

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 19, 2020

3:03 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Zack Fields, Co-Chair  
Representative Grier Hopkins  
Representative Andi Story  
Representative Sarah Vance  
Representative Laddie Shaw

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Steve Thompson  
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, Co-Chair

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

State Commission for Human Rights

Jamie Allard - Eagle River  
William Craig - Sitka  
Elizabeth "Betsy" Engle - Fairbanks  
Evelyn Falzerano - Anchorage  
Kyle Foster - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Alaska Public Offices Commission

Dan LaSota - Fairbanks  
Hardy "Van" Lawrence - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Personnel Board

Craig Johnson - Anchorage

State Board of Parole

Leitoni "Lei" Tupou - Juneau

Alaska Police Standards Council

Ed Mercer - Juneau  
Daniel Weatherly - Anchor Point  
Joseph White - Ketchikan  
Jennifer Winkelman - Juneau

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

JAMIE ALLARD, Appointee  
State Commission for Human Rights  
Eagle River, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as an appointee to the State  
Commissioner for Human Rights.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

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**CO-CHAIR ZACK FIELDS** called the House State Affairs Standing  
Committee meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. Representatives Story,  
Vance, and Fields were present at the call to order.  
Representatives Hopkins and Shaw arrived as the meeting was in  
progress.

**CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):**

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the only order of business would  
be consideration of Governor's appointees for various boards and  
commissions.

**State Commission for Human Rights**  
**Alaska Public Offices Commission**  
**Personnel Board**  
**State Board of Parole**  
**Alaska Police Standards Council**

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS invited State Commission for Human Rights  
appointee, Jamie Allard, to give her statement.

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JAMIE ALLARD, Appointee, State Commission for Human Rights, described her background: both parents were immigrants to the U.S. and became citizens; her father put himself through college and started a successful career; her father died at a young age and her mother raised four children as a single parent. Ms. Allard realized at an early age the importance of a good education. She reviewed her opportunities and achievements in athletics, the U.S. Army, the U.S. Department of State (DOS), the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA), the Social Security Administration (SSA), the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), and the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA). She has been married for 23 years and has two daughters. She is in her third year at Norwich University, Senior Military College, and plans to graduate with a degree in national security studies.

MS. ALLARD stated that she understands the importance of the State Commission for Human Rights - as someone of Chilean descent, as a disabled veteran, and as a female, "who has fought for everything she's ever wanted." She said that as a volunteer for the commission, she pledges to follow the law and work with her fellow commissioners to accomplish the mission.

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REPRESENTATIVE STORY said that the mission statement is to eliminate and prevent discrimination for all Alaskans. She asked the appointee for her assessment of the current state of human rights for Alaskans and to comment on whether there are groups not receiving adequate protection.

MS. ALLARD answered that the commission's operating framework is established by federal and state law. She said that her duty as a commissioner is to implement the commission's mission within that framework with compassion and understanding for all. She maintained that it is her duty to ensure that occurs, regardless of a person's station, history, or background. She added, "And I believe they are treated fairly and justly with the care and the compassion."

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether Ms. Allard feels that any groups are not receiving adequate protections now.

MS. ALLARD replied, "What I feel is irrelevant. What I am here to do is make sure that Alaska Statute Title 18, Section 18.80.060, Powers and duties of the commission, line 5, is followed."

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked her to share her assessment of the current state of human rights for Alaskans and what she would hope to accomplish.

MS. ALLARD reiterated that it is her duty to ensure that regardless of a person's station, history, or background, the person is treated fairly and justly with the care and the compassion. She stated that she will only follow the state law.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked for Ms. Allard's opinion on how Alaska is performing on "caring for all."

MS. ALLARD expressed her belief that the commission is doing the best job it can; it has had a large turnover in commissioners in the last year; it meets regularly; and it will continue to ensure that everyone is taken care of properly according to the law.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether Ms. Allard was aware of any areas needing work.

MS. ALLARD responded that anything coming before the commission will be addressed according to the law. She added that HB 119 [APPLICABILITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION] and HB 82 [DISCRIMINATION: GENDER ID.; SEXUAL ORIENT.] are before the legislature, but the commission has not discussed them; they are on the next meeting's agenda.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Ms. Allard whether she believes that sexual orientation and gender identity are characteristics worthy of protection.

MS. ALLARD answered that under HB 82, that would be evaluated.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked Ms. Allard if it was her interpretation that the law does not currently protect [sexual orientation and gender identity].

MS. ALLARD replied no, that's not her interpretation. She cited AS 18.80.060(a)(5), which read:

(5) study the problems of discrimination in all or specific fields of human relationships, foster through community effort or goodwill, cooperation and conciliation among the groups and elements of the population of the state, and publish results of investigations and research as in its judgment will tend to eliminate discrimination because of race, religion, color, national ancestry, physical or mental disability, age, sex, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood;

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked Ms. Allard whether she thinks the law provides protections for people based on sexual orientation.

MS. ALLARD responded that she does not have the right to interpret the law beyond what is in statute; it would be the duty of the commission.

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS cited Ms. Allard's Facebook post of July [2019], which read [original punctuation provided]:

These so called Village Police Officers aren't police as that word has legal meaning here in Alaska. VPSOs, local police, State Troopers and some few others are commissioned by the Commissioner of Public Safety, Amanda Price. They have to meet State standards, which vary from the very limited commission of a VPSO to the geographically limited commission local police and airport police, to the unlimited commission of a State Trooper.

The individuals at issue are simply people hired by a village government, most of them not political subdivisions of the State and acting under their perception of tribal or federal authority. In the village they could perhaps detain you and put you before the village counsel, but under Alaska law even the village counsel lacks any real authority for criminal prosecution. Which brings us to what this is really about; the sovereignty advocates want the villages to have police powers and criminal prosecution powers separate from State and federal jurisdiction, and the State of Alaska should never tolerate that.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked whether Ms. Allard was categorically opposed to recognition of tribal sovereignty.

MS. ALLARD answered that it was not her job to take a stand on that; as a commissioner she must follow the laws which the legislature has enacted.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS suggested that many people equate a person's position on tribal sovereignty with racial equality.

MS. ALLARD expressed that she does not believe the issue is relevant to her position on the commission.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE agreed that sovereignty and race are two separate issues, as they pertain to the State Commission for Human Rights.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS suggested that lay people reading the Facebook post could view it as racist, therefore, germane.

MS. ALLARD replied, "Just because I posted a post stating what the legal law is here in the state of Alaska has nothing to do with anybody's race, and to take ... a post that I've posted and try to imply that I'm racist or to implicate that it is a racist post, is absurd."

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS cited Ms. Allard's website, which stated that Ms. Allard was appointed by Governor [Mike] Dunleavy and encouraged by a friend to resign and run for the [Eagle River/Chugiak seat on the Municipality of Anchorage Assembly]. He asked, "Is it not the case that you were forced to resign from that position by your supervisor?"

MS. ALLARD responded, "No, I was not forced to resign."

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked how long Ms. Allard worked as a special assistant at DMVA."

MS. ALLARD answered that her recollection is that she started on December 28, 2018, and resigned May 2019. She confirmed for Representative Fields that she was in the position about six months.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked her how many offices she occupied at DMVA and how many of the office changes required her to force an existing employee to vacate the office for her.

MS. ALLARD replied that she occupied one office the entire time she was with DMVA.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked how many requests she made to purchase new equipment or conduct major office remodels.

MS. ALLARD responded that she asked for a printer in her office - with approval from the commissioner - to ensure privacy of documents that she printed as a special assistant. She mentioned that she received a used printer. She confirmed that she never requested any office remodels.

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked Ms. Allard for the date she moved to Alaska and the time period she lived in Alaska.

MS. ALLARD answered that she moved to Alaska May 2010, left in August 2014 for her husband to finish his engineering degree, and moved back in May-June 2017.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked whether she applied for and received permanent fund dividends (PFDs) during her absence from the state.

MS. ALLARD responded, "Yes, we did." She explained that during the two years that her husband attended school, they applied for and received PFDs - according to Alaska Statutes. The last year they were out of state her husband had graduated, and PFD Division personnel advised them to apply for the PFD even though they would not be eligible, so that their information would stay in the system. They did not receive their PFDs for that year.

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked about the successful mortgage company that she owned, as stated on her website, and if she had any foreclosures or repossessed vehicles.

MS. ALLARD confirmed for Representative Fields that she owned a small business in 2003-2005, had no repossessed vehicles, and is unclear what he is talking about in reference to foreclosures.

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REPRESENTATIVE STORY cited the duties of the commission listed under AS 18.80.060(a) (5), which read:

(5) study the problems of discrimination in all or specific fields of human relationships, foster through community effort or goodwill, cooperation and conciliation among the groups and elements of the population of the state, and publish results of investigations and research as in its judgment will tend to eliminate discrimination because of race, religion, color, national ancestry, physical or mental disability, age, sex, marital status, changes in marital status, pregnancy, or parenthood;

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked what community efforts, goodwill, or cooperation with groups that Ms. Allard has planned.

MS. ALLARD answered that she doesn't know fully what the role of commissioners will be, as there has been a large turnover.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Ms. Allard to elaborate on the following: what her plans are for eliminating discrimination and fostering goodwill and cooperation; what problems she has identified [regarding human rights in Alaska]; why she wants to serve on the commission; what she wants to accomplish; and what she feels passionate about as far as needed changes and needed protections.

MS. ALLARD responded that a strong team of commissioners serves on the State Commission for Human Rights; they are all volunteers; following the law is their assignment. She maintained that she is disabled and legally deaf; therefore, she has understanding and sympathy for that group. She stated that as far as activities in the community, the commissioners would need to decide that together; they haven't had much opportunity to come together as a team.

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS closed by relaying that Ms. Allard's testimony directly conflicts with what he has heard from her coworkers. He expressed his understanding that she was forced to resign, she requested substantial office equipment and renovations, and her abrasive personality is why she was not in her [DMVA] position longer.

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS stated that the House Resources Standing Committee has reviewed the qualifications of the governor's appointees for the State Commission for Human Rights, the Alaska Public Offices Commission, the Personnel Board, the State Board of Parole, and the Alaska Police Standards Council and recommends that the names be forwarded to a joint session for consideration. This does not reflect the intent by any of the members to vote for or against these individuals during any future sessions for the purpose of confirmation.

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The House State Affairs Standing Committee was recessed at 3:30 p.m. [The meeting reconvened March 20, 2020.]