

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 8, 2018

3:29 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Kevin Meyer, Chair  
Senator David Wilson  
Senator Cathy Giessel  
Senator John Coghill  
Senator Dennis Egan

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 164

"An Act relating to the confidentiality of certain records on animals and crops; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SB 164 OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 148

"An Act relating to powers of the Alaska Police Standards Council; and relating to background checks for admission to police training programs and certification as a police officer."

- MOVED SB 148 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 164

SHORT TITLE: CONFIDENTIALITY OF ANIMAL & CROP RECORDS

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/26/18	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/26/18	(S)	STA, RES
02/08/18	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

BILL: SB 148

SHORT TITLE: BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR POLICE & TRAINING

SPONSOR(s): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/18/18 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/18/18 (S) STA, JUD  
02/08/18 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

CHRISTINA CARPENTER, Director  
Division of Environmental Health  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Introduced and addressed questions regarding SB 164.

DR. ROBERT GERLACH, State Veterinarian  
Office of the State Veterinarian  
Division of Environmental Health  
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided a sectional analysis of SB 164 and addressed questions regarding the bill.

AMY SEITZ, Executive Director  
Alaska Farm Bureau  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 164.

BRYCE WRIGLEY, President  
Alaska Farm Bureau  
Delta Junction, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 164.

ROBERT GRIFFITHS, Executive Director  
Alaska Police Standards Council  
Alaska Department of Public Safety  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided an overview and sectional analysis of SB 148.

KATHIE WASSERMAN, Executive Director  
Alaska Municipal League  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 148.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:29:34 PM](#)

**CHAIR KEVIN MEYER** called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:29 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Giessel, Coghill, Wilson, Egan, and Chair Meyer.

**SB 164-CONFIDENTIALITY OF ANIMAL & CROP RECORDS**

[3:30:35 PM](#)

CHAIR MEYER announced the consideration of SB 164.

[3:30:59 PM](#)

CHRISTINA CARPENTER, Director, Division of Environmental Health, Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Anchorage, Alaska, explained that SB 164 will make certain records held by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) confidential.

MS. CARPENTER addressed slide 2: SB 164: Confidentiality of Records, and referenced as follows:

- To keep the Alaska agricultural sector healthy, to encourage its growth, and to prevent unfair competitive practices requires a change to the Alaska Statutes (AS), specifically to keep certain information about agricultural imports, animal identification, premise, and test results confidential.
- Amends AS 03.05 to add a new section that would make certain records held by DEC and DNR confidential.
- SB 164 would provide agriculture producers with similar confidentiality protection already afforded to other commercial industries; examples, commercial fisheries or big-game hunters.
- Coordinated effort with DEC and DNR.

[3:32:43 PM](#)

She addressed slide 3: SB 164: Need Overview, and referenced as follows:

- Farmers are reluctant to subject their animals and crops to voluntary testing for disease because the results of those tests are not proprietary as they are in other states.
- Public disclosure of this information can have potentially negative impacts on their business, and since they are not mandated tests, they opt not to test at all.

- An outbreak of disease could cause significant threats to animal health, both wild and domestic, public health, the environment or the food supply.
- Holding animal import health records, import permit information and voluntary disease testing or product quality testing as proprietary allows farmers to keep this business information confidential.

MS. CARPENTER opined that reluctance to engage in optional testing means farmers do not work with DEC early in the process to contain a disease outbreak or a morbidity event. She added that there is also concern from some animal owners that their information could be released and accessed by animal rights activists for harassment purposes.

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DR. ROBERT GERLACH, State Veterinarian, Office of the State Veterinarian (OSV), Division of Environmental Health (EH), Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, Anchorage, Alaska, addressed slide 4: Office of the State Veterinarian, and referenced as follows:

The Office of the State Veterinarian is responsible for the prevention, control and eradication of animal diseases in all animals in the state including livestock and pets, safeguarding the health and food production capacity of the state's livestock, reindeer, and poultry and preventing the transmission of animal diseases to humans.

He said for OSV to carry out its responsibilities requires access to certain information:

- Identification of where animals are located.
- How many animals are at a location.
- Contact information for animal owners.
- Animal movement information to identify if animals are moving from one place to another if an outbreak occurs.
- Background information surveillance on diseases in the state for certification.

He addressed slide 5: Program Functions and Record Examples, and referenced as follows:

- "One Health" animal disease and traceability:
  - Import regulations for animals.

- o Disease surveillance and investigation.
- o Movi Study: wild and domestic sheep and goats.
- Dairy:
  - o Sanitation at dairy farms and milk facilities.
  - o Dairy products safe for human consumption.
  - o New recipes.
- Reindeer slaughter.
- FSMA produce safety rule.
- Fish tissue monitoring.

DR. GERLACH explained that OSV's records on disease certification as well as programs to provide proof-of-animal quality are important for the producers to have a successful business.

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SENATOR GIESSEL addressed Alaska's cross-border trade with Canada. She pointed out that Canada has some prohibitions on animals crossing the border to come to Alaska. She asked Dr. Gerlach to provide details.

DR. GERLACH answered that there are some prohibitions on movement of certain species like sheep and goats from the Lower 48 that require special permits to travel through Canada. The other diseases that Canada has surveillance for, like Alaska's concern regarding certain diseases that are in wildlife, are parasites in ticks or Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). He revealed that Canada currently has a CWD outbreak in Alberta.

SENATOR GIESSEL noted that Alaska has the Porcupine caribou herd that moves back and forth across the border and asked if the caribou herd is monitored for disease.

DR. GERLACH replied the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) monitors the Porcupine caribou herd and shares the data with the EH.

SENATOR GIESSEL asked him to confirm that ADF&G has a veterinarian on staff, like Dr. Gerlach's position.

DR. GERLACH answered correct. He detailed that EH has a veterinarian as well.

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SENATOR GIESSEL asked Dr. Gerlach to verify that the state has three veterinarians in three different departments.

DR. GERLACH detailed that the responsibilities of the veterinarians in each of the departments varies. He emphasized that there is only one "state" veterinarian. He noted that only a state veterinarian can act on an outbreak to contain diseases.

SENATOR GIESSEL asked that Dr. Gerlach provide additional detail on the MOVI Study.

DR. GERLACH explained that the Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae (MOVI) is a disease of concern that was responsible for some sporadic die-off of bighorn sheep in the Lower 48. He said the MOVI Study is collecting data from domestic sheep and goats to see if there is potential risk to Alaska's wildlife.

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He addressed slide 6: Alaska Animal Imports: OSV Records:

- FY2014:
  - Number of permits:
    - Cattle: 6
    - Sheep/goats: 26
    - Equine: 77
    - Swine: 19
    - Poultry: 220
  - Number of animals:
    - Cattle: 37
    - Sheep/goats: 92
    - Equine: 203
    - Swine: 2,050
    - Poultry: 14,000
  
- FY2015:
  - Number of permits:
    - Cattle: 5
    - Sheep/goats: 21
    - Equine: 63
    - Swine: 13
    - Poultry: 490
  - Number of animals:
    - Cattle: 22
    - Sheep/goats: 38
    - Equine: 118
    - Swine: 668
    - Poultry: 30,623
  
- FY2016:

- o Number of permits:
  - Cattle: 14
  - Sheep/goats: 22
  - Equine: 203
  - Swine: 31
  - Poultry: 1,645
- o Number of animals:
  - Cattle: 169
  - Sheep/goats: 298
  - Equine: 352
  - Swine: 2668
  - Poultry: 128,372
- FY2017:
  - o Number of permits:
    - Cattle: 22
    - Sheep/goats: 17
    - Equine: 192
    - Swine: 37
    - Poultry: 1,230
  - o Number of animals:
    - Cattle: 401
    - Sheep/goats: 85
    - Equine: 366
    - Swine: 2,319
    - Poultry: 91,929

DR. GERLACH noted that the animal import data shows that permits and animals continue to increase.

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He addressed slide 7: Disease Outbreaks in Alaska, and referenced as follows:

- Brucellosis:
  - o 20 percent of cases are associated with recreational and subsistence hunting.
- Domestic Animals:
  - o Pet foods (brucellosis canis, leptospirosis, rabies, avian, swine, and canine influenza).
  - o Poultry (Marek's Disease, fowl cholera, avian influenza).
  - o Baby chicks (salmonella).
  - o Outbreaks at the Fair (Streptococcus suis, Malignant Catharral Fever).
  - o Domestic rabbits (herpes virus).

- Treats & Raw Foods:
  - Poultry deaths (Southcentral; toxin).
  - Horses (Kodiak; aflatoxin).
  - Domestic pets (salmonella, chemical contaminants).
- Records can still be disclosed if there is a threat to the health or safety of an animal, crop, or the public.

DR. GERLACH explained that disease outbreaks are reported to certain state and federal agencies. He added that data is released to inform farmers so that action can be taken. He emphasized that released information is "generalized" without personal or business information. He summarized that the intent is to protect animal health and contain or eradicate diseases without impacting a commercial entity.

[3:45:46 PM](#)

He addressed slide 8: SB 164: Sectional Analysis, and detailed as follows:

- Section 1:
  - Makes certain animal and crop records maintained by DEC and DNR exempt from the Alaska Public Records Act if they:
    1. Are importation records that identify an animal, crop, business, or individual;
    2. Contain animal or crop test results if certain conditions are met;
    3. Are trade secrets or proprietary business or financial information.
  - Allows the departments to disclose the above described records in the case that the departments determine that there is a threat to the health or safety of an animal, crop, or the public.
  - Provides the definition of "varietal."
- Section 2:
  - Allows the DEC and DNR to adopt regulations to implement the act.
- Section 3:
  - Provides for an immediate effective date for Section 2.

MS. CARPENTER addressed slide 9: SB 164: Benefits, and referenced as follows:

- Routine surveillance testing may encourage better animal husbandry and crop management, resulting in a higher

quality product for sale and increased production efficiency.

- Early identification and testing of sick or dead animals and crops decreases the potential for more serious outbreaks and spread of disease to other farms, plants or wildlife.
- Confidentiality of proprietary data prevents unfair advantage to a competitor regarding product development, marketing strategy, and source of animal inventory.

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SENATOR WILSON asked if the division had an indication as to how many people will go ahead and comply with testing. He noted that the bill has a zero fiscal note and asked who pays for the testing.

MS. CARPENTER addressed testing payment and explained that producers have their private veterinarian test and the two entities have a client-patient confidentiality; however, as soon as the private veterinarian turns records over to the state, the information is subject to public record. She specified that the bill's intent is for records protection rather than an increase in testing at EH's laboratory.

DR. GERLACH added that some of the testing EH does is paid from U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) grants to meet certain certifications. He noted that farmers are seeing the overall benefit from obtaining certifications, especially for moving animals out of state.

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SENATOR WILSON asked if there is a standard number of testing days for cattle that come into the state from the Lower 48 or Canada before the animal can go to market.

DR. GERLACH replied import requirements require testing 30 days in advance of cattle coming into the state.

SENATOR WILSON asked Dr. Gerlach to confirm that someone could bring an animal in and slaughter within 15 days and not go through testing.

DR. GERLACH answered correct. He detailed that an animal brought into the state for direct slaughter would still have to meet USDA standards for importation into the country. He noted that state law requires that direct slaughter must occur within 10

days, federal law requires 14 days. He added that an exemption for added time to slaughter may be requested.

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SENATOR WILSON asked if an animal could be imported into the state, used for breeding, and then be sent for slaughter.

DR. GERLACH answered no. He specified that an animal must go directly to slaughter. He pointed out that Washington state has experienced issues where animals brought in for immediate slaughter have been used for breeding. He emphasized that record accountability and traceability is vital in verifying that animals brought in for immediate slaughter are not used for breeding.

SENATOR COGHILL noted that he is concerned with, "Pulling the shade down over private industry." He asked what information will be publicly available if SB 164 is adopted.

DR. GERLACH answered that information of animal imports coming into the state would be available. He reiterated that information is generalized and specific information for a business or person will not be disclosed.

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SENATOR COGHILL asked what specific information will be available from the state. He inquired if the information from the state will show volume and category.

DR. GERLACH answered correct.

SENATOR COGHILL pointed out that accessing the USDA may be a way to circumvent restricted information. He noted that the information provided by the USDA does not provide the name.

DR. GERLACH replied that he did not know what information the USDA would release. He surmised that the USDA would redact certain information.

SENATOR COGHILL shared a constituent concern that some people are bringing animals into the state and calling them "Alaskan grown" and then marketing them.

DR. GERLACH replied that Senator Coghill poses a very good question and noted that specific information is available when a concern is voiced.

SENATOR COGHILL asked him to verify that information on volumes and species will be available without specific identification.

DR. GERLACH answered correct. He emphasized that information will not be hidden, but information for a specific business or person will not be disclosed. He noted that the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPPA) on health information privacy runs the same way.

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SENATOR COGHILL pointed out that the information that the USDA releases does show an address.

SENATOR WILSON addressed "Alaskan grown" and asked how livestock is verified to be "Alaskan grown" if there is a complaint.

MS. CARPENTER explained that information and records would continue to be shared with "fellow departments" for managing the "Alaskan grown" program.

SENATOR WILSON asked if only "general" information would be available to the public and only the state would have access to the specific information.

DR. GERLACH answered that's true and noted that access is also available to an "authority" that has the regulation to go ahead with a program like the "Alaskan grown". He reiterated that any time there is a question, the Division of Agriculture has access to specific information. He noted that the confidentiality issue has been a very big issue in the Lower 48 where states have strengthened access to information because of several different issues associated with data misuse by other public entities that are industry damaging.

[4:02:39 PM](#)

CHAIR MEYER opened public testimony.

[4:03:06 PM](#)

AMY SEITZ, Executive Director, Alaska Farm Bureau, Soldotna, Alaska, testified in support of SB 164. She explained that compliance with state and federal laws requires farmers to provide certain information to DEC and DNR as well as compliance for voluntary testing programs or importation laws. She said currently there is no confidentiality over testing records as well as pertinent information on individuals, businesses, animals, and crops.

MS. SEITZ said the passage of SB 164 will provide information security for farmers which is the same security already provided to other businesses in the state. She emphasized that the passage of SB 164 would not endanger public health and private information would be released if there was a problem.

[4:06:04 PM](#)

BRYCE WRIGLEY, President, Alaska Farm Bureau, Delta Junction, Alaska, testified in support of SB 164. He said building a strong and resilient local-food system requires a commitment from farmers as well as statutes and regulations that encourage local food production and processes. He said SB 164 will build trust between the state's food producers and government without fear that businesses can be impacted because of a sick animal or crop disease. He explained that the possibility of a serious problem and the potential food-market impact makes farmers reluctant to ask for help from agencies because that information is currently considered public. He asserted that knowing certain test results are subject to public record requests under the current law makes animal owners reluctant to voluntarily have their animals tested for what could be contagious diseases and viruses.

He summarized that continued distrust can be expected without the protections that SB 164 offers. He emphasized that SB 164 will build trust between food producers and their government. He asserted that working together will transform Alaska's food security.

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CHAIR MEYER closed public testimony.

[4:11:27 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL moved to report SB 164, version 30-GS2584\A from committee with individual recommendations and attached zero fiscal note.

[4:11:42 PM](#)

CHAIR MEYER announced that seeing no objection, the motion carried.

[4:11:47 PM](#)

At ease.

**SB 148-BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR POLICE & TRAINING**

[4:14:35 PM](#)

CHAIR MEYER called the committee back to order. He announced the consideration of Senate Bill 148 (SB 148).

4:15:32 PM

ROBERT GRIFFITHS, Executive Director, Alaska Police Standards Council, Alaska Department of Public Safety, Juneau, Alaska, provided the following background information on the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC):

In 1972 the Legislature created the Police Standards Council to professionalize law enforcement in Alaska. We were given the power and authority to establish regulations that deal with hiring, training, certification, and in some cases decertification of officers across the state. A few years later we had added to our repertoire: corrections, probation, parole, and what are known as municipal corrections officers; so, we certify all of those. We have about 2500 different certified officers in the state of Alaska that we track and try to train as best we can, and we are responsible for maintaining their certifications.

He said the intent of SB 148 is to give APSC a tool to assist rural public safety agencies in hiring and retaining officers.

He remarked that most people assume that every police officer in Alaska has passed a fingerprint-based background check; however, that is not always the case. He explained that while APSC has established regulations that mandate a police officer have their fingerprints taken and run through the national computer system to verify identity and past criminal history, those are only done by regulation and in some cases rural communities do not have the necessary infrastructure or capabilities to do that.

He disclosed that by statute, rural communities are not required to run a fingerprint-based background check; however, they must comply with both federal and state regulations regarding information access, protection, and security. He added that if a rural community was to institute any kind of electronic inquiry system, they would have to have secure data lines, specialized routing equipment and terminals, and physical security for the equipment. He said an electronic inquiry system is expensive and most of the state's rural communities cannot accommodate that.

4:18:16 PM

MR. GRIFFITHS explained that SB 148 fixes a recent problem where federal regulation that governs fingerprints and background checks regard the police officer's standards and training programs across the country of which most states, like Alaska, as "post agencies" that are regarded as a "licensing agency" as opposed to a "criminal justice agency." He explained that for access to be granted under federal law to the criminal justice system data which is where the fingerprint data resides, Alaska must have statutory authority for access. He specified that Alaska's current authority exists only in regulation, not in statute; as a result, SB 148 was drafted to address the statutory requirement. He summarized that Alaska's rural communities will be assisted by acceptance of fingerprints where they were taken by someone in the community, state trooper, or village public safety officer.

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He provided a sectional analysis as follows:

- **Summary:**  
This bill adds to the power of APSC to request a fingerprint based national criminal history records check from the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) through the Alaska Department Public Safety (DPS) for admittance to a basic police training program or for employment as a police officer, if the prospective employer does not have access to a criminal justice information system (CJIS).
- **Section 1:**  
Amends AS 12.62.400 (National Criminal History record checks for employment, licensing, and other noncriminal justice purposes) to include the new subsection (a) (1) (19) allowing for a fingerprint based records check to be submitted to the FBI for admittance to a basic police training program under AS 18.65.230 (APSC training programs) or for employment as a police officer under 18.65.240 (APSC standards for appointment as a police officer), if the prospective employer does not have access to CJIS.
- **Section 2:**  
Amends AS 18.65.220 (Powers of the APSC) to include the new subsection (8) which requires a state and national criminal history check for an applicant to a training program established in AS 18.65.230 and for a person to be appointed as a police officer under AS 18.65.240 if that

person's prospective employer does not have access to CJIS to conduct their own criminal history check.

- **Section 3:**

Amends AS 18.65.230 (APSC training programs) by adding a new subsection (b) which requires an applicant for appointment as a police officer or for admittance to a training program to submit fingerprints and a fee to the APSC unless the applicant's employer has done this.

- **Section 4:**

Amends AS 18.65.240 (APSC standards) to reflect the new subsection (d), added below in Section 5.

- **Section 5:**

Amends AS 18.65.240 (APSC standards) to add a new subsection (d) which limits the issuing of an APSC certificate unless the council determines the applicant will undergo a national criminal history record check pre-employment; and requiring a prospective employer to submit an applicant's fingerprints to the council for submission to the FBI if the prospective employer does not have CJIS access. The criminal history records check is required to assure applicants meet minimum standards established by the council.

- **Section 6:**

Amends AS 18.65.290 (Definitions) by adding a new subsection (9) which clarifies that the meaning of criminal justice information system is the meaning given in AS 12.62.900(13).

- **Section 7:**

Specifies the applicability of the act applies to persons that apply for admittance to a police training program under AS 18.65.230 or to be appointed as a police officer under AS 18.65.240 on or after the effective date of this act.

- **Section 8:**

Includes a reviser's instruction to change the catch-line of AS 18.65.230 from "Training programs" to "Training programs; fingerprints."

[4:23:20 PM](#)

CHAIR MEYER asked who would be liable if something happens in a smaller area that has not gone through the background check protocol.

MR. GRIFFITHS surmised that the community where the individual is working would assume most of the liability. He admitted that liability would be decreased if the individuals go through APSC's background check, training program, and certification process.

CHAIR MEYER asked how large the communities are and if they have taxing capabilities for hiring.

MR. GRIFFITHS answered that the communities must be incorporated. He added that the legislation targets communities under 1,000 in population that are off the road system. The targeted communities are primarily in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta and Northwest Arctic Borough areas.

CHAIR MEYER asked if APSC would be able to get to the smaller communities to do fingerprint checks.

MR. GRIFFITHS replied that APSC would be able to preform the fingerprint checks through its partnership with DPS.

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CHAIR MEYER asked if the officers in the smaller communities carry weapons.

MR. GRIFFITHS answered that some of the officers do carry weapons. He assumed that the officers that carry weapons have been through the APSC/DPS training programs and met the requirements; however, their officers are not prohibited from carrying a firearm. The option is up to the community and their community standards.

CHAIR MEYER said the concern is that some of the smaller communities are hiring individuals that may or may not be qualified to be law enforcement and may or may not be enforcing the state's laws. He asked if the officers in the smaller communities are on the Alaska Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS).

MR. GRIFFITHS answered that he did not know but would follow up with the information.

CHAIR MEYER remarked that there should be some way to make sure that the individuals are qualified.

4:26:36 PM

CHAIR MEYER opened public testimony.

4:26:55 PM

KATHIE WASSERMAN, Executive Director, Alaska Municipal League, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 148. She detailed the public safety challenges faced by smaller municipalities. She remarked that SB 148 is a bill that makes it easier to get the smaller municipalities that do have a Village Police Officer (VPO) to do what they need to do for community safety and avoid costly lawsuits. She noted that the background check is typically something that the smaller municipalities cannot do on their own. She noted that enrollment into PERS is inconsistent within each community.

CHAIR MEYER asked how smaller municipalities pay for their VPOs.

MS. WASSERMAN replied that she did not know. She surmised that communities with tribal presence may use tribal grants.

CHAIR MEYER asked Mr. Griffiths how VPOs differ from the Village Public Safety Officers (VPSO).

4:30:57 PM

MR. GRIFFITHS explained that the communities benefiting from SB 148 are the communities with VPOs. He detailed that APSC adopted regulations describing the different standards that are applied to police officers, both for training and for hiring. He said APSC has recognized that there is a vast disparity between rural law enforcement and urban law enforcement. He described the two police officer classifications as follows:

APSC created two classifications of police officer, they are still police officers under the state statute and under the law, but the requirements are slightly different to accommodate the needs and the limited resources of rural Alaska; we call those folks in rural Alaska "Village Police Officers," not to be confused with "Village Public Safety Officers" which are officers that are not employed by the state of Alaska or by the local community but instead by grantees through the Department of Public Safety.

CHAIR MEYER asked who pays for VPOs and VPSOs.

MR. GRIFFITHS replied that VPOs are paid by the local communities and VPSOs are paid through the VPSO program through DPS. The VPSO program is grant-funded by the state to regional corporations or in one case the grantee is a borough. He detailed that VPSOs are trained, certified and managed by DPS.

CHAIR MEYER asked him to confirm that the VPSOs are state employees.

MR. GRIFFITHS clarified that VPSOs are funded by state money, but the individuals are not state employees.

CHAIR MEYER asked him to confirm that VPSOs are different from VPOs.

MR. GRIFFITHS answered yes.

[4:33:27 PM](#)

SENATOR WILSON asked if the bill is retroactive for VPOs to get their fingerprints and police training.

MR. GRIFFITHS replied as follows:

I'm not sure "retroactive" would be the right terminology because our regulations currently require this. If they are currently serving in a community and haven't complied with those regulations or if this statute were to be adopted with a statute, we would still assist them in coming into compliance with both.

SENATOR WILSON assumed that the financial burden for fingerprint submission would be up to the communities and asked what the cost is.

MR. GRIFFITHS replied that the cost for a licensing, fingerprint background check is \$47.

CHAIR MEYER asked if VPO turnover is high.

MR. GRIFFITHS answered that turnover for VPOs is exceptionally high. He opined that part of the issue is that VPOs do not have an opportunity to enroll in PERS.

CHAIR MEYER pointed out that SB 148 has a fiscal note for DPS with corrections forthcoming.

[4:36:05 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL moved to report SB 148, version: 30-GS2594\A from committee with individual recommendations and forthcoming updated fiscal notes.

[4:36:18 PM](#)

CHAIR MEYER announced that there being no objection, the motion carried.

[4:37:11 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Meyer adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee at 4:37 p.m.