

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE

February 26, 2018

7:59 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gary Stevens, Chair
Senator Cathy Giessel
Senator John Coghill
Senator Tom Begich
Senator Shelley Hughes

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 185

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

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 185

SHORT TITLE: REEMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED TEACHERS & ADMIN

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MICCICHE

02/16/18	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/16/18	(S)	EDC, FIN
02/26/18	(S)	EDC AT 8:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR PETER MICCICHE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 185.

RACHEL HANKE, Staff
SENATOR MICCICHE
Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sectional on SB 185 on behalf of the sponsor.

LISA SKILES PARADY, Ph.D., Executive Director
Alaska Council of School Administrators
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided information and answered questions on SB 185.

KATHY LEA, Deputy Director/Chief Pension Officer
Division of Retirement and Benefits
Department of Administration (DOA)
Juneau, Alaska,

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 185.

NORM WOOTEN, Executive Director
Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

MARK MILLER, Ph.D., Superintendent
Juneau School District
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

PETE HOEPFNER, Member
Cordova School Board
Cordova, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

DEENA BISHOP, Ph.D., Superintendent
Anchorage School District
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

JACK WALSH, Superintendent
Craig School District
Craig, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

KATHERINE GARDNER, Executive Director Human Resources
Matanuska-Susitna School District
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

SHAWN ARNOLD, Superintendent

Nome Public Schools
Nome, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

SEAN DUSEK, Superintendent
Kenai Peninsula School District
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

PATRICK MAYER, Superintendent
Wrangell Public Schools
Wrangell, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

KAREN GABORIK, Ph.D., Superintendent
Fairbanks School District
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

KERRY BOYD, Superintendent
Yukon Koyukuk School District
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Supported SB 185.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[7:59:37 AM](#)

CHAIR GARY STEVENS called the Senate Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 7:59 a.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Giessel, Coghill, Begich, and Chair Stevens. Senator Hughes arrived shortly thereafter.

SB 185-REEMPLOYMENT OF RETIRED TEACHERS & ADMIN

[7:59:57 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS announced the consideration of SB 185 and his intent to hear and hold the bill.

[8:00:36 AM](#)

SENATOR PETER MICCICHE, , Alaska State Legislature, sponsor of SB 185 said the bill will reinstitute the retiree rehire provision that was adopted in 2005 through HB 161 with a sunset date of 2009. Alaska is experiencing a severe shortage of teachers, particularly in rural Alaska, but also of specialists throughout the state. Attracting and retaining teachers has become a critical issue for school districts. He has seen

advertisements calling for high school graduates to take a prep course to fill a classroom. He asked if the state wants a lifetime of experience filling a position temporarily or a high school graduate. The bill gives flexibility to hire retired teachers to temporarily fill positions. This bill is another tool in the short term while a long-term solution is worked on. House Finance has requested an actuarial, but the reality is that any other teacher filling that slot would have the same TRS [Teacher Retirement System] impact. The fiscal note is indeterminate at the moment.

[8:03:06 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked what impact the bill might have on the retirement or medical system.

[8:03:17 AM](#)

RACHEL HANKE, Staff, Senator Micciche, Alaska State Legislature, presented the sectional on SB 185 on behalf of the sponsor. She said some of those questions might be answered by the sectional, but Lisa Parady [Executive Director of the Alaska Council of School Administrators] would also be presenting on the bill.

Section 1: Allows school districts to rehire educators that have retired under the defined benefit plan or the defined contribution plan. Before a retired member can be considered to fill a position, the school district must publicly advertise the position for 10 business days and actively recruit to fill it with a person other than a retired member. A teacher whom is retired from the defined benefit or contribution plan must be retired for six months or more if they are younger than 62 or 60 days if they are 62 or older before they are considered for a rehire. The retired member must also certify that there was no prearrangement of reemployment made prior to retirement.

[8:04:12 AM](#)

Section 2: Would allow for retirees who are rehired as permitted by section 1, to continue to receive retirement benefits during the period of reemployment.

[8:04:21 AM](#)

Section 3: Will make retirees who are reemployed as permitted by section 1 of this bill ineligible to receive additional retirement benefits based on their service and salary during the period of reemployment.

8:04:30 AM

Section 4: Clarifies that a member who is reemployed does not become an active member, will continue to receive retirement benefits, deductions under TRS will not be made to their salary and reemployed educators will not receive credited time for service during reemployment. This section also ensures that a retired and rehired teacher will be eligible to receive the group health plan coverage that is provided to active members employed by the school district.

8:04:55 AM

Section 5: Confirms that an employer must make contributions to the defined benefit plan of the TRS system as proposed by section 1. This section also requires employers to make contributions to TRS for reemployed educators.

8:05:10 AM

Section 6: Would apply the bill's provision to contracts that are made on or after the bill's effective date.

8:05:25 AM

CHAIR STEVENS noted that a retired person would be receiving medical benefits. He asked why they would receive the group health plan coverage.

8:05:47 AM

SENATOR MICCICHE said they are carrying the bill for educators, and Lisa Parady might be best suited to answer that question.

8:06:03 AM

SENATOR HUGHES said she was glad they are coming up with solutions for the teacher solution. She asked why the bill specifies a different amount of time someone must be retired before rehire, six months if under 62 or 60 days if age 62 or older.

8:07:52 AM

LISA SKILES PARADY, Ph.D., Executive Director, Alaska Council of School Administrators, said the language incorporates an IRS ruling requiring bona fide separation of employment. She noted that Kathy Lea [Chief Pension Officer for the Division of Retirement and Benefits], an expert on the retirement system, was present to answer questions.

[8:09:25 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said her organization is in strong support of the bill. It is another tool at a time when school districts need immediate assistance. A huge crisis in staffing exists across the state. SB 185 is not a silver bullet, but it provides some relief. It is necessary for both urban and rural school districts. The rural districts have never seen such turnover rates.

[8:10:32 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said SB 185, which is a companion to HB 224, is the first bill in her tenure with support from all of education. They have partnered with school boards, which is common, but it is less common for them to work with NEA-Alaska. The bill is addressing something everyone in education sees as a crisis. The bill incorporates suggestions from NEA-Alaska that would allow contracts to be just for one year at a time and the districts must show they have gone through the hiring process. Of course, that is the reason they are here. Districts are posting and advertising and not finding anyone.

[8:11:40 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said this is a supply-and-demand issue. One of the highest priorities in their joint position statement is training, attracting, and retaining qualified educators. In the past thousands of people would be at job fairs in Anchorage. In 2017, 211 candidates and 36 districts were at the job fair. Many of those candidates were moving around Alaska. Sometimes the reasons they are moving from another district are not positive for the state's kids. Sometimes they want to move onto the road system, but 211 candidates are not meeting the state's need.

[8:13:08 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said they are supportive of President Jim Johnson's [President of the University of Alaska] focus on increasing the number of teachers prepared by the University of Alaska. The goal is to produce 90 percent of Alaskan teachers by 2025, but they need assistance now. This is a stop gap while working on other strategies. From 2001-2010, when the previous retiree rehire law was in effect, the total use was 325 people, which is not an outrageous number of people, but 325 people would go a long way toward filling some of these vacancies. The average time reemployed was 18.7 months; the shortest period was three months and the longest 46 months. The Lower Kuskokwim School District was the largest employer. The largest number employed in one year was 181. The majority of those positions was for

teachers, including 45 special education teachers. The turnover rate in Alaska for superintendents has been about 60 percent, 26 percent for principals. Statewide, the teacher turnover rate is about 22 percent, but remote, isolated villages have a 57 percent retention rate.

[8:16:06 AM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL said the sponsor statement states retirees will continue to receive retirement benefits during the period of reemployment, but section 2 of SB 185 states "benefit payments may not be made during the period of reemployment."

DR. PARADY said except as provided in section f, and section f outlines this bill.

[8:17:04 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said it is an at-will, one year, no additional benefits contract. Employers must pay 12.6 percent to offset the unfunded pension liability, which is a compromise with the Department of Administration and the retirement system. The school district continues to pay for the unfunded pension liability, which they pay for every employee. Other than that, it is a salary contract. The employer must offer health insurance as an option for the employee.

[8:18:17 AM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL said she will keep listening but is still thinking. It's double dipping.

[8:18:25 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked whether the bill would apply to administrators.

[8:18:53 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said it is open to educators, so it could include principals or superintendents.

[8:19:05 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if any administrators are not in TRS.

[8:19:12 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said the law allows a CEO of a school district to be in PERS [Public Employee Retirement System], but the bill is specific to TRS.

[8:19:29 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said, to clarify, the employer puts into TRS while a retired person is employed. The employee is not paying into TRS, but they are receiving their retirement check.

[8:19:59 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said the employee continues to receive retirement. Any retiree from the lower 48 can work in Alaska and not have their retirement affected, but Alaskan retirees cannot come back on contract without a penalty. With this bill they can come back, not at the level they retired at, but on a salary contract for a one-year period to fill a classroom vacancy.

[8:21:07 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said she wanted to clarify that just the employer would be paying into TRS, and not the employee.

[8:21:27 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said the employer, the school district, would be paying 12.6 percent, not the employee. The employee would only have a salary relationship with district.

[8:21:57 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said the health care for the reemployed retiree comes from the active employment health care plan, not the TRS system. She asked if it is cheaper to get health care that way than through the TRS system. She also asked if it is cost neutral for the employer to pay 12.6 percent when the employee is not.

[8:22:44 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said efforts were made to be as cost neutral as possible. They were not trying to impact the retirement system. They worked on this for two years. Part of the compromise was to address the unfunded pension liability. Also, the state does want school districts to continue to try to find long-term classroom teachers, principals, superintendents. But this is a better alternative to other ways of filling vacancies or not filling those vacancies. Only 385 people used this previously.

[8:24:31 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said she would not want to increase the state pension liability if the employee is not paying into the plan. It may be a lower cost to TRS if an employee uses the active health care plan.

[8:24:57 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS said it is an interesting point that teachers from out of state can come and be hired, but not retired Alaska teachers.

[8:25:12 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked if the reemployed educator could opt out of the medical plan.

[8:25:32 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said yes.

[8:25:35 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said the employee is not paying into the retirement system because they are not adding to their retirement.

[8:25:55 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said that is correct.

[8:26:04 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS said they need to better understand this clause: A teacher whom is retired from the defined benefit or contribution plan must be retired for six months or more if they are younger than 62 or 60 days if they are 62 or older before they are considered for a rehire.

[8:26:29 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said that language is specifically from the IRS letter ruling that requires a bona fide separation of employment to be reemployed in a retirement system. They worked with their attorney general at the Department of Administration who took the language of the IRS ruling and embedded it in the bill to be in compliance.

[8:27:25 AM](#)

KATHY LEA, Deputy Director/Chief Pension Officer, Division of Retirement and Benefits, Department of Administration (DOA), introduced herself and offered to answer questions on SB 185.

[8:27:56 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS said that he recalled teachers in Kodiak who went back into teaching after retirement and had to pay money back into the retirement system. He asked if that were true and why would teachers currently not be allowed back in the system.

[8:28:20 AM](#)

MS. LEA said the current rules prohibit retired teachers from coming back into full-time, active teaching. If they are reemployed for a school year, they would have to repay the retirement benefits for the school year they are employed.

[8:29:05 AM](#)

MS. LEA said when retired teachers reemploy now, they must pay their employee contribution and they do accrue additional retirement credit. That is why their retirement benefit must be stopped.

CHAIR STEVENS asked her to address the IRS issue of over and under 62.

[8:29:33 AM](#)

MS. LEA said in-service distribution occurs when members are still active in their retirement plan but are receiving benefits. Some types of plan allow in-service distribution. The state plans do not. To avoid an in-service distribution plan, one must look to the IRS for the normal retirement age. The IRS rules for normal retirement age as set by IRS is strictly for tax purposes. Age 62 is the normal retirement age for all private sector retirement plans since 2007. No age has been set yet for government plans. The IRS has signaled that it will continue to review plans with 62 as the normal retirement age. The difference is when a person is eligible for a retirement plan and when they are not. Age 62 is the normal retirement age and to make sure there is a bona fide separation of service, a person who is 62 or older must only have a 60-day break in service to reemploy with the same employer.

[8:31:41 AM](#)

MS. LEA said a person under 62 is in the early retirement stage and must have a longer break from service.

[8:32:08 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked whether someone who retires from the Lower Kuskokwim School District cannot apply with the Anchorage School District unless the rehire bill in this provision exists.

[8:32:27 AM](#)

MS. LEA said a retired teacher from any school district cannot reemploy with any school district without stopping retirement and becoming an active member in TRS with the exception of substitute teaching and short-term contracts.

[8:32:53 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked what a short-term contract is.

MS. LEA said short-term is 60 to 90 days.

[8:33:07 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked what happens if a school district hires someone on a one-year contract and keeps doing it year after year.

[8:33:15 AM](#)

MS. LEA said state auditors would question whether it is temporary. Under the IRS rules, a temporary contract can be no longer than two years. If it is not temporary, the members will be penalized because they will have to repay all retirement collected during that period.

[8:33:51 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked about full- or part-time positions.

[8:34:03 AM](#)

MS. LEA said any service in TRS that is 50 percent or more of a normal work week must participate in TRS.

[8:34:20 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked for clarification about the 12.6 percent that would be paid by the employer.

[8:35:00 AM](#)

MS. LEA said under this bill the retiree can come back into service without suspending benefits and would not accrue additional service, and so does not need to pay into TRS. The 12.6 contribution from the employer is needed to keep the system whole.

[8:35:39 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked whether it would help a district with health care costs because a reemployed retired teacher 65 or older would be covered by Medicare, even if they are also covered by the active health care plan.

[8:36:11 AM](#)

MS. LEA said an active employee insurance is always primary, either to Medicare or the retiree health care plan.

[8:36:38 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked if Medicare is the first payer if a teacher is not reemployed.

[8:36:58 AM](#)

MS. LEA said for a retired person, Medicare is primary.

[8:37:06 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS said the University of Alaska opted out of the social security system. He asked whether that was true of public school teachers.

[8:37:21 AM](#)

MS. LEA said in 1945, when Social Security was first offered to public and government employees, teachers voted not to participate at that time, which is why they are not in social security today.

[8:38:13 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked whether this impacts all state public employees. They cannot be rehired and collect retirement.

[8:38:46 AM](#)

MS. LEA said that is a standard provision in Alaska retirement plans. Someone cannot be a member of a plan while a retiree. They must stop benefits before participating in a part- or full-time permanent position.

[8:39:09 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS said he and Senator Coghill remembered the days from years ago when Fish and Game employees would do the same job and draw retirement and a salary. He asked for confirmation that this bill would not do the same thing.

[8:39:24 AM](#)

MS. LEA said no, the bill does not do that. It requires a recruitment period, evidence of a recruitment period, and only a one-year contract.

[8:40:06 AM](#)

NORM WOOTEN, Executive Director, Association of Alaska School Boards (AASB), testified in support of SB 185. He said two AASB resolutions support SB 185. Alaska is competing with every other state for the same pool of decreasing applicants. The rehire of retired teachers and administrators is not the final solution to the teacher shortage, but it is a temporary solution that allows districts to find teachers for hard-to-fill positions, which is a problem for all of the state.

[8:41:25 AM](#)

CHAIR STEVENS asked if people are teaching longer than they used to.

[8:41:37 AM](#)

MR. WOOTEN said he has only anecdotal information. Some keep working and enjoy it and others not so much.

[8:42:13 AM](#)

MARK MILLER, Ph.D., Superintendent, Juneau School District, supported SB 185. He said he is in favor of the bill because it deepens a shallow talent pool. While he was lying bed at 2 a.m. thinking about how to close a \$3 million deficit and wondering whether the bus barn would call in for a snow day, he thought that if he decided to retire tomorrow and work at Home Depot, he could receive retirement benefits. But if he wanted to use his education to help young students, he is prohibited from doing that in the state of Alaska while retired. Alaska's greatest resource is Alaskans and in tough times, the most important job is to leverage resources for the maximum good of the state and students. This bill does that.

[8:44:43 AM](#)

PETE HOEPFNER, Member, Cordova School Board, supported SB 185. He said schools throughout Alaska have positions they unable to fill, especially for special education and high school math and science. The number of teachers at Alaska teacher job fairs has dropped dramatically. In the past, 1,500 to 2,000 candidates came. In 2014, 250 candidates came. In 2017, 211 candidates came for 850-900 positions, which included janitors and nurses. Today people come to Alaska to teach only for the Alaskan experience. The pay and retirement are not there. In Texas teachers can start at \$56,000 with a bachelor's degree and zero experience. Most Alaskan districts cannot afford that. It is another tool to have a teacher in every classroom. All districts are trying to fill these positions. This bill is supported by AASB by two resolutions. The revised fiscal note shows minimal impact to the state.

[8:47:51 AM](#)

DEENA BISHOP, Ph.D., Superintendent, Anchorage School District, supported SB 185. She said as superintendent of the Anchorage School District (ASD), she is in strong support of SB 185. For many years ASD has accessed the extensive experience and expertise of retired educators by allowing temporary and part-term employment, but this has been very limited without the provisions in SB 185. Districts could enter into at-will employment agreements with retired educators without current

protections and benefits such as tenure, sick leave, and retirement. She would support having these explicit restrictions in the bill. She would also like to see the bill include retirees under the defined contribution plan. The state would benefit because districts pay 12.6 percent for the unfunded pension liability. It is a win/win. The ASD does not pursue hiring retired teachers to avoid hiring new teachers. Retirees fill gaps when properly certified staff cannot be found. They provide temporary or short-term expertise for special projects, and they give needed support during high-demand times of the year, such as summer months, the start of the school year, and assessment periods. ASD wants to rehire retired teachers rather than use contract agencies. Districts could save money because of costs not directed to employees. The ASD appreciates the legislature offering increased flexibility and discretion in a time of constricting resources. The ASD embraces innovation and supports creative solutions. SB 185 has the potential of great benefits to the ASD and the state.

[8:51:26 AM](#)

JACK WALSH, Superintendent, Craig School District, supported SB 185. He said this is his 23rd year as an administrator in Alaska and 23 years at job fairs and filling classrooms and leadership needs, mostly in rural Alaska. This plan has worked in the past and offers a real option for people. It is another tool to put the best quality teachers in front of students. They have worked to address all the issues around retirement with the Department of Administration. Districts need this tool and resource. They regularly deal with illnesses, with family emergencies. They need people to come in on a short- or long-term basis to maintain quality of services. This has some money going into retirement system. It is a critical piece of how the future of the Alaskan schools can be improved.

[8:55:07 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES asked why SB 185 has no sunset when the previous bill did.

[8:55:29 AM](#)

DR. PARADY said with the gravity of the current teacher shortage situation, they do not have a sense of when they can shift this tide. They do not know how to identify when a sunset would be appropriate, so they did not suggest one. The state is in trouble. Their foundation is cracking because they cannot find qualified staff to fill vacancies. Everyone is working on this, the Department of Education and Early Development, the university, groups like hers, the school board association. They

are thinking of how to solve this issue of students having the best people in front of them. Alaska is not alone with this problem. It is worse for Alaska because it gets its teachers from the lower 48. Most teachers come from Oregon, and Oregon is doing emergency waivers to get as many teachers in place. The state that Alaska gets most of its teachers from is in crisis also.

[8:58:36 AM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES said she has heard there is no magic date about when the national teacher shortage will end. If this truly will help the retirement liability as well as help districts, it makes her want to think about expanding it for other situations, such as the trooper situation.

[8:59:52 AM](#)

KATHERINE GARDNER, Executive Director Human Resources, Matanuska-Susitna School District, supported SB 185. She said that in Mat-Su the need to hire retired teachers or administrators is very limited, but this would be a relief for emergencies. Their recruitment challenges are not as difficult as in other parts of the state, but there are certain situations where flexibility is needed. Usually their preference is not to hire retired person, but that is not always reality. She echoed Dr. Bishop's comment about the need for explicit restrictions on employment. She said the bill should be implemented for individuals working at least half time so as not to impact school districts that employ retired teachers for very limited part-time positions that are not retirement eligible.

[9:02:08 AM](#)

SHAWN ARNOLD, Superintendent, Nome Public Schools, supported SB 185. He said SB 185 is a tool to help school districts around the state. In Nome they have had increasing difficulty filling the specialist positions, school counselors and special education. They need to find the best teachers for students with the greatest needs, but it is harder and harder every year. Many teachers remain in the community and some are hard-to-find specialists. They are hesitant to work again because of the retirement impact. This wouldn't be the only solution, but it is definitely legislation moving in right direction.

[9:04:41 AM](#)

SEAN DUSEK, Superintendent, Kenai Peninsula School District, supported SB 185. He said the Superintendents Association supports this bill. Until the University of Alaska meets its goal of producing enough teachers, this is a bridge. The

benefits of the bill outweigh possible complexities. Each year in the Kenai Peninsula they have open positions that this bill could fill. They always work hard to fill positions, but at times they need retired teachers for gaps at the beginning of the year. Students would benefit from experienced leadership and educators working with new teachers to achieve a comprehensive learning program for all students.

[9:06:42 AM](#)

PATRICK MAYER, Superintendent, Wrangell Public Schools, supported SB 185. He noted that he is the president-elect of the Alaska Superintendents Association. He said that in a few weeks will be at the job fair in Anchorage. He will no longer have to worry about the stampede of teacher candidates in the ballroom of the Captain Cook. SB 185 is a mechanism for immediate help. It is vital because of the critical shortage of educators and a high turnover rate. The joint position statement of the Alaska Council of School Administrators shows retiree rehire as a top priority. The flexibility of SB 185 allows options best for students. Students will benefit from the experience of retired teachers.

[9:09:15 AM](#)

KAREN GABORIK, Ph.D., Superintendent, Fairbanks School District, supported SB 185. She said Fairbanks for the first time has felt the pain of teacher shortages. They have almost always had unfilled special education positions, but now they have regular education positions unfilled for music and high school math and science teachers. The ability to rehire retired teachers on a temporary basis would make a huge difference for students. Now students have a revolving door of unqualified substitutes in that content area. It equates to real time and learning lost in critical content areas. It also requires other teachers to support these classrooms. The priority will be always to recruit for long-term basis, but more and more they are experiencing gaps in hiring. Many communities have retired teachers willing to assist, including some urban retired teachers who may be willing to go to rural areas on a short-term basis.

[9:12:08 AM](#)

KERRY BOYD, Superintendent, Yukon Koyukuk School District, supported SB 185. She noted that she is secretary of the Alaska Superintendents Association. She said that as a superintendent of a district that employs teachers in very rural, remote fly-in areas, and also in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, and Wasilla, this bill could be very beneficial. Over the years they have had to fill in positions at the last minute and retired teachers are

reluctant to do so because of the impact on their benefits. This would help the state over all. Her staff is in support of the bill, and some said they may consider staying in Alaska to utilize their strength as educators.

[9:13:56 AM](#)

ACTING CHAIR COGHILL said in the Interior, retired state, federal, and military workers make up a huge chunk of his working population. He reflected on the interesting dynamic of their contributions to the economy.

[9:14:54 AM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH said most of the letters speak to HB 224. He said it would be good to have letters that refer to SB 185.

ACTING CHAIR COGHILL held SB 185 in committee.

[9:15:20 AM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Acting Chair Coghill adjourned the Senate Education Standing Committee at 9:15 a.m.