

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 11, 2020
9:02 a.m.

9:02:57 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Johnston called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Jennifer Johnston, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Ortiz, Vice-Chair
Representative Ben Carpenter
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Gary Knopp
Representative Bart LeBon
Representative Kelly Merrick
Representative Colleen Sullivan-Leonard
Representative Cathy Tilton
Representative Adam Wool

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Erin Shine, Staff, Representative Jennifer Johnston;
Representative Ivy Spohnholz, Sponsor; Mike Mason, Staff,
Representative Chris Tuck; Representative Laddie Shaw,
Sponsor; Josh Walton, Staff, Representative Laddie Shaw;
Vikki Jo Kennedy, Self, Juneau; Tom Studler, Chief Warrant
Officer, United States Army (Retired), Fairbanks.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Sterling Strait, Alaska Seismic Hazard Safety Commission,
Anchorage; Lynn Kyle, President, Alaska Chapter of Vietnam
Helicopters Pilots Association, Eagle River.

SUMMARY

HB 30 WORKERS' COMP: DEATH; PERM PARTIAL IMPAIR

CSHB 30(FIN) was REPORTED OUT of committee with five "do pass" recommendations, one "do not pass" recommendation, and five "no recommendation" recommendations and with one new fiscal impact note by the Department of Administration and two new fiscal impact notes by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

HB 127 DENTAL HYGIENIST ADVANCED PRAC PERMIT

CSHB 127(FIN) was REPORTED OUT of Committee with seven "do pass" recommendations and four "no recommendation" recommendations and with one new zero fiscal note by the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, one new zero fiscal note by the Department of Health and Social Services, and one new fiscal impact note by the Department of Health and Social Services.

HB 182 SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION KITS: TESTING

CSSSHB 182(STA) was REPORTED OUT of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and one new fiscal impact note by the Department of Public Safety.

HB 197 EXTEND SEISMIC HAZARDS SAFETY COMMISSION

HB 197 was REPORTED OUT of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one previously published fiscal impact note: FN1 (DNR).

HB 223 NAMING VIETNAM HELI. PILOTS' MEM. BRIDGE

HB 223 was REPORTED OUT of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and one previously published fiscal note: FN1 (DOT).

Co-Chair Johnston reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

#hb127

HOUSE BILL NO. 127

"An Act relating to the practice of dental hygiene; establishing an advanced practice permit; prohibiting

unfair discrimination under group health insurance against a dental hygienist who holds an advanced practice permit; relating to medical assistance for dental hygiene services; and providing for an effective date."

[9:04:01 AM](#)

Co-Chair Foster MOVED to ADOPT proposed committee substitute for HB 127, Work Draft 31-LS0836\S (Fisher 3/10/20).

Co-Chair Johnston OBJECTED for discussion.

ERIN SHINE, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER JOHNSTON, reported that the proposed CS, version S, made one change on page 6, line 23. The effective date was changed to January 1, 2021. In conversations with the sponsor and with the Division of Business and Professional Licensing the new effective date would provide enough time to promulgate regulations.

Co-Chair Johnston WITHDREW her OBJECTION.

There being NO further OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

[9:05:17 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE IVY SPOHNHOLZ, SPONSOR, explained that bill created an advanced practice permit for dental hygienists which would allow experienced licensed dental hygienists to apply for a license to provide preventative oral care to underserved populations. Underserved populations included people at senior centers, healthcare facilities, daycares, schools, and for Alaskans eligible for Public Assistance who were homebound or who lived in an underserved community.

Co-Chair Foster MOVED to report CSHB 127(FIN) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSHB 127(FIN) was REPORTED OUT of Committee with seven "do pass" recommendations and four "no recommendation" recommendations and with one new zero fiscal note by the

Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, one new zero fiscal note by the Department of Health and Social Services, and one new fiscal impact note by the Department of Health and Social Services.

[9:06:30 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:06:43 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#hb182

HOUSE BILL NO. 182

"An Act relating to testing of sexual assault examination kits; and providing for an effective date."

[9:06:43 AM](#)

Co-Chair Johnston reported no one had any questions for the sponsor.

Co-Chair Foster MOVED to report CSSSHB 182(STA) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSSSHB 182(STA) was REPORTED OUT of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and one new fiscal impact note by the Department of Public Safety.

#hb30

HOUSE BILL NO. 30

"An Act relating to the exclusiveness of liability of an employer in the case of death; relating to the payment of workers' compensation benefits in the case of permanent partial impairment; relating to notice of workers' compensation death benefits; relating to the payment of workers' compensation death benefits payable to a child of an employee where there is no surviving spouse; relating to the payment of workers' compensation death benefits for an employee without a surviving spouse or child; and providing for an effective date."

[9:07:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON, SPONSOR, relayed that the bill did one thing; it updated 20-year old permanent partial impairment ratings that had flagged because of encroaching inflation. It positioned the state in a place where the compensation for a permanent partial impairment was too low.

Co-Chair Foster MOVED to report CSHB 30(FIN) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

Representative Carpenter OBJECTED.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Josephson, Knopp, LeBon, Merrick, Ortiz,
Sullivan-Leonard, Wool, Johnston, Foster
OPPOSED: Tilton, Carpenter

The MOTION PASSED (9/2).

CSHB 30(FIN) was REPORTED OUT of committee with five "do pass" recommendations, one "do not pass" recommendation, and five "no recommendation" recommendations and with one new fiscal impact note by the Department of Administration and two new fiscal impact notes by the Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

#hb197

HOUSE BILL NO. 197

"An Act extending the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission; and providing for an effective date."

[9:10:09 AM](#)

MIKE MASON, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE CHRIS TUCK, reported that Alaska was one of the most seismically active regions on Earth. The state had a history of very large and damaging earthquakes. The state had tried to work diligently to prepare for future earthquakes and, as part of that work, it created the Alaska Seismic Hazard Safety Commission in 2001. House Bill 197 would simply extend the Alaska Seismic Hazard Safety Commission through June 30, 2028. The bill

included an immediate effective date because the current authorization expired in June. A recent audit of the commission included a specific recommendation to extend the commission until 2028. The chair of the commission, Sterling Strait, was online and available to answer questions. He thanked the committee.

[9:11:18 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:11:55 AM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Johnston OPENED public testimony.

STERLING STRAIT, ALASKA SEISMIC HAZARD SAFETY COMMISSION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), thanked Representative Tuck for bringing the bill forward and the House Finance Committee for hearing it. He was available to answer any questions. He stated that he was excited about the work the commission was doing. There had been good discussion about the Anchorage earthquake that occurred 1.5 years prior. The commission was compiling some good recommendations to move forward and was excited about what it could do to help improve seismic safety in the state. He thanked members for their time.

[9:13:21 AM](#)

Co-Chair Johnston CLOSED public testimony.

Co-Chair Foster MOVED to report HB 197 out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

HB 197 was REPORTED OUT of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one previously published fiscal impact note: FN1 (DNR).

#hb223

HOUSE BILL NO. 223

"An Act naming the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots' Memorial Bridge."

[9:14:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LADDIE SHAW, SPONSOR, reported that Vietnam was called the helicopter war, and during that war there were 12,000 helicopters that flew in combat or support missions. He reported 5,000 helicopters were destroyed, and 40,000 pilots served. He deferred to his staff to provide an overview of the bill.

JOSH WALTON, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE LADDIE SHAW, relayed that the bill named bridges 1124 and 1889 the Vietnam Helicopter Pilots' Memorial Bridge. The bridges spanned the Matanuska River Northbound and Southbound at Mile 30.4 of the Glenn Highway.

[9:15:13 AM](#)

Co-Chair Johnston OPENED public testimony.

[9:15:31 AM](#)

VIKKI JO KENNEDY, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in support of HB 223. She recalled a friend she lost to the Vietnam War. She thought a memorial in Alaska for Vietnam Helicopter Pilots was long overdue. She thanked the committee for hearing her testimony.

[9:17:57 AM](#)

TOM STUDLER, CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER, UNITED STATES ARMY (RETIRED), FAIRBANKS, supported the bill. He was a Vietnam Veteran. He served in Vietnam and flew on hunter-killer teams. He thought it was ironic the representative had asked him to testify on the bill. He undoubtedly flew Representative Shaw, a member of Seal Team 1, at some point, as they served in the same area at the same time. One of his jobs was to support Seal Team 1. The other primary mission of his team was with Special Forces. He flew on a hunter-killer team where their job was to find and seek out the enemy. He flew approximately 1,500 hours and was shot down five times during his tour in Vietnam. One of those times was across the border in a country in which they were not it. It took him a week to get out. He could attest that the pilots and crew members in Vietnam had a very tough mission. The Vietnam War was the "Helicopter War." He thought the U.S. Army flew more missions during Vietnam than any other time. He found it

difficult to reflect on his time in Vietnam because of the many friends he lost - the people that sacrificed their lives. Just under 5,000 pilots and crew died during the war. He happened to be personal friends with a couple of Medal of Honor recipients, Chief Warrant Officer Gerald (Pappy) Devine and Chief Warrant Officer Mike Novosel, for their heroism flying dust off missions. They returned time-after-time to evacuate the wounded. He noted the average life of a helicopter pilot in Vietnam once engaged was under 5 minutes. The Vietnam helicopter pilots were very deserving of the bill for their sacrifices made to their country.

Co-Chair Johnston thanked Representative Shaw and Mr. Studler for their service. She remarked, "We never did that enough for the Vietnam Vets."

[9:21:21 AM](#)

LYNN KYLE, PRESIDENT, ALASKA CHAPTER OF VIETNAM HELICOPTERS PILOTS ASSOCIATION, EAGLE RIVER (via teleconference), was a Vietnam Veteran and helicopter pilot. He noted that the Alaska Chapter was an all exclusive group of helicopter pilots and crew and had 89 members, 7 of which were deceased. According to the National Vietnam Helicopter Pilots Association, there were over 300 pilots and crew in Alaska. However, finding everyone was ore difficult, being that they were all senior citizens. The Vietnam conflict was a helicopter war and the sacrifices made by the pilots and crews could not be understated. They brought in a revolutionary way of doing business which was still in existence. For instance, medical treatment was a standard presently and started in Vietnam. Air crews flew over 500,000 missions and saved over 900,000 patients at an astonishing rate of 82 percent survival. It was currently used in all of the country's combat arms, across the country, and in Alaska. Many people gave their lives to the cause. Those that came home, brought their skills and provided significant contributions to Alaska in aviation capability. He indicated that many Veterans were passing away each day. It would be an honorable thing for Veterans to see the memorial. Their contribution and sacrifice to the nation was certainly worthy of their legacy to be honored and a dedication of a landmark in their honor was a historic opportunity. He recognized funding could be an issue, but so was their sacrifice. He emphatically supported the bill.

Co-Chair Johnston thanked Mr. Kyle for his testimony and his service.

Co-Chair Johnston CLOSED public testimony.

[9:24:05 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:24:16 AM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Foster MOVED to report HB 223 out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

HB 223 was REPORTED OUT of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and one previously published fiscal note: FN1 (DOT).

Co-Chair Johnston reviewed the agenda for the afternoon.

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ADJOURNMENT

[9:25:09 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.