

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 31, 2017

1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator David Wilson, Chair  
Senator Natasha von Imhof, Vice Chair  
Senator Cathy Giessel  
Senator Tom Begich

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Peter Micciche

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 72

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

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 72

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

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) GARDNER

03/01/17	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/01/17	(S)	HSS, JUD, FIN
03/31/17	(S)	HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SENATOR BERTA GARDNER  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SB 72.

MEGAN HOLLAND, Staff  
Senator Berta Gardner  
Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided a sectional analysis for SB 72.

MARTI BUSCAGLIA, Executive Director  
Alaska Commission for Human Rights  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Addressed a resolution passed by the commission in support of SB 72.

JUDY ANDICE, advocate  
League of Women Voters  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

TERESA KENNEDY, employee  
National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce  
Washington, D.C.

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

LIN DAVIS, advocate  
Southeast Alaska Gay and Lesbian Alliance  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

ALYSON CURREY, advocate  
Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

CASSANDRA BROWN, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

EMO LEE, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

CARMEN LOWRY, Executive Director  
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

JIM MINNERY, President  
Alaska Family Council  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition of SB 72.

MARINA DAY, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

MELANIE LINDHOLM, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

KATHY OTTERSTEN, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

MORGAN LIM, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

LESLIE FAILS, Minister  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

RONALD CASTO, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

PHIL OSBORN, representing self  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

DR. EMILY OLSEN, M.D., representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

DANIEL STICH, representing self  
Two Rivers, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

HAYDEN NEVILL, Founder  
Gender Pioneers  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

ELIZABETH LYKE, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

RUDY POGLITSH, representing self  
Wasilla, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition of SB 72.

MICHAEL BURKE, Pastor  
St. Mary's Church Anchorage  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

REBECCA DUNNE, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

LINDSEY PARKINSON, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

DAVID KREISS-TOMKINS, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

ALYSSA QUINTYNE, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

MARTIN ELDRED, Pastor  
Joy Lutheran Church  
Eagle River, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

BILLY FARWELL, Executive Director  
Identity Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

COLLEEN HEANEY-MEAD, advocate  
Growing Alaska Leaders  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

EMILY KLOC, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

GENEVIEVE HOLUKI, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

MIKE COONS, representing self  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition of SB 72.

PAIGE POSTIN, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

BROOKS BANKER, Youth Program Manager  
Alaska Identity  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 72.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:30:59 PM](#)

**CHAIR DAVID WILSON** called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Begich, von Imhof, Giessel, and Chair Wilson.

#### **SB 72-DISCRIMINATION: GENDER ID.; SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

[1:31:29 PM](#)

**CHAIR WILSON** announced the consideration of SB 72.

[1:31:41 PM](#)

**SENATOR BERTA GARDNER**, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 72, spoke to the following sponsor statement:

Senate Bill 72 is very important to me personally and I think probably many of us have relatives and friends who would be protected under these provisions. Article I in Alaska's constitution says, "This constitution is dedicated to the principles that all people have a natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the enjoyment of the rewards of their own industry, that all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law, and that all persons have corresponding obligations to people in the state."

Alaska human rights statute currently prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, and banking

based on race, religion, color, national ancestry, physical or mental disability, age or sex. Senate Bill 72 would add to that list, "Discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity or expression;" under current statute Alaskans are not protected from discrimination of this kind.

Historically the state of Alaska has been on the forefront of advocating for civil rights and instituting measures that embrace our state's diversity, and currently Anchorage, Juneau, and Bethel have ordinances similar to this legislation, and state employees are also protected from discrimination based on their gender identity and expression. Twenty-one other states have passed legislation similar to this and the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights has passed a resolution in favor of including sexual orientation and gender identity to the protections.

I think that the time to afford civil rights to all Alaskans, regardless of gender orientation, identity or expression, is now. National studies estimate that three to four percent of the U.S. population self identifies as lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, or gay. A 2011 survey specifically for Alaska estimates about 3.5 percent of our state, but in a way the actual numbers are irrelevant. In suicide prevention we say that even one is too many and I think that also holds true for any civil rights violations. It's my belief that sexual orientation, gender identity or expression should not interfere with: any person's right to expect fair treatment under the law, a person's right to live free of abuse and discrimination, a person's right to employment, to housing, to public accommodations, and to banking services that are available to everybody else; Alaskans today are sometimes denied those rights on account of their orientation, identity or expression.

It's also an economic issue, the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation's "Live. Work. Play." initiative says this, "The job market is changing, it is no longer people going where the jobs are, instead people go where they want to live, and the jobs are going where the people are. Today's talent is looking for a city that's aesthetically pleasing, welcoming and open to diversity." The "One Anchorage One

Economy" team is proud to support the city's second annual "Welcoming Week in Anchorage," that was September in 2016, and Anchorage is a member of the National Welcoming Cities Initiative. The Anchorage Economic Development Corporation unanimously supported the LGBT equal rights ordinance in Anchorage. Many companies support similar policies and institute internal policies for economic purposes, and as polls and testimony reveal their support for this measure from Alaskans of all identities, orientation, religious affiliations, and political parties.

At no cost to the state, this bill if passed will strengthen civil rights statutes and include one of the fastest growing, vibrant and economically active communities in Alaska. The 2010 U.S. Census showed that LGBT households in Alaska grew by 57 percent over the previous decade. It's time for the state to take this in hand, live up to our constitution, and be a human rights state where people are equal, entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protections.

[1:37:05 PM](#)

MEGAN HOLLAND, Staff, Senator Berta Gardner, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, said SB 72 is an act adding to the powers and duties of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights and relating to and prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity or expression.

She reviewed the following sectional analysis for SB 72:

**Section 1:**

Amends AS 18.80.060 regarding the powers and duties of the Human Rights Commission. The section adds "sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" to the list of 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 the need to prevent 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:**

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

**Section 6:**

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 7:**

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

**Section 8:**

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 9:** 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 to close a transaction.

**Section 10:** Amends AS 18.80.300 to add definitions of "gender identity or expression," and "sexual orientation" to Alaska statute.

CHAIR WILSON asked Marti Buscaglia to address the committee regarding the Alaska Commission for Human Rights.

[1:40:44 PM](#)

MARTI BUSCAGLIA, Executive Director, Alaska Commission for Human Rights, Anchorage, explained that the commission's resolution calls on the Legislature to revise the Alaska Human Rights Law, AS 18.80, as follows:

- Expressly prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.
- Requests staff to work with the Department of law to draft proposed regulations addressing the inclusion of prohibition against discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity under the existing law prohibiting sexual discrimination.
- Consider the administrative application of the Education Law Center's (ELC) interpretation of Title VII of 1964 Civil Rights Act prohibiting employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and or gender identity or expression.

MS. BUSCAGLIA explained that the commission is in the stage of actually drafting the language, but the commission's belief is a statute change would send a stronger statement of the state's position on anti-discrimination. She disclosed that the commission has a long history of supporting equal rights and noted that the state has also been a leader in adopting strong civil rights protections. She set forth that strengthening the state's statute to protect people in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community would be part of Alaska's strong advocacy of civil rights.

CHAIR WILSON asked Ms. Buscaglia to confirm that the commission is working on amending the process through regulations.

MS. BUSCAGLIA answered yes.

[1:44:24 PM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH asked Senator Garner what are the current discrimination rates in Alaska on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression.

SENATOR GARDNER explained that previously when a similar resolution had a public hearing there was testimony that there was not a problem with discrimination in Alaska. She disclosed that her answer to the remark that there was no discrimination was that without a protected class, people cannot bring a complaint and therefore the data is not collected by the Human Rights Commission because they have no jurisdiction over that. She remarked that it is hard to know exactly what rates are because there are not charges or any allegations; however, there has been some research that makes estimates. He said Ms. Holland will provide additional information.

MS. HOLLAND disclosed that data from other states has been provided to committee members. She pointed out that a 2011 survey in Anchorage showed significant rates of discrimination in employment, public accommodations, housing, and financing. She detailed that the 2011 survey indicated that 21 percent of LGBT people in Anchorage reported being turned down for a job that they were otherwise qualified for because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, 15 percent report being fired because of their orientation or gender identity, and 73 percent report hiding their sexual orientation or gender identity at work to avoid discrimination.

[1:47:04 PM](#)

SENATOR BEGICH called attention to a census snapshot from the Williams Institute on the prevalence of same-sex couples in Alaska. He addressed Ms. Holland's testimony on the 2011 survey and shared an example of sexual-orientation discrimination that occurred within his family in Anchorage. He remarked that the bill would have a direct impact on his family and noted a possible conflict. He said a movement is going on where a lot of national companies have moved forward on their own to prohibit discrimination and some will not do business in states where discrimination happens. He pointed out that with the discrimination-policy movement going on, he asked why a state law is needed.

MS. HOLLAND replied that although there is a prevalence of internal policies within private industries to give protections to individuals, the protections typically only cover employment areas. She set forth that the bill's sponsor believes that the bill is absolutely necessary because the extent of someone's civil rights should not be contingent on their employer or where they live. She said the civil rights for all Alaskans should be protected.

[1:49:43 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON asked how the bill affects religious institutions.

MS. HOLLAND answered that the bill's intent language simply adds an additional protective class, so the same expectations and legal requirements that are applied to religious institutions on behalf of someone's gender, race, or marital status still applies. She noted that there was a Supreme Court case that created the "ministerial exception" where religious institutions are exempt from anti-discriminatory policies related to the area of employment. She noted that religious institutions would have

to uphold their current requirements not to discriminate in areas such as housing and public accommodation.

[1:51:15 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON opened public testimony on SB 72.

SENATOR GARDNER asked permission to read three testimonies into the record.

[1:52:15 PM](#)

At ease.

[1:52:50 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON called the committee back to order.

SENATOR GARDNER directed attention to three e-mails from Mary Parker, Donald Johnson, and Paige Hodson. She noted that Ms. Hodson's written testimony describes her son's experience in Alaska and how he ultimately left the state.

[1:54:09 PM](#)

JUDY ANDICE, advocate, League of Women Voters, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She set forth that the League of Women Voters of the United States believes in equality in education, housing, and employment for all persons regardless of their race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

[1:55:52 PM](#)

TERESA KENNEDY, employee, National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce, Washington, D.C., testified in support of SB 72. She revealed that she is a former resident of Alaska. She set forth that Alaska is failing by not including LGBT people in the state's nondiscrimination laws.

[1:59:50 PM](#)

LIN DAVIS, advocate, Southeast Alaska Gay and Lesbian Alliance (SEAGLA), Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She revealed that she is a married lesbian and has been with her wife for 27 years. She disclosed that her wife is a physician and a member of the Alaska Academy of Family Physicians and noted that the academy strongly supports LGBT protections. She said the American Academy of Family Physicians have studied that communities are healthier when young people feel they can grow up to be who they are meant to be.

[2:02:44 PM](#)

ALYSON CURREY, advocate, Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She said as a health-care provider, SB 72 is legislation that is good for public health and good for business. She set forth that each of us should be free to build loving relationships and create families without discrimination based on an individual's personal-private lives.

[2:03:54 PM](#)

CASSANDRA BROWN, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She read a letter of support of SB 72 from an individual that was not in attendance.

[2:07:27 PM](#)

EMO LEE, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She set forth that she is transgender, a human, and expects as an American citizen to be afforded the respect and protection of the law afforded in theory to all other human beings.

[2:10:02 PM](#)

CARMEN LOWRY, Executive Director, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA), Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She set forth that ANDVSA fully supports SB 72 that upholds the civil and human rights of individuals regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

[2:13:41 PM](#)

JIM MINNERY, President, Alaska Family Council, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition of SB 72. He said the thousands that the Alaska Family Council represents cherishes the freedom to peacefully express and live by its religious, philosophical, and political beliefs. He remarked that laws like SB 72 are used by the government to compel citizens to sacrifice their deepest convictions on marriage and what it means to be male and female.

[2:16:30 PM](#)

MARINA DAY, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She asked that "Sexual orientation, gender identity or expression" be added to the Alaska Human Rights Law.

[2:18:32 PM](#)

MELANIE LINDHOLM, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She revealed that she and her fiance have both experienced discrimination because of their identity, especially in employment. She said her fiance was

fired for being transgender and she was denied employment because her fiance is transgender.

[2:19:15 PM](#)

KATHY OTTERSTEN, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She said she spoke in favor of the bill specifically as someone who has a lifetime of being valueless in society. She revealed her personal information to the committee. She beseeched the committee to have the courage to make an affirmative statement that all persons have value.

[2:21:25 PM](#)

MORGAN LIM, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He said he was surprised to learn that the law in Alaska allows someone to be discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. He revealed that he is a gay man and remarked that he is personally putting himself at risk of eviction if his landlord finds out that he is testifying in support of SB 72. He set forth that no person should have the fear of eviction or termination of employment because when testifying to legislators on an issue that is important to them.

[2:22:41 PM](#)

LESLIE FAILS, Minister, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She stated that she is in favor of equal rights for all people and asked for support in SB 72 to make positive changes that will allow both people of faith and Alaskans to move forward.

[2:23:58 PM](#)

RONALD CASTO, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He revealed that he is gay and shared his discriminatory employment experiences. He set forth that having the law on his side is important to him because laws are reflective of the values and morals of Alaskans.

[2:25:10 PM](#)

PHIL OSBORN, representing self, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fairbanks, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He set forth that it is well past time to put to bed the issue with discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. He asked that religious people remember to, "Love thy neighbor as thyself."

[2:26:56 PM](#)

DR. EMILY OLSEN, M.D., representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She referenced a policy position

paper from the American College of Physicians (ACP) in regard to LGBT health disparities. She detailed that ACP recommends that gender identity, independent and fundamentally different from sexual orientation, be included as part of nondiscrimination and anti-harassment policies.

[2:28:39 PM](#)

DANIEL STICH, representing self, Two Rivers, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He revealed that he is gay and shared a personal event where discriminatory employment and habitation events occurred due to his sexual orientation.

[2:30:17 PM](#)

HAYDEN NEVILL, Founder, Gender Pioneers, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He revealed that he is a transgender man. He set forth that protecting gay, lesbian and transgender people in housing and employment is the right thing to do.

[2:32:24 PM](#)

ELIZABETH LYKE, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He disclosed that she is a transgender woman and the bill is very important to her. She said Alaska is an amazing place to live, but not having protection from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression is a glaring way that the state has more work to do.

[2:33:55 PM](#)

RUDY POGLITSH, representing self, Wasilla, Alaska, testified in opposition of SB 72. He opined that making sexual orientation and gender identity or expression protected-legal classes endangers women. He opined that SB 72 will allow sex offenders to prey on women and girls by providing access to intimate places.

[2:35:16 PM](#)

MICHAEL BURKE, Pastor, St. Mary's Church Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He revealed that he has seen at least a dozen cases in Alaska that were clear-cut examples of discrimination against people that were gay, lesbian or transgender.

[2:38:05 PM](#)

REBECCA DUNNE, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She revealed that she is lesbian and married to a transgender man. She remarked that discrimination

in housing and the work place is more prevalent because LGBT have become more visible and are living more honest lives. She said Alaska has a patchwork of municipal protections, but her landlord in Fairbanks could still evict her for being or appearing gay and her husband could be fired at his job for being or appearing transgender. She set forth that SB 72 is about fairness and will protect thousands of Alaskans.

[2:39:12 PM](#)

LINDSEY PARKINSON, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She set forth that everyone should be supported and protected.

[2:40:05 PM](#)

DAVID KREISS-TOMKINS, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He remarked that LGBT people have long been discriminated against in Alaska. He said the legislation in SB 72 should have been passed a long time ago. He noted that his background included working in shelters and noted that people who identify as gay and lesbian typically end up in shelters more often.

[2:42:14 PM](#)

ALYSSA QUINTYNE, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She said SB 72 is the long anticipated and well needed protection for the LGBT community in Alaska.

[2:44:18 PM](#)

MARTIN ELDRED, Pastor, Joy Lutheran Church, Eagle River, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He stated that as a faith leader in his community, he has witnessed the heartbreak of injustice as good, law abiding, taxpaying Alaskans have been fired from their jobs after their bosses discovered an employee's sexual orientation. He added that some people have been unable to secure housing due to discrimination as well. He pointed out that same-gender marriage is legal in Alaska, but unfortunately it is still legal to fire or deny housing to someone for how they were created and or for whom they love.

[2:46:21 PM](#)

BILLY FARWELL, Executive Director, Identity Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He disclosed that Identity Alaska's mission is to advance the state's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community. He said Identity Alaska envisions a world where all Alaskans can be their authentic self in their community and still feel safe, supported, and welcomed. He remarked that much progress has been

made with the LGBTQ community in recent times, but the fear of discrimination is still very real for many Alaskans today. He pointed out that LGBTQ people living in Anchorage, Juneau, and city employees in Bethel have basic, non-discrimination protections; however, the majority of Alaskan residents still live in communities without legal protection from discrimination due to one's sexual orientation or gender identity. He set forth that discrimination is not an Alaskan value and it is time to make those values law.

[2:48:47 PM](#)

COLLEEN HEANEY-MEAD, advocate, Growing Alaska Leaders, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She said the hope is in making discrimination against members of the LGBTQ illegal at the state level, and Alaskans will make it clear that hate has no home in Alaska.

[2:50:54 PM](#)

EMILY KLOC, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She disclosed that she is a queer citizen living in Anchorage. She revealed that 20 to 40 percent of youths who are gay and transgender are homeless; the bill is a very crucial issue for them in terms of housing, especially when the LGBT community makes up only seven percent of the total population. She provided data to the committee regarding trans-violence in the U.S. She said trans-queer women of color need to be protected, accepted and embraced by Alaskans.

[2:52:40 PM](#)

GENEVIEVE HOLUKI, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She said she feels very saddened that somehow "all" has to be defined. She explained that she is uncomfortable that the Supreme Court somehow seems to feel that religious rights can override a civil right. She set forth that civil rights are what built the U.S.

[2:53:41 PM](#)

MIKE COONS, representing self, Palmer, Alaska, testified in opposition of SB 72. He referenced crossdressing and sexual-identity incidences that occurred with teenaged students in schools. He revealed that he is retired, but noted that when he went to work he did not talk about his sexual episodes because he felt it was not appropriate. He pointed out that "at will" should be considered regarding employment because he could have been fired for any reason whatsoever.

[2:57:17 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced that additional public testimony could be given on Wednesday, April 5.

[2:57:40 PM](#)

PAIGE POSTIN, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. She referenced a study by the GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) that 20 percent of adults age 18 to 34 identify as LGBT, a significant increase from the 12 percent of adults age 35 to 51, or the 7 percent of adults age 52 to 71 who identify as LGBT. She set forth that now is the time to protect the civil rights of LGBT individuals and act will not lead to increased sex crimes in anyway.

[2:58:41 PM](#)

BROOKS BANKER, Youth Program Manager, Alaska Identity, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 72. He revealed that he works with LGBTQ-identified youth ages 13 to 19. He stated that many of the youth who are planning on furthering their education are not considering Alaska as much because they don't feel protected. He shared that friends who identify as LGBTQ have voiced their plans to move their lives to different states in which they feel more protected.

[2:59:52 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON held SB 72 in committee with public testimony open.

[3:00:15 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Wilson adjourned the Senate Health and Social Services Committee at 3:00 p.m.