

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
SENATE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 12, 2018

1:31 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator John Coghill, Chair  
Senator Mia Costello  
Senator Pete Kelly  
Senator Bill Wielechowski  
Senator Mike Shower

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 122

"An Act repealing the authority for a child abuse or neglect citizen review panel in the Department of Health and Social Services; and establishing the Child Protection Citizen Review Panel in the office of the ombudsman."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 124

"An Act relating to the duties of physicians and health care practitioners when performing or inducing abortions; providing that a child removed from a pregnant woman's womb alive after an abortion may be surrendered and found to be a child in need of aid; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 122

SHORT TITLE: OCS CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) COGHILL

05/17/17	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/17/17	(S)	HSS, JUD, FIN
02/26/18	(S)	HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

02/26/18 (S) Heard & Held  
 02/26/18 (S) MINUTE(HSS)  
 02/28/18 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
 02/28/18 (S) Moved SB 122 Out of Committee  
 02/28/18 (S) MINUTE(HSS)  
 03/01/18 (S) HSS RPT 3DP 1NR  
 03/01/18 (S) DP: WILSON, VON IMHOF, GIESSEL  
 03/01/18 (S) NR: BEGICH  
 03/12/18 (S) JUD AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 124

SHORT TITLE: ABORTION PROCEDURES; CHILD SURRENDER

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) GIESSEL

01/16/18 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/18  
 01/16/18 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
 01/16/18 (S) HSS, JUD  
 02/19/18 (S) HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
 02/19/18 (S) Moved SB 124 Out of Committee  
 02/19/18 (S) MINUTE(HSS)  
 02/21/18 (S) HSS RPT 1DP 1DNP 3NR  
 02/21/18 (S) NR: WILSON, VON IMHOF, MICCICHE  
 02/21/18 (S) DP: GIESSEL  
 02/21/18 (S) DNP: BEGICH  
 02/21/18 (S) FIN REFERRAL ADDED AFTER JUD  
 03/07/18 (S) JUD AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
 03/07/18 (S) Heard & Held  
 03/07/18 (S) MINUTE(JUD)  
 03/09/18 (S) JUD AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
 03/09/18 (S) -- MEETING CANCELED --  
 03/12/18 (S) JUD AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

RYNNIEVA MOSS, Staff  
 Senator Coghill  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Introduced SB 122 on behalf of the sponsor.

KATE BURKHART, Ombudsman  
 Office of the Ombudsman, Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided supporting comments on SB 122.

AARON SPRATT, representing self  
 Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 124.

DONNA MEINERS, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

PATRICK MARTIN  
Alaska Right to Life  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to 124.

MICHAEL PANKIN, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 124.

BARBARA ANDERSEN  
Accountability Alliance Alaska  
Seward, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

ALYSON CURREY, Legislative Liaison  
Planned Parenthood Votes  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

ANNA THOMPSON, representing self  
Petersburg, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

JULIA CAULFIELD, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

ROBIN SMITH, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

ZHENIA C. PETERSON, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

PAM SAMASH, representing self  
Nenana, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 124.

XOCHITL LOPEZ-AYALA, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

SERENE ROSE O'HARA-JOLLEY, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

ANN RAPPOPORT, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

LIZ RANGEL, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

MELISSA RHODES-REESE, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

RICK SMALL, representing self  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified on SB 124 as an abolitionist of human abortion.

JASMINE LEREMIA, representing self  
Petersburg, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 124.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:31:53 PM](#)

**CHAIR JOHN COGHILL** called the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Costello, Shower, Wielechowski, and Chair Coghill. Senator Kelly arrived during the meeting.

#### **SB 122-OCS CITIZEN REVIEW PANEL**

[1:33:13 PM](#)

**CHAIR COGHILL** announced the consideration of SB 122. Speaking as the sponsor, he stated that the bill transfers the Citizens Review Panel from the Office of Children's Services (OCS) to the Office of the Ombudsman.

**RYNNIEVA MOSS**, Staff, Senator Coghill, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, introduced SB 122 on behalf of the sponsor. She explained that federal law mandates that all states establish a

Citizens Review Panel to oversee the operation of child protective services and make recommendations on ways to improve the process. In 2005, the legislature solidified its support for the Citizens Review Panel in statute and provided funding.

The bill proposes to transfer oversight of the Citizens Review Panel from the Office of Children's Services (OCS), which delivers child protective services, to the Office of the Ombudsman. The role of the ombudsman is to ensure that state government is serving Alaskans as efficiently, effectively, and equitably as possible. They do this through case specific investigations. The role of the Citizens Review Panel is to ensure that the Office of Children's Services is serving Alaska's families as efficiently, effectively and equitably as possible. They do this through outreach, evaluation, and advocacy. The mission of the Office of the Ombudsman aligns well with that of the Citizens Review Panel (CRP) and will give CRP the autonomy to more independently review the child protective services that are provided by the Office of Children's Services. The Ombudsman's Office accepts citizen complaints about municipal, state, and federal agencies and personnel. The ombudsman may investigate to determine if there is a problem and may seek an appropriate remedy. The Citizens Review Panel currently does not review individual cases but encourages the grievance process and contacting the ombudsman.

MS. MOSS directed attention to a chart of the complaints lodged with the ombudsman about the Office of Children's Services. In 2017, 250 complaints were filed and 136 were investigated. The ombudsman does not investigate cases if a grievance has not been filed or if the case is being litigated.

[1:38:31 PM](#)

MS. MOSS provided the following sectional analysis for SB 122.

She noted that the new language in .400 says that there will be at least one panel member from each of the five OCS administrative regions in the state.

**Section 1.**

**AS 24.55.400.** Establishes the Citizen Review Panel in the legislative branch of state government under the office of the ombudsman and instructs the panel to emphasize public participation in the panel's work and to bring all the stake holders on the panel.

The panel will meet at least every three months and it will establish guidelines for its operation.

Gives the panel the authority to investigate individual cases if it deems necessary.

She said she believes the ombudsman would do the individual investigations.

**AS 24.55.405.** Requires the panel to reviews policies and procedures of OCS on an annual basis and review reports submitted annually to the federal government. The panel is given statutory authority to recommend and advocate for changes to the department's child protection services.

It requires OCS to provide the CRP the following state plans submitted to the federal government annually:

State plan for grants for child abuse or neglect prevention and treatment programs. (42 U.S.C. 5106a(b)).

State plan for delivery of child welfare services prepared jointly by the state and the Secretary Health and Human Services. (42. U.S.C. 621 - 629m).

**AS 24.55.410.** Mandates that OCS SHALL consult with the CRP and assist the panel in carrying out its duties, including providing case-specific information to the panel.

MS. MOSS said the duties of the department in .410 include establishing procedures for sharing administrative and case-specific information; coordinating outreach efforts with communities with panel activities; and coordinating activities of the panel with the taskforce on criminal justice.

**AS 24.55.415.** Makes information delivered at a CRP meeting confidential and the CRP must follow the Open Meetings Act giving public notice and restricting the CRP members from meeting privately.

**AS 24.55.420.** Provides for public outreach and public comment.

**AS 24.55.425.** Provides for the CRP to prepare an annual report to be available to the governor, legislature and public. Requires OCS to submit a written response to the report within six months of its release. Requires the panel and the department to prepare a joint report [evaluating the child protective system] to the governor, legislature and public every three years.

**AS 24.55.430.** Sets a penalty of up to \$2,500 for each violation of confidentiality a person is convicted.

**AS 24.55.435.** Provides immunity for panel members from liability in panel actions.

**AS 24.55.440.** Definitions.

Department is the DHSS.

Panel is the Citizens Review Panel

MS. MOSS said the language in Section 2 is new and lists in detail the confidential information that would be available to the panel.

**\*Sec. 2.** Gives the CRP access to confidential documents regarding child protection cases.

**\*Sec. 3.** Repeals the Alaska Statutes that put the CRP under the jurisdiction of DHSS.

**\*Sec. 4.** Requires DHSS to do a two-year review of existing processes for reviewing and overseeing the work of OCS and outline a plan to reduce duplication and improved coordination amongst agencies involved in child protection. The report will be delivered to the senate secretary, house chief clerk, the governor and the general public.

**Sec. 5.** Gives the office of the ombudsman regulatory authority.

**Sec. 6.** Transition language that allows existing panel members to serve out their term on the panel even though it has been moved from the department.

The bill does not have an effective date. [Thus, it would go into effect 90 days after it is signed by the governor.]

[1:45:05 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL listed who was available to answer questions. He clarified that the Office of Children's Services is under the Department of Health and Social Services and the Office of the Ombudsman resides in the legislative branch.

[1:46:00 PM](#)

SENATOR COSTELLO asked if she had discussed the scope of the report called for in Section 4 with the department, and how it was received.

MS. MOSS said the department is neutral on the bill. The ombudsman will establish the scope of the report through regulation and the policies of the Citizens Review Panel.

CHAIR COGHILL shared that OCS has never had time to establish regulations for this report. "When you ask the Office of Children's Services to do things, it's like asking somebody to tie their shoes while they're running."

[1:47:37 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER referenced the duties of the department in Section 1. He asked what she perceives "consult with the panel periodically" to mean.

MS. MOSS said the two entities currently communicate monthly.

CHAIR COGHILL described it as an as-needed and as-required basis.

[1:49:24 PM](#)

KATE BURKHART, Ombudsman, Office of the Ombudsman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, expressed appreciation for the attention on the role of the Citizens Review Panel, which is critical to the child protective services system. The Office of the Ombudsman has frequent and ongoing contact with the people engaged with that system. She said she is very familiar with the idea of colocation of agencies with similar missions. Prior to becoming ombudsman, she was the executive director of three co-located planning councils for the Department of Health and Social Services.

She said that for the model to work the missions and values of the organizations must be aligned and there must be adequate management and resources. She noted that her office provided some comment to the sponsor about management. As drafted, the bill places the Citizens Review Panel in the Office of the Ombudsman for budgetary purposes only. She said she would be working with Ms. Moss on that because that creates a fiscal/agent relationship, which is not the level of management that co-location anticipates.

MR. BURKHARDT said she believes that co-location of the two organizations will help support the mission of the Citizens Review Panel and augment the work of the Office of the Ombudsman.

[1:51:10 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL stated he would hold SB 122 for future consideration.

#### **SB 124-ABORTION PROCEDURES; CHILD SURRENDER**

[1:51:32 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL announced the consideration of SB 124, "An Act relating to the duties of physicians and health care practitioners when performing or inducing abortions; providing that a child removed from a pregnant woman's womb alive after an abortion may be surrendered and found to be a child in need of aid; and providing for an effective date."

He opened public testimony on SB 124.

[1:53:07 PM](#)

AARON SPRATT, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 124. He comes from a faith tradition that values life from the beginning to the end and he comes from a faith tradition that serves his neighbor, particularly when that neighbor can't defend himself or his personal rights. Abortion is the taking of a life and life begins in the womb. He prays for the women who have been victims of abortion. He understands there may be reasons a woman might not want to go through a pregnancy and he doesn't deny that the woman has a right to bodily integrity. He does oppose and deny that the woman has the right to force her will on her child by killing it. Life in the womb has the right of existence because it is a live human being. All life deserves honor and respect and certainly protection. He asked the committee to protect the babies in a mother's womb.

1:55:31 PM

SENATOR KELLY joined the committee.

1:56:28 PM

DONNA MEINERS, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. She has worked as a nurse in Alaska for over 30 years and has supervised over 50 staff nurses and managed a multimillion dollar budget in a health care facility. SB 124 does not address any pressing health and social service needs of a majority of Alaskans. Survey data collected through an initiative by DHSS and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium reports the top five health concerns of Alaskans are: 1) alcohol use; 2) the cost of health care; 3) diet and exercise and obesity; 4) substance abuse; and 5) violence. She asked where the legislation is in addressing these needs. SB 124 requires an increased burden of care to providers caught in the middle of politics while they are struggling to meet the needs of Alaskan women, couples, and families. The bill is a clear effort to chip away at reproductive rights and is sure to be challenged in court. SB 124 does not address the real needs of Alaskans and will lead to a budget drain to defend it.

1:59:00 PM

PATRICK MARTIN, Alaska Right to Life, testified in opposition to 124. They oppose the bill for two specific reasons. First, they believe it is never okay to kill an innocent pre-born baby. Second, they don't believe anyone should ever vote to authorize an abortionist to kill innocent pre-born babies. He posed the question of when does life begin. He opined that biology and embryology makes it clear that life begins at conception. He said human rights also begin at conception. SB 124 authorizes abortionists to kill children in the womb by authorizing the abortionist to subjectively determine viability and then amending the abortion procedure accordingly. If the baby in the womb is not viable he may proceed with the abortion procedure that most effectively kills the child.

Under the rulings in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, the health of the mother criteria is broadly defined and could allow an abortionist to proceed to kill the child in the womb during all nine months of pregnancy. Alaska Right to Life does not believe that SB 124 will block access to a single abortion. If it does, it has the potential of forcing the abortionist to induce a pre-term birth on an otherwise healthy mother and baby, placing both at risk. He urged the committee to hold SB 124 in committee and asked the sponsor to withdraw the bill. Instead, introduce a

bill that opposes abortion in all forms, for all reasons, at all stages and ages.

[2:04:22 PM](#)

MICHAEL PANKIN, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 124. His reading of the bill is that it would be protecting botched abortions - children who were slated for abortion, the abortion was attempted, and the child was born alive. He paraphrased the preamble to the Constitution of the State of Alaska to augment the argument that SB 124 should pass.

[2:06:21 PM](#)

BARBARA ANDERSEN, Accountability Alliance Alaska, Seward, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. The bill was brought forth in a world of hypocrisy where truth is slandered and facts disregarded. It is contradictory and insidious in nature. It disregards the fact that a human being is at stake in the hands of men who should be protecting all people. She cited Romans I: 18-21 and reminded the committee that HB 250, the Life at Conception Act, protects the life of a child and properly defines abortion as murder. That bill has been purposely ignored by two legislators who introduced their own bills which results in the scriptures conclusive definition: "Claiming to be wise, they became fools." She urged the committee to gut SB 124 and replace it with the language from HB 250.

[2:09:42 PM](#)

ALYSON CURREY, Legislative Liaison, Planned Parenthood Votes, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. Planned Parenthood provides quality, compassionate, evidence-based health care, including abortion services. Their providers follow rigorous standards and guidelines using the most current medical evidence available, including guidance from the Centers for Disease Control, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. The bill would restrict doctors' ability to exercise their professional expertise about what is best for their patients. Nearly 99 percent of abortions take place prior to 21 weeks, before fetal viability. For the few later abortions that occur, the bill would force physicians to alter how they practice medicine to comply with ideological restrictions that are not grounded in science to prioritize the health of the fetus over the health of the woman. This is an unfounded precedent motivated by politics. Later term abortions are performed almost exclusively in cases of serious fetal abnormalities. The bill is a cruel restriction for women and families already facing difficult circumstances.

SB 124 raises serious legal and constitutional concerns that is outlined in the written testimony submitted to the committee. Similar language in the bill has been struck down by the U.S. Supreme Court as impermissibly vague leaving physicians unclear as to their legal responsibilities. Women deserve high quality and medically sound health care. Leading medical groups oppose attempts to interfere with the doctor-patient relationship and disregard for their patients' safety. SB 124 is not well written and would be difficult for providers to comply. She urged the committee to oppose SB 124.

CHAIR COGHILL cautioned testifiers not to assign a motive to the sponsor.

[2:13:04 PM](#)

ANNA THOMPSON, representing self, Petersburg, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. The decision to terminate a pregnancy should be between a woman, her family, and her physician. Health care provider , not politicians, are equipped to make medical decisions about their patients. She agreed with Ms. Currey's testimony. The vague language in SB 124 would make it challenging for physicians to comply and avoid liability. Alaska should be working to ensure high-quality medical care for pregnant women, not forcing physicians to consider legal penalties before helping a patient. The latter is dangerous and misguided. She encouraged the members to vote against SB 124.

[2:14:44 PM](#)

JULIA CAULFIELD, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. She believes a woman's choice to end a pregnancy should be between herself and her physician. Politicians should not be involved. SB 124 jeopardizes women's health when they are already making a difficult decision to end a pregnancy. If the woman seeks an abortion later in pregnancy, the bill forces a physician to put the health of the fetus first. This is unsafe and medically unfounded. Physicians are experts in their field and should be able to treat their patients on an individual basis. SB 124 is unreasonable and unworkable for physicians and simultaneously prevents women from getting the care they need. It is bad for Alaskan women and bad for doctors.

[2:16:14 PM](#)

ROBIN SMITH, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. Most women who have later term abortions are doing so because the pregnancy has gone terribly wrong.

These difficult decisions don't need government interference. Young adolescents also have later term abortions. They are likely to deny the pregnancy out of fear of the response of their parents or the shame of seeking an abortion. It is often difficult for these teens to move forward and get the help they need. There is also the problem of the lack of abortion services in Alaska. Just four communities in the state offer these services. Not only is there the cost of the abortion, but also the cost of travel. This is extremely difficult for someone in the villages to maneuver. Finally, a woman's right must be paramount. The bill is not a priority and the legislature should focus on the fiscal crisis in Alaska.

[2:19:11 PM](#)

ZHENIA C. PETERSON, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. The decision to have an abortion should be between a woman and her doctor. In Alaska it is difficult to access reproductive health care, comprehensive sexual education, and abortion. The bill would infringe on a woman's legal right to have an abortion and would penalize physicians who are doing their job. She suggested the legislature focus on funding programs that teach medically accurate sex education and healthy relationships to avoid unintended pregnancies. She urged the members to vote no on SB 124.

CHAIR COGHILL noted that the audio coming out of Anchorage is very poor.

[2:20:56 PM](#)

PAM SAMASH, representing self, Nenana, Alaska, said she wanted to remind people that it was the State Medical Board that decided to allow late term abortions. She said the fact that Planned Parenthood doesn't support SB 124, makes her want it 10 times more. She urged the committee to pass the bill and save a baby.

[2:22:36 PM](#)

XOCHITL LOPEZ-AYALA, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. She can't understand why access to abortion should come up in the legislature every year. Government has no place in decisions a woman makes about her body. Focus on resources for sex education and access to birth control and family planning contraception that will help women, particularly Native women and women of color like herself. Protect Alaska women and do not pass SB 124.

[2:24:50 PM](#)

SERENE ROSE O'HARA-JOLLEY, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. She directed attention to the fiscal note and opined that the money would be better spent on family planning services and access to reproductive care before the need for an abortion arises. The safe and medically sound way to reduce the need for abortions is sex education, family planning, and access to birth control. She urged the committee to support using the money Alaska has in a sensible way and make the state safer for all Alaskans. Oppose SB 124.

[2:26:32 PM](#)

ANN RAPPOPORT, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. She referenced an editorial in the Anchorage Daily News that talked about why SB 124 is such a bad idea. It raised the question of whether those who are working to prevent abortion are stepping up to adopt those babies who would each likely need extensive medical and social services care throughout their lives. The legislature has already significantly cut funding for health and social services. Passing SB 124 would result in another huge unfunded mandate. DHSS determined that should the bill pass, it would cost nearly \$2 million in the first year and nearly \$4 million a few years later. This money could be put to much better use in reproductive health planning. Significantly, the bill is estimated to potentially affect two fetuses a year with an increase in the next few years. She questioned why the legislature is spending time on this bill when the state is on the brink of fiscal collapse and classroom sizes are increasing. A woman's reproductive decisions are not the government's business. She urged the committee to vote no on SB 124.

[2:29:53 PM](#)

LIZ RANGEL, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. It is inappropriate to politicize decisions on women's bodies. Bills like SB 124 have the sole purpose of placing obstacles between women and their access to a safe abortion. The vague language makes the bill medically unsafe and encourages the physician to place the woman's life second to that of the fetus. She asked the Senate to place more value on children that are already born by funding education. As an Alaskan woman, she urged the committee to vote no on SB 124.

[2:31:14 PM](#)

MELISSA RHODES-REESE, representing self, Juneau, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. The factors that go into the decision to have an abortion are personal, private, and between

a woman, her family, and her medical professional. The decision to have an abortion is difficult, particularly when it is late term. In 2017, 8 percent of abortions in Alaska were late term. The circumstances are tremendous. She shared a personal family experience and reiterated her opposition to SB 124.

[2:33:18 PM](#)

RICK SMALL, representing self, Palmer, Alaska, said he is an abolitionist of human abortion. Just as there were abolitionists of slavery, he doesn't believe the murder of human beings should be regulated. The practice should be abolished. Alaska law states the unborn child is worthy of protection, but that protection does not apply if a woman decides to have an abortion. That is insane and evil. SB 124 does not address abortion as murder, but it is premeditated murder of an innocent human being during development. It is time for Christians to rise up and work to abolish abortion, not regulate it.

[2:35:04 PM](#)

SENATOR KELLY commented that he didn't believe the abolitionist were against the underground railroad.

[2:35:30 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL stated that he would hold public testimony open on SB 124.

[2:35:49 PM](#)

JASMINE LEREMIA, representing self, Petersburg, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 124. She is 17 and her perspective of SB 124 is that it asks for underdeveloped, unborn children to undergo a premature induced birth. She doesn't see the rationale behind forcing babies to live a life where they are without a mother from birth. They would suffer from not having the mother/child bond that shapes their development. Additionally, these premature babies would fall behind their peers because their premature development is done outside the womb. Her brother was born three months premature and nearly died multiple times in his first year. He also suffered from social and academic learning disabilities until middle school. He had a fulltime mother. The negative effects on premature babies' development without a fulltime mother would likely be more potent. SB 124 also leaves open the important questions of the plan for these premature children, how they would be kept in a state of healthy physical and psychological development, and the role the state would take on by taking charge of these unwanted, premature children. The cost of a program to support this bill would be detrimental to the state in this time of financial

crisis. SB 124 is unusually cruel to the children it would affect and it is inefficient and financially detrimental to the state.

[2:38:09 PM](#)

SENATOR COSTELLO asked Mr. Martin if he recalls any other time that Planned Parenthood and Alaska Right to Life came out on the same side of a piece of legislation.

PATRICK MARTIN, Alaska Right to Life, said not that he recalls but they are not on the same side here either. The reasons for their opposition are completely different.

[2:39:12 PM](#)

CHAIR COGHILL said he would keep public testimony open on SB 124 and hold the bill for further consideration. He would take amendments on Wednesday.

[2:41:26 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Coghill adjourned the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting at 2:41 p.m.