

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 4, 2019

3:19 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Gabrielle LeDoux, Co-Chair
Representative Adam Wool, Co-Chair
Representative Zack Fields
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Dave Talerico

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Josh Revak

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S): MARIJUANA CONTROL BOARD

Christopher Jaime - Soldotna

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

CHRISTOPHER JAIME, Appointee
Marijuana Control Board
Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development
(DCCED)

Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Marijuana Control Board.

CHELSEA FOSTER

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered comments on the governor's appointee to the Marijuana Control Board.

GREG EGLE, Owner

Bells Flats Botanicals

Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered comments on the governor's appointee to the Marijuana Control Board.

CARY CARRIGAN, Executive Director,
Alaska Marijuana Industry Association (AMIA)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered comments on the governor's appointee to the Marijuana Control Board.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:19:12 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR ADAM WOOL called the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:19 p.m. Representatives Hannan, Fields, Stutes, Talerico, LeDoux, and Wool were present at the call to order.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S): Marijuana Control Board

[3:20:03 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL announced that the only order of business would be consideration of Christopher Jaime, the governor's appointee to the Marijuana Control Board.

[3:20:30 PM](#)

CHRISTOPHER JAIME, Appointee, Marijuana Control Board, Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development (DCCED), stated that he has lived in Alaska for 26 years and worked for the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for the last 18 years. He relayed that during his time with DPS he lived and raised his children in several communities throughout the state, including: Anchorage, Sitka, Fairbanks, Nome, and Soldotna. He noted his work for both The Alaska State Troopers and the Division of Alaska Wildlife Troopers. He conveyed that working in both an urban and a rural setting has given him a diverse career and a well-rounded perspective on the needs and challenges facing the state. He said he understood that Alaskans voted to legalize the cultivation, consumption, and distribution of marijuana, adding that he didn't want to express any of his personal views on marijuana or "vote" against the will of the people. He expressed that he would be taking a "common sense" approach while on the board and would regulate marijuana from a public safety perspective. Finally, he

reflected on his recent visits to several marijuana-related businesses. He said he received a detailed explanation of the challenges they face and got to see the entire process "from seed to sale." He added that he was excited for this opportunity.

3:23:09 PM

CO-CHAIR LEDOUX wondered how Mr. Jaime would react if, as a current state employee, he was contacted by the Office of the Governor when there was a regulation up for consideration and his perspective on the topic didn't "gel" with the administration's.

MR. JAIME replied that he would take [the administration's] input into consideration, but ultimately, any board-related decision he made would be his own.

CO-CHAIR LEDOUX questioned whether Mr. Jaime was a member of the Public Safety Employees Association (PSEA).

MR. JAIME stated that he was not a member.

CO-CHAIR LEDOUX asked if Mr. Jaime would have any union protections.

MR. JAIME explained that, as a lieutenant for the Alaska Wildlife Troopers, he was a member of the Supervisory Union (SU).

3:25:19 PM

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN inquired as to the number of crimes that are committed under the influence of alcohol versus marijuana.

MR. JAIME stated that he didn't have any numbers in front of him, however, throughout his time in Nome he responded to various crimes that were primarily fueled by alcohol.

REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN offered her understanding that, in public safety and corrections, somewhere between 90-95 percent of crimes engage with alcohol-related behaviors, whereas very few violent crimes are marijuana influenced. She asked if Mr. Jaime had anecdotally encountered this to be true.

MR. JAIME agreed, explaining that most of the violent crimes and suicides he investigated pertained to alcohol significantly more than marijuana.

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REPRESENTATIVE TALERICO thanked Mr. Jaime for his 18 years of service in law enforcement to the State of Alaska, as well as for his service as a veteran.

[3:28:00 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL asked Mr. Jaime if he was familiar with the previous holder of the public safety seat on the Marijuana Control Board.

MR. JAIME shared his understanding that the previous board member was the chief of police for the Sitka Police Department.

CO-CHAIR WOOL questioned whether Mr. Jaime was ever involved in any local political petitions or activity pertaining to marijuana.

MR. JAIME replied that he was not.

CO-CHAIR WOOL asked Mr. Jaime if he had ever arrested anyone for the use or possession of marijuana during his career in law enforcement.

MR. JAIME explained that when it was still illegal to possess [marijuana] in public, he had issued several summons during his career but never arrested anyone for it.

CO-CHAIR WOOL inquired as to whether Mr. Jaime, with his history in law enforcement, would feel conflicted serving on a board that regulates the legal use of marijuana.

MR. JAIME replied that he would not feel conflicted, adding that he was excited to regulate.

[3:30:30 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL opened public testimony.

[3:31:00 PM](#)

CHELSEA FOSTER stated that she hoped the appointment would be properly vetted, adding that if Mr. Jaime is applicable and works with integrity, there's no reason why he shouldn't hold the seat.

[3:32:02 PM](#)

GREG EGLE, Owner, Bells Flats Botanicals, acknowledged the importance of having a public safety presence on the board. He noted that he hoped positivity would be maintained throughout the appointment process.

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CARY CARRIGAN, Executive Director, Alaska Marijuana Industry Association (AMIA), stated that he is not issuing testimony for or against Mr. Jaime; however, he expressed cause for concern with the appointment, primarily because Mr. Jaime is still an employee of the state, which makes him directly answerable to the governor. He offered his belief that it is critically important that board members remain impartial and perform their duties on behalf of the public. Nonetheless, he expressed relief that Mr. Jaime had taken the time to tour several marijuana facilities.

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CO-CHAIR WOOL closed public testimony.

[3:36:35 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR WOOL reiterated the importance of board members' impartiality and asked Mr. Jaime if he would be able to uphold that.

MR. JAIME assured the committee that he would.

CO-CHAIR WOOL asked for Mr. Jaime's position on the proposal to disband both the Alcohol Control Board and the Marijuana Control Board and pass their duties on to the commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development (DCCED).

MR. JAIME offered his belief that it is the governor's choice to do so or not, explaining that he would not make a statement for or against the proposal.

CO-CHAIR WOOL inquired as to Mr. Jaime's thoughts on certain industries having their regulation boards composed of both industry professionals and public members.

MR. JAIME stated that boards are a good thing because they provide a variety of opinions.

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REPRESENTATIVE HANNAN questioned whether, while attending board meetings, Mr. Jaime would have to take leave or if he would be compensated by the state. She also asked how that leave would impact his duties as a trooper.

MR. JAIME claimed that the board meetings would fall under his salary. He explained that, regarding his trooper post, there would be supervisors and sergeants that could perform his job while he was gone.

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CO-CHAIR LEDOUX pointed out that Mr. Jaime's SU membership would act as somewhat of a "firewall" from the governor's influence since state employees under a union contract cannot be fired by the governor at will.

[3:41:10 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR LEDOUX made a motion to advance the confirmation of Christopher Jaime, appointee to the Marijuana Control Board, to the joint session for consideration. There being no objection, the confirmation was advanced.

[3:41:45 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:42 p.m.