

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

April 2, 2019

3:33 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Mike Shower, Chair
Senator John Coghill, Vice Chair
Senator Lora Reinbold
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Scott Kawasaki

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Alaska Police Standards Council

Stephen Dutra - North Pole
Burke Waldron - Bethel
Rebecca Hamon - King Salmon
Joseph White - Ketchikan

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

Chief Administrative Law Judge

Kathleen Frederick - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Alaska Public Offices Commission

Rick Stillie - Delta Junction

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Alaska Parole Board

Edie Grunwald - Palmer

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 5

Proposing amendments to the Constitution of the State of Alaska relating to the Alaska permanent fund and the permanent fund dividend.

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record.

WITNESS REGISTER

JOSEPH WHITE, Chief of Police; Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Department of Public Safety
Ketchikan, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Police Standards Council.

STEVE DUTRA, Chief of Police; Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Department of Public Safety
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

BURKE WALDRON, Chief of Police; Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Department of Public Safety
Bethel, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

REBECCA HAMON, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Department of Public Safety
King Salmon, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

KATHLEEN FREDERICK, Appointee
Chief Administrative Law Judge
Office of Administrative Hearings
Department of Administration
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee as the Chief Administrative Law Judge.

RICK STILLIE, Appointee
Alaska Public Offices Commission
Department of Administration
Delta Junction
Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the Alaska Public Offices Commission.

VICKI JO KENNEDY, representing self
Kodiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to the appointment of Mr. Stillie Jr. to the Alaska Public Offices Commission.

EDITH M. GRUNWALD, Appointee
State Board of Parole
Department of Corrections
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as appointee to the State Board of Parole.

ROGER BRANSON, representing self
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to the appointment of Edith Grunwald to the State Board of Parole.

CAROLINE PORTER, representing self
Palmer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of the appointment of Edith Grunwald to the State Board of Parole.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:33:35 PM](#)

CHAIR MIKE SHOWER called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Reinbold, Kawasaki, Micciche, and Chair Shower. Senator Coghill arrived as the meeting was in progress.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)
Police Standards Council
Chief Administrative Law Judge
Alaska Public Offices Commission
State Board of Parole

[3:34:14 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER announced the only order of business would be governor appointments to boards and commissions. He asked Joseph White to tell the committee about his interest in serving and what he brings to the Police Standards Council.

[3:34:54 PM](#)

JOSEPH WHITE, Appointee, Police Standards Council, Department of Corrections and Chief of Police, Ketchikan, stated that he started his law enforcement career in Ketchikan in 1996 as a patrol officer. He worked in most of the positions in the department and in 2017 he assumed the role of chief of police. The two primary functions of the council are to maintain high standards for law enforcement officers in Alaska and assisting with training of those officers. These functions go hand-in-hand. The council plays a strong part in finding the right people, ensuring they are well trained, and keeping people in these positions. He said he brings almost 23 years in law enforcement experience to the council and he's been involved in multiple disciplinary actions ranging from counseling sessions to terminations. He believes in progressive discipline, a strong team atmosphere, and fair treatment. He's been involved in three meetings since he was appointed and has seen that everyone takes the time to listen to all sides of the issue before coming to a fair and consistent outcome. He offered his belief that the work the council does is crucial to law enforcement in Alaska.

[3:38:13 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI thanked him for his service. He asked why recruitment is such a big issue for law enforcement.

CHIEF WHITE listed the tiered retirement system, compensation that hasn't kept up with salaries in the Lower 48, and negativity associated with law enforcement in the Lower 48 that has influenced the profession. In years past at least 75 percent of recruits were local and that's not the way it is anymore. The recruiting philosophy has also changed over time. Instead of looking for 20-year officers KPD now is happy to find a 5-year officer. He said the world, technology, and the workforce has changed, and the police profession has declined as a preferred profession.

SENATOR REINBOLD commented on his robust resume. She asked if he believes that Senate Bill 91 has had an impact on morale for law enforcement.

CHIEF WHITE said he believes it generally has had an effect and it's been frustrating for his officers, but he didn't know if

specific people in his department left because of that bill. He acknowledged that it's more difficult to provide a good service when certain offenders repeatedly victimize members of the community.

SENATOR REINBOLD highlighted the large morale problems within the Anchorage Police Department (APD) because of Senate Bill 91. She then asked what role he plays in wildlife management, specifically bears in the community.

CHIEF WHITE said his community has to deal with black bears that get into trash every summer and it's very time consuming. They have worked with the Department of Fish and Game and a limited amount with the Alaska State Troopers but it would be nice to have more collaboration. He doesn't believe Ketchikan is unique in having this problem; it seems to be nationwide.

SENATOR REINBOLD clarified she was asking what he believes his role is in wildlife management. She asked if he will consider public safety first and help develop a plan for dealing with nuisance animals.

CHIEF WHITE said absolutely; if a group gets together to try and deal with public safety associated with nuisance bears, he'd be on board with those dialogs.

[3:48:58 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated support for Chief White. He asked if the current training provided by the Alaska Police Standards Council involves proper hazing and dispatching of nuisance wildlife.

CHIEF WHITE said he didn't believe that is part of the standard academy training but new KPD officers do receive in-house training to deal with nuisance bears. Officers are trained to use shotguns loaded with beanbags and trapping techniques but bears will be dispatched if they become a public safety issue, he said.

SENATOR MICCICHE asked if his participation on the council has been active and supportive of the mission and why he wants to continue.

CHIEF WHITE said he's proud to be on the council that does work that is necessary to maintaining high standards and providing guidance for all law enforcement officers in the state.

CHAIR SHOWER asked what the requirements are for APSC certification for an officer or trooper to have full arrest powers.

[3:54:05 PM](#)

CHIEF WHITE replied the individual must be 21 years old, have a high school diploma or equivalent, and no background of domestic violence. There are also drug test qualifications and some crimes may preclude entry.

CHAIR SHOWER asked how the lack of APSC certification would impact the ability to access certain sensitive information in APSIN [Alaska Public Safety Information Network], for example.

CHIEF WHITE said it would make it difficult.

CHAIR SHOWER asked who signs the APSC certificates and does that person need to be certified.

CHIEF WHITE said he believes the council director signs the certificates.

CHAIR SHOWER asked what internal policies exist to keep the council focused and doing things the right way.

CHIEF WHITE said the meetings are open to the public and the director does a great job of keeping things confidential when it should be and disseminating information to the public when it's appropriate.

[3:56:29 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER closed public testimony after determining that no one wished to comment on the appointment of Chief White to the Police Standards Council.

CHAIR SHOWER asked Stephen Dutra to tell the committee about his interest in serving and what he brings to the Police Standards Council.

[3:57:28 PM](#)

STEVE DUTRA, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council, Department of Public Safety and Chief of Police, North Pole, said he has a lot to offer to the council. He has over 23 years of experience in law enforcement, he's worked in rural Alaska, has served on the Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police for some time, and he's been the council since May. He started his career as a line officer and has worked up through the ranks to

the chief of police. He has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and communication and he holds an instructor's certificate in ethics. He has a firm grasp on what it takes to be a police officer and the standards that are required. He has a level head and will be able to analyze the cases that come before the council. He's been involved in legislative issues that affect the city and believes he'll be a good fit for the council.

SENATOR REINBOLD emphasized the importance of public safety, including wildlife management. She asked if he's been part of the effort to put victims first and to shine a light on the concerns associated with the 2016 criminal justice reform.

CHIEF DUTRA confirmed that he actively opposed Senate Bill 91.

SENATOR REINBOLD thanked him and expressed hope that he wouldn't give up the fight.

CHAIR SHOWER asked what the requirements are for APSC certification that a police officer or state trooper would need for arrest powers.

CHIEF DUTRA listed a U.S. citizen, 21 years of age, and a high school diploma or GED. A person has arrest authority once they meet the basic requirements and are sworn in.

CHAIR SHOWER asked how it would impact a person's ability to access sensitive information like APSIN without APSC certification.

CHIEF DUTRA answered it would be very difficult.

CHAIR SHOWER asked how the council holds itself to a high standard internally and how he would ensure those standards are upheld.

CHIEF DUTRA replied the individuals on the council have impeccable credentials and he can't imagine that any one person could influence the group. His experience so far is that the conversations and debate about what is ethical and moral have been stimulating.

CHAIR SHOWER asked who signs the APSC certificate authorizing arrest powers and does that person need to be certified.

CHIEF DUTRA said the director signs the certificate and he/she does not need to be certified.

[4:02:52 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER closed public testimony after determining that no one wished to comment on the appointment of Chief Dutra to the Police Standards Council.

[4:03:29 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER asked Burke Waldron to tell the committee his interest in serving and what he brings to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

[4:03:42 PM](#)

BURKE WALDRON, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council, and Chief of Police, Bethel, stated that he started his law enforcement career in 1990 as a state trooper and then a wildlife trooper. He worked up through the ranks with DPS and retired in 2015 as a detachment commander. He returned to law enforcement in 2016 to become the chief of police in Bethel. Over the course of his career he has held field and command staff positions. He brings a broad spectrum of experience to the council. He supports the council's efforts to maintain high ethical and moral standards and training for officers. He echoed the sentiments of the two previous speakers.

SENATOR REINBOLD asked if he will commit to work on education and standards for wildlife management and control to reduce dangerous encounters.

CHIEF WALDRON said he has lots of experience with this complicated issue. Three different agencies potentially have significant responsibility for public safety and management of wildlife and these agencies must interact with one another. He related his experience that the agencies have done a good job of focusing primarily on public safety.

SENATOR REINBOLD asked if he will work with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) to establish standards for quick response to wildlife that are posing a danger to the public within the city limits.

CHIEF WALDRON answered yes.

[4:08:40 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER asked if financial credit is a factor in somebody receiving APSC certification.

CHIEF WALDRON said he didn't believe so but most agencies consider an applicants' credit history in their hiring decisions.

CHAIR SHOWER asked if there was more to receiving APSC certification than just meeting the minimum qualifications.

CHIEF WALDRON replied the minimum qualifications are outlined in 13 AAC [Title 13 Alaska Administrative Code] but many agencies have higher standards.

[4:10:29 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER closed public testimony on the appointment of Chief Waldron to the Alaska Police Standards Council after discerning that nobody wished to comment.

CHAIR SHOWER asked Rebecca Hamon to tell the committee about her interest in serving on the Police Standards Council.

[4:11:05 PM](#)

SENATOR COGHILL joined the committee.

[4:11:12 PM](#)

REBECCA HAMON, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council, Department of Public Safety, King Salmon, related that, if approved, this will be her third term on the council. Initially she was asked to serve to provide the victim advocate perspective because of her work as a victim advocate for domestic violence and sexual assault, both as a team member with law enforcement and other agencies and one-on-one. She said the last eight years have been informative and helped her see law enforcement from a different perspective. Conversely, she has been working in the villages in the Naknek Court region to restore trust in law enforcement. She feels she is a good fit on the council.

SENATOR REINBOLD reviewed Ms. Hamon's resume, highlighted her focus on victims, and emphasized that many people in the legislature stand ready to help if she identifies needed resources and red flags. She asked Ms. Hamon if there was anything she'd like to highlight today.

[4:16:07 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER noted that the connection was lost.

He asked Kathleen Frederick to tell the committee about her interest in the position of chief administrative law judge.

4:16:55 PM

KATHLEEN FREDERICK, Appointee, Chief Administrative Law Judge, Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH), Department of Administration, Palmer, related that if approved this will be her second term in this capacity. Her experience includes over 30 years as an attorney, primarily doing civil law including administrative law. Her Martindale-Hubbell attorney rating is AV, which is the highest possible for lawyers. The work she did managing a small law firm is directly related to her work as chief administrative law judge because OAH primarily funds itself on its billings.

MS. FREDERICK said she was first appointed to the position of chief administrative law judge in 2014. The duties for this position, which are outlined in AS 44.64.020, principally are to supervise the Office of Administrative Hearings. This is an independent agency domiciled in the Department of Administration that provides adjudication and mediation services for the Executive Branch as well as state related entities, municipalities, and school districts.

She described herself as goal oriented and focused on cost-savings and efficiencies. During her first term some of the accomplishments include selecting and installing a new paperless case management system, eliminating the case backlog, and avoiding overdue cases for the first time since 2005. Over the last few years OAH has also implemented a fast-track mediation program for Medicaid services cases that resulted in a substantial savings to the state in both hearing and program costs. The program won a Denali award for cost savings initiatives in 2016. Eighty-three percent of Medicaid services cases sent to that program resolve in a one hour mediation conducted by a contract mediator for a fraction of the cost of what they would cost if they went to a hearing and decision. Importantly, it has reduced the average time from case referral to closure from 67.5 days to 36.2 days. She highlighted that Medicaid services cases comprise about 40 percent of the OAH docket.

MS. FREDERICK reported that OAH also started offering adjudication/mediation services to municipalities, state related entities, and school districts which it is authorized to do by statute. These entities pay the normal OAH hourly rate but they have benefited from reduced costs and economies of scale. She

said the foregoing were accomplishments in her first term. She feels she is a good fit for the position because of her administration, civil litigation background and private law firm management experience, which directly translates to this job. She has had five years' experience with the job so she's up to speed and can "hit the deck running." She feels honored to serve in this position and hopes to continue

[4:23:52 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD thanked her for serving. She expressed appreciation for the efficiencies Ms. Frederick found and implemented and wished her well.

CHAIR SHOWER asked her to discuss the procedure for citizens to get relief if they feel their appeal has been delayed for an unreasonable length of time.

MS. FREDERICK explained that when a decision is appealed the agency is supposed to refer those cases to OAH within a week. Those cases are assigned to a judge and put on a schedule that ranges from 20 days to 120 days depending on the type of case. In some circumstances and at the request of the parties, the case is delayed but the overall goal is to meet those deadlines. She noted the possibility of extensions to the deadline.

CHAIR SHOWER asked what agencies do not allow their administrative appeals to be handled by OAH.

MS. FREDERICK said the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) currently refers special education cases to a pool of four hearing officers, just two of which are at OAH. She acknowledged that there may be others.

CHAIR SHOWER asked what the typical cost is for an agency that uses OAH.

MS. FREDERICK said it varies widely, but mediation is fairly reasonable. If the case goes to decision, the average cost is about \$1,300 a case. The most expensive case she's seen had a cost of about \$17,000.

[4:28:08 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER found nobody who wished to comment on the reappointment of Kathleen Frederick to the position of chief administrative law judge and he closed public testimony.

[4:28:27 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER thanked Ms. Frederickson and returned attention to Rebecca Hamon.

[4:28:47 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD asked if she would like to shine a light on a particular issue in rural Alaska.

MS. HAMON said she'd like to highlight two things. First is that some of the most remote villages have no police presence whatsoever. They also have some of the worst weather and it can take up to four days to get law enforcement to the village to respond to a crime. She said it's not uncommon for the victim to be ostracized by the community for speaking up. She said she has worked with some very capable village police officers (VPOs) and village public safety officers (VPSOs) and she would like to see more young people moving into those roles in their villages. She noted that it is disheartening to hear about those programs being cut. She said she'd also like to shine a light on the way cases are handled. She said she's worked hours supporting a victim and trying to get justice only to have the cases either dismissed or the charges reduced and the perpetrator is back in the village very quickly. A lot of time is also spent dealing with the fallout in the family because of reporting or working to keep the victim safe. She commented on the difficulties associated with the lack of resources in villages.

SENATOR REINBOLD thanked her for the very good answer and suggested she put it in writing and send it to the committee.

[4:33:17 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER found no one who wished to comment on the appointment of Rebecca Hamon to the Alaska Police Standards Council and he closed public testimony.

He asked Richard Stillie, Jr. to tell the committee about his interest in serving on the Alaska Public Offices Commission.

[4:33:57 PM](#)

RICK STILLIE, JR., Appointee, Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC), Delta Junction, described APOC as an important commission and said he believes in its mission to encourage public confidence in elected officials. Having confidence and transparency in government is paramount to a free society, he said. Transparency starts with campaigns, elections, and appointments. He said he believes he has a lot to contribute to APOC whose cause he believes in.

MR. STILLIE described the contract work he's done since 2004 on a federal installation. He works with Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and Defense Federal Acquisition Regulations (DFAR) on a daily basis to ensure his areas of responsibility are in compliance with those regulations.

He disclosed that he became an active member of the Republican Party starting in 2008-2009. He has held a variety of positions in the party, but he resigned when he was appointed as an APOC commissioner. He noted that one of the positions he held was to track rules and complaints or interpretations in a fair even-handed manner, which is similar to the expectations of APOC. He said it's also important to note that he is familiar with the APOC process and he understands the challenges associated with reporting financial disclosures. He opined that it helps to understand what the challenges filers may face, particularly the first time. He doesn't want the fear of filing to be a detriment to seeking office. He said he has participated in one APOC meeting and was impressed with the current staff. He is honored to have this opportunity to serve.

[4:40:39 PM](#)

SENATOR KAWASAKI read AS 15.13.02(b) that describes the composition of APOC.

(b) The governor shall appoint two members of each of the two political parties whose candidate for governor received the highest number of votes in the most recent preceding general election at which a governor was elected. The two appointees from each of these two parties shall be chosen from a list of four names to be submitted by the central committee of each party.

He asked Mr. Stillie if he was one of the four names the two central committees submitted to the governor for consideration.

MR. STILLIE, JR. responded, "Yes sir, as far as I'm aware."

SENATOR KAWASAKI more specifically stated the same question.

MR. STILLIE, JR said he wasn't part of the process; he was informed that his name was on the list that was submitted to the Governor.

SENATOR KAWASAKI expressed appreciation that he recounted his history with the party. He then asked if he said he'd adhered to

Sec. 15.13.020(e)(1)-(5) that lists the things a member of the commission may not do during their tenure.

MR. STILLIE, JR. answered yes. He added that he understands he may no longer be part of any campaign, an officer of a political party, make any contributions for or against a candidate or anything that appears on a ballot. He shared that his wife is delighted.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked if the record is correct that he was appointed January 16, 2019.

MR. STILLIE, JR. said he didn't know the exact date but that was the timeframe.

SENATOR KAWASAKI asked his reasoning for having filed a group registration on behalf of the District 9 Republican Party three days after January 16, 2019 when he was aware of the prohibitions for members of APOC.

MR. STILLIE, JR. explained that once he knew he would be appointed he contacted APOC for guidance on how to back out of his involvement with the APOC as an entity that is required to report to the commission. At that time the District 9 members passed their reporting responsibilities to the state party. That was the end of any reporting or party actions from District 9.

SENATOR REINBOLD thanked him for being willing to serve and encouraged him to investigate any red flags. She also asked if he would look into initiating an anonymous reporting system.

MR. STILLIE, JR. said he'd be glad to look at that. He offered his personal experience that the APOC staff makes every attempt to answer questions and address concerns about the process to file a complaint. Noting that statutory changes are not within APOC's scope, he offered his belief that the commissioners would be willing to work with the legislature on those issues.

[4:47:18 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD highlighted her personal experience with the time-consuming and difficult process to file an APOC complaint. She said she doesn't support mandatory reporting of red flags but she does support establishing a path for anonymous reporting or a process for bringing issues forward for investigation.

CHAIR SHOWER asked if he was aware of any issues with APOC and if he had any ideas for improvements.

MR. STILLIE, JR. responded that he believes the statutes could be updated to reflect current operations, but he would rely on staff and legal counsel for guidance.

CHAIR SHOWER asked that he continue to look for efficiencies and accountability.

[4:51:11 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD highlighted that she's seeing people in the capitol who are lobbying more than 10 hours and don't appear to be registered. She described it as alarming and something APOC should be aware of.

SENATOR KAWASAKI summarized some of the duties of APOC and emphasized the importance of having commissioners who respect and will dispatch the laws regardless of their personal feelings. He asked Mr. Stillie if he believes the following postings on his Facebook account are true and factual: A February 5 posting states that, "Islam has never propagated peace and love." and a posting a couple of days later says, "While there may be peaceful Muslims, their religion is based on hate."

[4:53:15 PM](#)

MR. STILLIE, JR. acknowledged that he has personal beliefs and questioned the relevance of the question since he has the right to free speech. He stressed that very few of his Facebook postings are political and he has stopped that type of posting since he was appointed.

He stated his belief that there are many peace-loving Muslims but that there is a global movement to implement Sharia law, "which really is not what any of us stand for in a lot of their viewpoints with the way that they treat women and such." He said he wasn't afraid to say that for the record but he wanted to clarify that he will not make any APOC decisions based on his personal opinions, beliefs, or disagreements with anyone.

CHAIR SHOWER said it's important to know how to separate one's personal opinions from following the laws as written.

[4:56:41 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER opened public testimony on the appointment of Mr. Stillie to the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC).

[4:57:07 PM](#)

VICKI JO KENNEDY, representing self, Kodiak, stated opposition to the appointment of Mr. Stillie to the Alaska Public Offices Commission. She shared that her impression has been that there are problems with this appointment and what she just heard is confirmation. She offered her personal opinion that he is not trustworthy.

[4:58:25 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER closed public testimony on Mr. Stillie.

He asked Edith Grunwald to tell the committee about her interest in serving on the State Board of Parole.

[4:59:07 PM](#)

EDITH M. GRUNWALD, Appointee, State Board of Parole, Department of Corrections, Anchorage, stated that she believes she is a good candidate for this board because she is a good team member and has leadership skills. She spent 31 years in the military, most of which was as an officer in the Air National Guard. Her appointment started March 1 and she has been looking at the statutes and codes and attending meetings since she was asked to serve. She noted that she became familiar with the justice system a little more than two years ago because of her son's case. After doing some research on the parole board she determined it would be a good fit with her skillset. She has effective interviewing skills and has conducted hearings during her career. She has masters' degrees in national strategies and business administration. She understands the need for the trades, the need for inmates to have a skillset, and the importance of the parole board networking with other agencies to help and provide services to inmates prior to and after their release so they have a better chance for successful reentry.

[5:02:56 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD thanked her for being willing to serve and for her advocacy for victims and defendants.

SENATOR COGHILL thanked her for her service to the country and state. He asked how she has prepared herself for this role given her entry into the criminal justice system as a result of what happened to her son.

MS. GRUNWALD said it can be challenging at times but she's objective and has the capacity and resiliency to work toward finding some good and some balance between the victim and offender struggle that's going on nationally.

SENATOR COGHILL expressed support and thanked her for being willing to serve.

SENATOR KAWASAKI thanked her for being willing to serve. He read the selection criteria for board members under Sec. 33.16.030(a) and asked if she's able to do this.

(a) The governor shall appoint board members on the basis of their qualifications to make decisions that are compatible with the welfare of the community and of individual offenders. The governor shall appoint members who are able to consider the character and background of offenders and the circumstances under which offenses were committed.

MS. GRUNWALD answered yes; that will probably be one of the easier parts of the job for her. She is understanding yet objective and has learned a lot from the professionals who are already serving on the board.

SENATOR KAWASAKI read paragraphs (6) and (7) of Sec. 33.16.060. and asked if she'd thought about any recommendations to enhance the parole board's efficiency and efficacy.

(6) recommend to the governor and the legislature changes in the law administered by the board;
(7) recommend to the governor or the commissioner changes in the practices of the department and of other departments of the executive branch necessary to facilitate the purposes and practices of parole;

MS. GRUNWALD answered no, but what she's learned so far is that Alaska has a fairly efficient practice. What she will be watching are the parole practices established by Senate Bill 91. Prior to the criminal justice reform the board had to justify why they would release an individual and the current practice is to justify why they are keeping the individual in jail. She characterized that as "backwards."

SENATOR KAWASAKI mentioned pending legislation that would elevate the role of the parole board and expressed hope about improving the processes.

[5:11:36 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE expressed appreciation for her service to the country and thanked her for committing five years to the State Board of Parole. He said he's followed what she's been doing the

last couple of years and even though she's a parent in mourning he's found her responses to be centered and reasonable.

CHAIR SHOWER expressed support and appreciation as a long-time acquaintance.

[5:12:43 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER opened public testimony on the appointment of Edith Grunwald to the State Board of Parole.

[5:12:54 PM](#)

ROGER BRANSON, representing self, Wasilla, stated that people who are unable to see injustice in small things should expect to be blind to the injustice in large things. He told the committee that six Alaskans lost their lives the day that David Grunwald was murdered. He said he would argue that Mr. Grunwald was the most fortunate, but only those who worship a loving and merciful God could grasp that as reality. He talked about the current culture and the state letting these young men down by not providing them with age-appropriate activities.

He asked the committee to allow Ms. Grunwald the space to heal by not confirming her to a position on the State Board of Parole.

[5:15:14 PM](#)

CAROLINE PORTER, representing self, Palmer, said she is calling in support of the appointment of Edith Grunwald to the State Board of Parole. She knows Ms. Grunwald to be honorable, respectful, and fair. She will approach the position with the fairness that is expected and if she interjects her personal experience it will be to make a positive impact. "I can't imagine you not confirming her to this position."

[5:16:43 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER closed public testimony.

[5:16:58 PM](#)

CHAIR SHOWER stated that in accordance with AS 39.05.080, the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointments be forwarded to a joint session for consideration:

Alaska Police Standards Council

Stephen Dutra - North Pole

Burke Waldron - Bethel

Rebecca Hamon - King Salmon

Joseph White - Ketchikan

Chief Administrative Law Judge

Kathleen Frederick - Anchorage

Alaska Public Offices Commission

Rick Stillie - Delta Junction

Alaska Parole Board

Edie Grunwald - Palmer

Signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees; the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

5:18:09 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Shower adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 5:18 p.m.