska workforce. She relayed that she will focus on employment discrimination data in her testimony because it is the most common type of discrimination brought before ASCHR and AERC. The 2011 survey found that 44 percent of the 268 respondents were harassed by their employers or reported that they were harassed by their employers or coworkers because of their sexual orientation or gender identity; 16 percent reported they were forced to leave their jobs due to harassment; 21 percent reported that they were turned down for a job because of gender identity or sexual orientation; 18 percent were denied promotions; and 15 percent said they were fired because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

MS. GREEN relayed that when comparing the four groups of people, transgender people reported higher levels of discrimination and violent harassment than was reported by lesbian, gay, and bisexual people, but the figures were high among all groups. She said that the findings on sexual orientation and gender identity discrimination were comparable to rates of racial discrimination reported in the 2009 Anchorage Community Survey (ACS) conducted by the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Justice Center. She maintained that the rates for anti-LGBT discrimination in the 2011 Anchorage survey were like those reported in national studies.

MS. GREEN referred to the 1989 report and stated that one component of this "prima facie" report is the 84 documented actual instances of anti-gay bias, discrimination, harassment, or violence, including three murders. She claimed that most importantly, the narrative stories compiled in the report were evaluated by a former intake investigator of ASCHR, who found that 42 percent of the instances would have been jurisdictional under AS 18.80, if AS 18.80 had included sexual orientation as a protected class at that time. She added that the 1989 report did not look at gender identity. She maintained that she was not aware of any current efforts to compile similar narratives of discrimination. She questioned why studies on the issue must be done by the population that is trying to get protection from discrimination, while at the same time, ASCHR has had to refrain from investigating the cases, because it is not jurisdictional. She said, "The whole point is - let's make it jurisdictional."

MS. GREEN concluded by saying that in 2015, the Williams Institute report, entitled "Employment Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Alaska," estimated that about six cases per year would likely be reported to ASCHR if sexual orientation and gender identity and expression were made jurisdictional.

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MATTHEW SCHULTZ, Minister, Christians for Equality; Alaska Christian Conference, testified that he believes that sexual orientation and gender identity should be added to the anti-discrimination statute so that all Alaska citizens may have equal protection. He lamented that much of the discrimination that occurs is done under the guise of spiritual leadership and under the false impression that the Christian faith requires it. He stated that he wishes to correct that error and encourage Alaska to protect LGBTQ people from discrimination and persecution. He maintained that the ministerial exemption is complete and sufficient; and freedom of religion would not be in jeopardy under the proposed legislation. He said that he has studied and taught extensively on the topic of morality and ethics; and he can say without hesitation that any system that allows for discrimination against even one person is immoral. He said that protected categories exist because people within those categories are in physical and emotional jeopardy; their jobs are in jeopardy; they are discriminated against; and it is Alaska's ethical responsibility to stand up for them, to stand with them, and to address and prevent discrimination of the LGBTQ community. He stated that it is not illegal to be gay, yet a person can be fired simply for placing a photo of his/her legal spouse on his/her desk. He maintained that people can lose their homes because they are gay. He emphasized that Alaska can and must be better. He asked that HB 184 be moved out of committee.

[3:52:22 PM](#)

BILLY FARRELL, Executive Director, Identity Inc., relayed that the mission of Identity Inc. is to advance Alaska's LGBTQ community; its members envision a world in which all Alaskans can be their authentic selves in their communities and still feel safe, supported, and welcomed. He stated that the LGBTQ community has experienced much progress in recent years, but the fear of discrimination is still very real for many Alaskans today. He maintained that due to the hard work of passionate residents and lawmakers, LGBTQ people living in Anchorage and

Juneau and city employees in Bethel have basic nondiscrimination protection. He asserted that most Alaska residents still live in communities without equal protection from discrimination due to sexual orientation and/or gender identity and expression; therefore, every day many must decide between being "out" or "open" and keeping their jobs, staying in their homes, or (indisc.) in public.

MR. FARRELL reported that it is not acceptable that members of the LGBTQ community must face this injustice with little to no recourse. He stated that because Alaska's nondiscrimination protections currently do not include sexual orientation and gender identity, ASCHR is barred from investigating these claims of discrimination. He asserted that HB 184 is needed so someone facing discrimination can report it; it can be investigated; and the person can seek justice for the wrongdoing.

MR. FARRELL relayed that the state's lack of inclusive nondiscrimination protection hampers its economic growth; equality is good for business; 89 percent of Fortune 500 companies prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, and nearly six in ten prohibit discrimination based on gender identity. He maintained that changing Alaska's laws to reflect public values will help Alaska attract and retain the best and the brightest to the workforce. All of Alaska's workers, including those who are gay and transgender, should be treated fairly and equally by the laws of the state. All Alaskans should have the opportunity to earn a living and provide for themselves and their families. He said that updating the statutes will ensure that all Alaskans will be judged on their job performances and qualifications - nothing more and nothing less. No one should have to live in fear of being legally fired for reasons that have nothing to do with his/her job performance.

MR. FARRELL stated that there has been a great deal of discussion in the current legislative session about the future of Alaska; he has had the privilege of working with many young LGBTQ Alaskans from across the state. He relayed that these young people are not considering staying in Alaska for college or employment, because they do not feel welcomed or safe. He conceded that HB 184 alone cannot change that culture and climate of hate, but it could be a foundation for all Alaskans feeling safe, welcome, and (indisc.) in their communities. He concluded by saying, "Discrimination is not an Alaskan value, and it's time to make those values law."

3:56:30 PM

MARTY BUSCAGLIA, Executive Director, Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (ASCHR), testified that the religious exemption protection currently exists under current Alaska law. She cited the Alaska Administrative Code (ACC), 6 AAC 30.985, which read as follows:

Any organization operated for charitable or educational purposes and supervised or controlled by or in connection with a religious organization is not prohibited from limiting admission to or giving preference to persons of the same religion or denomination or otherwise making a hiring decision that will promote the religious principles for which it is established or maintained.

MS. BUSCAGLIA relayed that in November 2016, ASCHR passed a resolution which called on the legislature to expressly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. She stated that ASCHR authorized staff to draft proposed regulations addressing the inclusion of prohibitions against discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and expression under the existing law prohibiting sex discrimination. She maintained that the language for the regulation has been drafted and is now in the Department of Law (DOL) for a legal opinion. She said that there are many steps to follow, including public comment, review by the governor and the legislature, and review by Legislative Legal and Research Services. She maintained that the resolution could be halted at any point.

MS. BUSCAGLIA stated the position of ASCHR on the proposed statute change: it would constitute a much stronger statement of the state's position on anti-discrimination; it would have greater force; and it would be a more robust interpretation of the law. She maintained that ASCHR's mission is to seek out and eradicate discrimination throughout the State of Alaska. The ASCHR has a long history of supporting equal rights for all Alaskans; since 1990, it has supported greater protections from discrimination based on sexual orientation. She relayed that Alaska's laws against discrimination are based on the principle that people should not be denied employment, a place to live, public accommodations, and government services for arbitrary reasons that are not connected to their abilities or qualifications. She maintained that making sure people are not discriminated against because of their sexual orientation or

gender identity and expression is consistent with this principle. She offered that Alaska has been a leader in adopting strong, simple civil rights protections: the Alaska Human Rights Act [1963] was adopted a year before the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964; Alaska added protections to its law for persons with disabilities three years before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990; strengthening its statute now to protect people in the LGBT community would be consistent with the strong advocacy of civil rights in the state.

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CHAIR KREISS-TOMKINS announced that HB 184 would be held over.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON referred to the testimony suggesting that someone could be terminated from his/her job because of displaying a picture of his/her lawful spouse, and he offered that committee members should find this very disturbing.

HB 173-CLIMATE CHANGE COMMISSION

[4:00:51 PM](#)

CHAIR KREISS-TOMKINS announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 173, "An Act establishing the Alaska Climate Change Response Commission; relating to the powers and duties of the Alaska Climate Change Response Commission; establishing the climate change response fund; and relating to the surcharge on oil produced in the state."

[4:01:16 PM](#)

MEGAN HOLLAND, Staff, Representative Andy Josephson, Alaska State Legislature, reviewed the changes introduced in the committee substitute (CS) for HB 173, labeled 30-LS0163\R, Bruce, 5/1/17 [hereafter referred to as "Version R"] on behalf of Representative Josephson, prime sponsor, as follows: the oil surcharge and state funding are removed from the Alaska Climate Change Response Commission; Sections 1-4 relating to the oil surcharge are removed; Section 44.19.666 creating the Climate Change Response Fund is removed; the phrase, "in the climate change response fund" is removed from Section 44.19.662; all mention of state funding as sources of funding for the commission are removed; and under the CS, the commission would be operated through user fees and grant funding.

[4:02:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked who the "users" would be in the reference to user fees.

MS. HOLLAND replied that users would include government entities, non-government entities, and non-profits - organizations working in green energy and climate change response. She maintained that the fees would be for grant writing services provided by the commission, as well as other forms of assistance.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked for confirmation that no entities, including the state, would be required to use the services or pay for anything if they decided that they did not want to use the commission. She said, "This is all entirely voluntary"

MS. HOLLAND answered yes. She clarified that Version R states that government entities and tribal organizations could not be charged user fees.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked, "If it's all voluntary, why wouldn't you just form a non-profit? Why do we need a bill to do something which is ... totally voluntary that is going to operate off of ... grant funds or people that think that it provides a good service and [want] to use it?"

[4:04:45 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON, Alaska State Legislature, responded that as a state commission, the Alaska Climate Change Response Commission would be tasked with mitigation, grant receipts, and coordination with other government and non-government institutions. It would represent a statement of public policy by the legislature that climate change is real and seriously impacts Alaska. He maintained that a commission is needed both to mitigate climate change and fund schools in Newtok and Kivalina that are threatened. He said that it would continue the work done by former Governor Sarah Palin's [Alaska Climate Change Sub-Cabinet]. He added that it would model its membership on the now defunct Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) commission by having local representation.

[4:06:58 PM](#)

MS. HOLLAND added that one of the primary purposes of the commission is to support non-profits and other entities in the

effort, not provide the same services as non-profits. She maintained that Alaska misses out on billions of dollars in federal and private funds for [climate change related] efforts.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX referred to the proposed Section 44.19.652 [on page 3 of Version R, beginning on line 12], entitled "Compensation", which mentions "per diem and travel expenses". She asked if that would be paid for through user fees and grants.

MS. Holland replied yes.

[4:08:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL referred to testimony during the 4/11/17 House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting citing a study, which stated that most of the economic impact of climate change is projected to be in the Interior due to the large amount of infrastructure in that region. He pointed out that the Interior is not on the list of regions in Version R from which members of the commission would be appointed.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON offered that to correct that omission, there is a forthcoming amendment to add a seat representing the Interior.

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL mentioned that with the selection [of commissioners] based on region, it would be unfortunate for a regional "battle" to ensue. He stated that climate change affects many places in Alaska; therefore, there may be conflict over funding or what region is in greatest need. He asked if the sponsor was concerned about this. He asked if the overall mission of the proposed legislation is to bring awareness to climate change or to mitigate it or something else.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON answered that he is not worried about regional tensions; they would be avoided because Version R is drafted such that the various regions would all be represented on the commission. He offered that like for the CZMA, the members of the commission would be those on the "frontlines" and in the best positions to know the impacts to their regions. He referred to the proposed Section 44.19.660 [on page 4 of Version R, beginning on line 13], entitled "Powers of the commission", and noted that the powers of the commission would be broad; the commission would be a clearinghouse for information, study, grant seeking, coordination with other agencies, public outreach, and monitoring and reporting. He mentioned that the

duties are also listed under the proposed Section 44.19.662 [on page 5 of Version R, beginning on line 2], entitled "Duties of the commission". He pointed out that the original version of HB 173 was more ambitious; it included a surcharge using the [Division of] Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR) [Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC)] fund. Version R is less ambitious in that there are fewer resources to accomplish what is proposed, but it is a starting point to begin the process. He relayed that two governors ago there was a belief that this was a concern; he maintained that the impact of climate change has only grown; and it is important to recommence these efforts.

[4:12:33 PM](#)

CHAIR KREISS-TOMKINS asked if under Version R, a designee would be permitted to attend a commission meeting in the place of a commissioner.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON responded that there is mention of alternate members and deputy commissioners. He expressed his confidence that with the large number of members on the commission, the absence of a single commissioner would not undermine the commission's work. He referred the committee to the proposed Section 44.19.656 [on page 3 of Version R, beginning on line 21], entitled "Alternate members".

[4:14:02 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WOOL asked if there are other commissions or committees working on these issues. He mentioned the [10th] Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting [5/1/17] and offered that there is a great deal of activity on the topic of climate change. He asked if there is redundancy.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON offered his understanding that although the lieutenant governor has a keen interest in climate change and is examining it as matter of policy for the [Governor Bill] Walker/[Lieutenant Governor Byron] Mallot administration, there is not a specific state effort. He offered that the topic of climate change comes up often in many legislative hearings, but as a state effort with a commission, it has been suspended since the Palin subcabinet was disbanded. He conceded that there is a great deal of research on climate change in Alaska, and it is a significant topic of research and concern for the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF); however, he offered that he is not aware of a centralized effort on this issue emanating from state government.

[4:15:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOHNSON referred to page 2, lines 6-7, of Version R - the proposed subparagraph (E) - which read, "Upper Cook Inlet area, including the Municipality of Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough", and noted that the area mentioned encompasses a large population of the state, and only one representative [for that area] is proposed for the commission. She opined that it would be disproportionately underrepresented. She asked about the goal of the composition of the commission, if not by population or equal representation.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON referred to the proposed Section 44.19.660 [on page 4 of Version R, beginning on line 13], which describes the powers of the commission, and the proposed Section 44.9.662 [on page 5 of Version R, beginning on line 2], which describes the duties of the commission. He noted that the duties of the commission would be broad and encompassing. He indicated that the intent for composition of the commission is not for a "one man, one vote" membership, like in the legislature, but more for the geographic representation; it would be the commissioners with the greatest stake and exposure to climate change.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX moved to bring the CS for HB 173, Version R, before the committee for discussion. There being no objection, the motion passed.

[4:18:23 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 4:18 p.m. to 4:20 p.m.

[4:19:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX moved to rescind the committee action to bring the CS for HB 173, Version R, before the committee for discussion. There being no objection, the action was rescinded. [The motion to bring Version R before the committee was treated as withdrawn].

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX moved to adopt the CS for HB 173, Version R, as the working document. There being no objection, Version R was adopted as a work draft.

[4:20:42 PM](#)

CHAIR KREISS-TOMKINS opened public testimony on HB 173.

4:20:58 PM

DANIELLE REDMOND testified that this year the state is faced with a massive budget deficit that has strained the legislature. She opined that in all these budget conversations, it is important to look ahead and to point out that Alaska is on the frontlines of climate change impacts, which will result in enormous costs for the state. She relayed that having a body to study these questions and support communities like Shishmaref, whose existence is at stake, seems like the very least Alaska should do.

4:22:24 PM

BUCK LINDEKUGEL, Conservation Attorney, Southeast Alaska Conservation Council (SEACC), testified that SEACC welcomes action by Representatives Josephson and Geran Tarr on climate change, because Alaska cannot ignore the long-term implications of climate change on Alaska's economy and unique way of life. He expressed his appreciation that the proposed legislation focuses on climate impacts to rural Alaska, because it would provide important support to local communities and non-profits, who are on the frontlines of this issue. He stated that Alaska needs to act now; the President of the United States has made climate denial a staple of his success and has appointed a climate denier to run the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He said, "It's time to get to work here in Alaska on positive local job-creating solutions to climate change."

4:24:12 PM

BOB SHAVELSON, Advocacy Director, Cook Inletkeeper, testified that Cook Inletkeeper is a non-profit started in 1995 focusing on clean water and healthy salmon. He maintained that "the debate is over"; it is well known that burning fossil fuels causes climate change and ocean acidification; and Alaska is on the frontlines of rapid climate change. He mentioned the receding glaciers, disappearing sea ice, and melting permafrost. He stated that in Kachemak Bay, there have been a variety of significant impacts directly linked to a warming climate: forest devastation by a massive aphid; extensive seabird die-off; hardshell clam die-off; decrease in razor clam population on the east side of Cook Inlet; and never-before-seen instances of paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP). He maintained that the most disturbing impact is the temperatures of the salmon

streams, which violates the clean water standards, causes stress in salmons, and makes them more vulnerable to pollution, predation, and disease. He said that climate change threatens the Alaskan lifestyle, and fisheries are at grave risk. He expressed his support for HB 173 and is disappointed that the funding mechanism was removed. He maintained that without adequate funding, HB 173 would be a "tiny baby step," and giant strides are needed to address the severity of the problem.

[4:26:38 PM](#)

ELIZABETH RODERICK testified that she appreciates that the legislature is considering acting on climate change; the state is not addressing the issue; action is overdue; and HB 173 will begin some movement on the issue. She maintained that many Alaskans are worried; she is losing sleep; and communities are experiencing economic losses. She stated that tourism and fisheries are the third and fourth largest sectors of the Alaska economy and relayed some of the consequences of climate change: in 2015, warm water temperatures and low river levels killed salmon in Matanuska and Susitna areas; hundreds of arctic char stocked by the Department of Fish & Game died; in January 2017, U.S. Secretary of Commerce [Penny Pritzker] granted Governor Walker's request for declaration of disaster for Alaska's salmon fisheries; the harvests in Kodiak, Prince William Sound, Chignik, and Lower Cook Inlet were much below the forecasts; and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) [U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC)] determined that increasing acidity in Alaska waters is dissolving the shells of snails feeding pick salmon, herring, and mackerel.

MS. RODERICK offered that the Arctic sea ice is considered the "air conditioner" for the world because of the role it plays in regulating global temperatures, and it is disappearing at an alarming rate. She reiterated that infrastructure is being badly impacted and will cost a great deal if not addressed now. She stated that Alaska has lost an estimated 300,000 caribou in northern Alaska from drowning and starvation due to the warmer temperatures. She maintained that the state's military leaders are declaring [climate change] to be the biggest threat to economic and national security. She expressed her disappointment with the elimination of the surcharge in Version R and asserted that Alaska needs to move forward with a climate change adaptation plan.

[4:29:46 PM](#)

KAREN CAMERON, P.E.P.P.A., testified that the Arctic is where the greatest changes are taking place. She lamented that Alaska is not the leader and model that it could be for the rest of the world. She maintained that a commission, such as proposed under HB 173, would allow a variety of communications between scientists, citizens, and governmental officials; Alaska could have one vision as to what needs to be done and how to go about it.

MS. CAMERON asserted that there are incredible sources of funding that Alaska is missing out on - the National Science Foundation (NSF), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and NOAA. Many non-profits could apply for this money, and the money could be funneled through the State of Alaska. She emphasized the importance of the commission members and encouraged the appointment of Adjutant General Laurie Hummel, Commissioner of the Department of Military & Veterans' Affairs (DMVA). She stated that there were many issues to consider and expressed her appreciation for the people focused on climate change.

[4:32:09 PM](#)

KRISTEN COLLINS, Organizer, Alaska Center, testified that she supports forming a commission and stated that Alaska's Arctic communities are already faced with the impact of a warming climate. She maintained that the proposed legislation represents a step that the state needs to take forward to be able to react and recover from climate change impacts. She offered her support for HB 173 and urged the committee to prioritize legislation that would enable communities to be resilient in the years and through the changes to come. She expressed her disappointment that the funding mechanism was removed from the proposed legislation; and she offered her support for HB 173.

[4:33:15 PM](#)

ANN RAPPOPORT testified that the proposed legislation would be a mix of relief and adjustment strategies for addressing climate change in Alaska. She mentioned her career in fish and wildlife biology and reiterated that Alaska is ground zero for climate change. She relayed impacts that she has seen in her 38 years in Alaska: glaciers melting and the gardening season lengthening significantly; coastal erosion and river flooding causing millions and millions of dollars of damage to countless villages and infrastructure throughout the state; and invasive

species spreading with threats to wild fish, wildlife, and habitats that support subsistence, commercial, and recreational uses of tremendous economic, cultural, and other benefits to all Alaskans.

MS. RAPPORT said, "It's way past time for the state to implement a thoughtful and coordinated approach to addressing these changes and threats to our existing economy and ways of life." She asserted that HB 173 would present a start to this approach. It would bring state agencies and elected leaders together in a climate change response commission to come up with solutions for Alaska. It would include grants, procurements, and technical and financial assistance to communities advancing renewable energy technology and advising the governor and legislature on climate policy. She maintained that all of these are very much needed. She stated that she is very disappointed in the change in the funding mechanism under Version R. She opined that the source of funding originally proposed - 1-cent per barrel surcharge on oil production - is appropriate due to the relationship between the production of oil and climate change; it is very reasonable; it would not impact the budget; and it would provide funding for the essential activities under HB 173. She mentioned that she is concerned that the user fees and grants proposed in Version R would not provide sufficient funding.

CHAIR KREISS-TOMKINS asked for an at-ease to pass the gavel to Vice Chair LeDoux.

[4:35:23 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 4:35 p.m. to 4:37 p.m.

[4:36:42 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR LEDOUX continued public testimony on HB 173.

[4:37:01 PM](#)

BJOMA OLSEN, Kachemak Bay Conservation Society (KBCS), testified that he recently has started an organization called Alaskans KNOW Climate Change to encourage Alaska to address the climate change issue. He relayed that the EPA has stated that over the past 60 years, Alaska has warmed 3 degrees Fahrenheit - more than twice the global average - and over 6 degrees in the winter during the same period. Three Iditarod [Trail Sled Dog Races] had to be moved to a Fairbanks restart. He added that Alaska is

witnessing the effects of climate change, which should put to rest any ideas of a "liberal conspiracy theory." He fully supports HB 173 and is also dismayed that the surcharge has been removed from the proposed legislation. He suggested that Alaska should join the European nations that have been taking large strides in addressing climate change adaptation and mitigation.

[4:38:59 PM](#)

MIKE SALLEE testified that he agrees with the other testifiers. He offered that a climate commission could possibly build upon already existing projects, such as: the one in which Thorne bay students created a working model of a water pump that works off the tides 24 hours per day; and studies of the food chain involving salmon and sable fish, specifically related to the dissolving shell of the tetrapod due to ocean acidification. He said he is very disappointed that the surcharge on oil was eliminated from the proposed legislation. He maintained that it is well documented that the oil industry has undermined the science connecting climate change to human activity. He asserted that he is apprehensive of the power of oil interests in influencing the Alaska legislature.

[4:41:32 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 4:41 p.m.

[4:41:56 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR LEDOUX continued public testimony on HB 173 after technical difficulties were resolved.

[4:42:40 PM](#)

CEAL SMITH, Alaska Climate Caucus; Alaska Climate Action Network, referred to a letter of support [dated 5/3/17] included in the committee packet and signed by over 170 people representing over 30 organizations in Alaska. She asserted that the issue of climate change is urgent and important; climate change is impacting Alaska profoundly and at an alarming rate; it is affecting people's everyday lives. She stated that the trends are not encouraging: every year since 2014 Alaska has had record-breaking temperatures; and this fall temperatures across large parts of the Arctic Ocean were 68 degrees Fahrenheit above normal. She relayed that the failure to act on climate change is hurting Alaskans. She said that nearly 15 years ago the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO) reported 86

percent of Alaska's Native villages are impacted; Kivalina, Koyukuk, Newtok and Shishmaref are in imminent danger; and she expressed her belief that it is past time that Alaska supports the relocation of these villages. She offered that when polling the members of her organizations, climate change is ranked one and two among the list of concerns. She expressed that her membership is in support of HB 173 and would like to see the funding mechanism restored.

[4:45:31 PM](#)

MOIRA INGLE testified that Alaska is at the forefront of climate change and Alaskans are seeing the effects of it. She lauded former Governor [Sarah] Palin's subcabinet and mentioned that former Governor [Sean] Parnell abandoned the effort. She emphasized that given the position of Alaska on the forefront of climate change in the U.S. and the world, state level action on climate change is long overdue. She expressed her support for HB 173 - to restart the effort - and her disappointment with the removal of the funding mechanism. She maintained that the proposed surcharge was modest and would have been levied on an appropriate industry - the fossil fuel industry - which has both benefited from oil extraction and is culpable in climate change. She referred to the 5/3/17 letter of support mentioned by the previous testifier and urged the committee to consider the suggestions in the letter for amendments to HB 173, as follows: to require the Commission to develop a climate change adaptation plan within two years; to expand the commission to include experts and representatives from more Interior census areas; and to increase the surcharge.

[4:48:20 PM](#)

RAYMOND O'NEILL testified that he has worked throughout the state as an environmental engineer - in Shishmaref, in Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta communities, and in Yukon Flats communities - and has seen the impact of global warming. He asserted that it is a climate crisis that is approaching an emergency. Across North America including Alaska, vector borne diseases are on the rise. The village of Shishmaref is eroding away; infrastructure is not being supported; and new infrastructure is not being brought in because of the need for the community to move. He maintained that attention to climate change is long overdue; it is hurting Alaska now; the community public health, safety, economy, and environment have been impacted in many ways. He recommended that the committee adopt the amendments suggested in the 5/3/17 letter of support. He said he is outraged that the

surcharge on fossil fuel would be questioned; the people of the communities most impacted are unable to fund the effort; and the industries that have profited from [the extraction of fossil fuels] need to assist.

[4:51:02 PM](#)

MICHELLE O'NEIL PURYEAR testified that she agrees with the proposed legislation; it is the social responsibility of any corporation doing resource extraction to reinvest in the communities they affect; and she considers it the cost of doing business.

[4:52:14 PM](#)

CARL WASSILLIE, Biologist, Alaska's Big Village Network (ABVN), testified that he is a Yup'ik biologist from the Kuskokwim [River] area. He stated that he is concerned about climate change; climate change resolutions have been issued from the Yukon-Kuskokwim region beginning in 2005; since 2003, multiple tribes of the region have requested that [actions] be taken domestically and internationally to adjust to the changes that are causing harm to communities. He maintained that the State of Alaska has responsibility to the citizens of Alaska and for preventing implications of human rights abuses associated with doing nothing about climate change. He stated that he supports HB 173 fully and is disappointed that the funding has been eliminated. (indisc.) He asserted that HB 173 would be a good step and expressed his appreciation for the state reevaluating what the Palin administration did in 2006. He said the impacts [of climate change] are not only physical but are psychological; the harm is ongoing, especially in coastal villages and river villages dealing with the loss of sea ice and increased flooding and erosion.

[4:54:51 PM](#)

ERIC SHAETZLE testified that Alaska must anticipate and prepare for the effects of climate change. He offered that even if the assessment of the numerous impacts was restricted solely to the fishing industry, those efforts would be justified. He maintained that ocean acidification and hydrologic cycle disruptions are direct threats to Alaska's economy. Alaska needs to protect the economic interest of Alaskans and identify opportunities for Alaska that might emerge because of the growing response to this global challenge.

4:55:53 PM

VICE CHAIR LEDOUX closed public testimony on HB 173.

4:56:06 PM

The committee took a brief at-ease at 4:56 p.m.

4:56:28 PM

VICE CHAIR LEDOUX announced that HB 173 would be held over.

4:56:55 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:57 p.m.