

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 17, 2022

8:05 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Sara Hannan, Co-Chair
Representative Calvin Schrage, Co-Chair
Representative Harriet Drummond
Representative Mike Prax
Representative Ken McCarty
Representative Kevin McCabe

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Josiah Patkotak, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 298

"An Act establishing the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 256

"An Act relating to the Alaska Police Standards Council; relating to municipal correctional officers and municipal correctional employees; making municipal police officers subject to police standards; requiring the Department of Public Safety to submit a yearly use-of-force report to the legislature; requiring a municipality that employs a person as a municipal police officer or in a municipal correctional facility, the Department of Corrections, or the Department of Public Safety to report to the Federal Bureau of Investigation incidents of use of force by state and municipal police, probation, parole, and correctional officers and municipal correctional facility employees; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 256 (CRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 298

SHORT TITLE: ALASKA FOOD STRATEGY TASK FORCE

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) SNYDER

02/04/22 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/04/22 (H) CRA
03/15/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/15/22 (H) Heard & Held
03/15/22 (H) MINUTE(CRA)
03/17/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 256

SHORT TITLE: LAW ENFORCEMENT: REGISTRY; USE OF FORCE
SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TARR

01/18/22 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/7/22
01/18/22 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/22 (H) CRA, STA, FIN
03/08/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/08/22 (H) Heard & Held
03/08/22 (H) MINUTE(CRA)
03/15/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/15/22 (H) Heard & Held
03/15/22 (H) MINUTE(CRA)
03/17/22 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE LIZ SNYDER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, made comments during the hearing on HB 298.

ROBBI MIXON, Executive Director
Alaska Food Policy Council
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered invited testimony during the hearing on HB 298.

AMY SEITZ, Executive Director
Alaska Farm Bureau;
Chair

Alaska Food Policy Council
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony during the hearing on HB 298.

TIKAAN GALBREATH, Technical Assistant Specialist
Intertribal Agricultural Council

No address provided

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 298.

SHARON STEVENS GANSER
He Will Provide Food Pantry
Seward, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 298.

RACHAEL MILLER, Member
Alaska Food Policy Council Board
No address provided

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 298.

MELISSA MARTIN, President
Anchor Point Food Pantry
Anchor Point, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 298.

RON MEEHAN, Policy and Advocacy Manager
Food Bank of Alaska;
Manager

Alaska Food Coalition
No address provided.

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 298.

CLAIRE LUBKE, Program Director
St. Francis House Food Pantry
Catholic Social Services
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 298.

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, spoke to HB 256 and answered questions.

LISA PURINTON, Chief
Criminal Records and Identification Bureau, Division of
Statewide Services
Department of Public Safety
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Responded to questions during the hearing on HB 256.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:05:58 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR SARA HANNAN called the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at [8:05] a.m. Representatives McCarty, Drummond, Prax, McCabe, Schrage, and Hannan were present at the call to order.

HB 298-ALASKA FOOD STRATEGY TASK FORCE

[8:06:37 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 298, "An Act establishing the Alaska Food Strategy Task Force; and providing for an effective date."

[8:07:10 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LIZ SNYDER, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HB 298, noted that she had received 22 letters of support for the proposed legislation, and the letters are available in the committee packet.

[8:07:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said he would like to see more feedback from farmers.

[8:08:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN announced the committee would hear invited testimony.

[8:08:48 AM](#)

ROBBI MIXON, Executive Director, Alaska Food Policy Council, gave an overview of the goals of the Alaska Food Policy Council (AFPC). She talked about partnership grants and the connection of localized food systems, as well as a systems approach to food security planning on the local, borough, and state levels, to leverage assets. She remarked on turning broad policy recommendations into tangible policies and regulations for Alaska. She said AFPC could provide support for the task force proposed under HB 298 and has the training to do so. She said she considers HB 298 "a continuation of the work ahead of us," and said this would be a long-term collective effort. She said there would be stakeholder input in order to achieve economic

independence and self-sufficiency. She remarked that there are tremendous challenges ahead, but AFPC believes in the visions of food security and is in full support of HB 298.

[8:13:25 AM](#)

AMY SEITZ, Executive Director, Alaska Farm Bureau; Chair, Alaska Food Policy Council, stated that both the Alaska Farm Bureau and the AFPC believe Alaska needs to build a resilient food system, which has been reliant on outside sources and systems. The food supply chain has been disrupted repeatedly. She emphasized the need for collaboration in establishing a secure food system in Alaska. She further emphasized the importance of a reliable transportation system. She said the task force established under HB 298 would bring together experts from various areas, including involvement of the State of Alaska. In response to Representative McCabe, she indicated she would make sure there would be more input from farmers. In response to a question from Representative Prax, she offered information regarding the Fairbanks chapter of the Alaska Farm Bureau.

[8:21:07 AM](#)

TIKAAN GALBREATH, Technical Assistant Specialist, Intertribal Agricultural Council, gave a history of the Intertribal Agricultural Council, established in 1987, and its focus on conservation development and agricultural resources "for the betterment of our people." He said global events are highlighting the need for local food sourcing. He said the council invests its energy in an array of diverse programs. His program is funded under the National Technical Network. He described Alaska's position as unique, as in many cases the state does not have existing infrastructure. He spoke of reducing the global carbon footprint. He noted that Alaska Native people hold the most land in the state, and he spoke about subsistence and sharing of resources. He asked the committee to consider whether they would want to live in Alaska if all its food resources disappeared. He encouraged the legislature to support those resources, and he said HB 298 is a meaningful step in doing so.

[8:27:51 AM](#)

MR. GALBREATH, in response to comment by Representative McCabe regarding old ways of food storage, agreed regarding the importance of looking to traditional methods in finding solutions to the global challenges being faced.

[8:29:55 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN opened public testimony on HB 298.

[8:30:18 AM](#)

SHARON STEVENS GANSER, He Will Provide Food Pantry, spoke about the work of the food pantry and food insecurity in Seward and statewide. She asked the committee to consider "developing" HB 298 - the task force. In response to Co-Chair Hannan, she said there were 336 people who used the food pantry last year, "so throughout the year that counted as 2,800 households." She explained that meant the 336 people came back to the food pantry several times. In response to Representative Drummond, she clarified that point.

[8:33:11 AM](#)

RACHAEL MILLER, Member, Alaska Food Policy Council Board, said she is also a professor at Alaska Pacific University. She posited that investing in food security is not only about scarcity but also about opportunity and leadership in the north. She talked about presenting to the Alaska Food and Farm Caucus back to back with Governor Mike Dunleavy's issuance of Administrative Order 331. She called food a bi-partisan topic. She talked about reports that exist and the issue of how federal dollars are leveraged for Alaska. She offered her belief that HB 298 is an inclusive and timely bill, which she supports as a means to capitalize current momentum and interest in food security.

[8:38:30 AM](#)

MELISSA MARTIN, President, Anchor Point Food Pantry, spoke about food waste and fish being thrown back that could be used by a food bank, and she opined there is a need for a task force such as the one proposed under HB 298.

[8:40:03 AM](#)

RON MEEHAN, Policy and Advocacy Manager, Food Bank of Alaska; Manager, Alaska Food Coalition, testified in support of HB 298 as a bill that would allow the state to develop its comprehensive food policy strategy to strengthen its food system, reduce food insecurity, and grow its local food economies. He spoke about Alaska's unique food security issues

arising from its remote geographical location. He said food banks in the state have experienced an unprecedented level of food insecurity since the beginning of the pandemic. He said finding solutions to overcome barriers [to food security] will require collaboration among stakeholders from Alaska's food systems statewide. He talked about growing the agricultural industry, increasing efficiencies in state-run programs, and ensuring food security throughout the state. He stated support for HB 298.

[8:43:00 AM](#)

CLAIRE LUBKE, Program Director, St. Francis House Food Pantry, Catholic Social Services, testified in support of HB 298. She spoke about the negative effect of food security on people's lives and the need for improved food systems. She talked about the numbers served by the food pantry. She mentioned agricultural programming and the largest urban farm in the Municipality of Anchorage, farmer's markets, opportunities for people to become "food entrepreneurs, and the positive impact of these. She said Catholic Social Services has a vested interest in food production and access. She praised the robust committee representation and comprehensive food security categories outlined under HB 298. In response to Representative Drummond, she offered further information regarding the largest farm in the municipality.

[8:47:37 AM](#)

MS. LUBKE, in response to a question from Representative Prax about paying someone to grow food, talked about federal funding for programming and refugee agriculture grants. She offered to obtain further information to share.

[8:49:37 AM](#)

MS. LUBKE, in response to Representative McCarty, said she could provide information about the sustainability of the program.

[8:51:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 298.

[8:51:47 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SNYDER made closing remarks. She emphasized the savings in producing food in Alaska is but one positive aspect; another is in relation to the jobs that would be created.

[8:53:27 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN announced that HB 298 was held over.

HB 256-LAW ENFORCEMENT: REGISTRY; USE OF FORCE

[8:54:59 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 256, "An Act relating to the Alaska Police Standards Council; relating to municipal correctional officers and municipal correctional employees; making municipal police officers subject to police standards; requiring the Department of Public Safety to submit a yearly use-of-force report to the legislature; requiring a municipality that employs a person as a municipal police officer or in a municipal correctional facility, the Department of Corrections, or the Department of Public Safety to report to the Federal Bureau of Investigation incidents of use of force by state and municipal police, probation, parole, and correctional officers and municipal correctional facility employees; and providing for an effective date." [Before the committee, adopted as a working document on 3/15/22, was the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 256, Version 32-LS1341\B, Ambrose/Radford, 3/11/22 ("Version B").]

[8:55:55 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor of HB 256, noted that there was a handout added to the committee packet that lists the data collected by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) [pertaining to use of deadly force]. A second document lists the 21 agencies currently participating in reporting to the FBI. A third handout provides a definition referred to by Kelly Howell during the hearing on HB 256 on 3/15/22.

[8:57:20 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR, in response to Representative Prax saying he has heard complaints that the provisions of HB 256 would overburden the [law enforcement] system, pointed out that the list of agencies that has been provided to the committee is a list of agencies participating voluntarily with reporting, and

it's about 80 percent of law enforcement professionals in the state. She said that indicates to her that it is a system that is easy to implement. She mentioned the uniformed crime report, which other law enforcement entities not on the list are using; therefore, switching from one to the other would not be overburdensome. She said the FBI provides training modules on how to implement this system, and "the department" is available to support in a technical capacity. In response to a follow-up question as to whether this is a new means of collecting data or whether it will require new data, she said Section 1 of HB 256 directs the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC) to develop the regulations for this reporting.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX suggested boots on the ground as a way to find out what goes on.

[9:04:09 AM](#)

LISA PURINTON, Chief, Criminal Records and Identification Bureau, Division of Statewide Services, Department of Public Safety, in response to Representative Prax's question, explained that the sworn offices would not likely be doing the paperwork; it would be done by clerical staff, who are already reviewing incidence reports.

[9:05:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE said he sees the data as a defense of police departments. He indicated that he is satisfied with HB 256, [Version B].

[9:06:43 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY talked about incremental small demands on time that increase to be unmanageable. He expressed concern about the safety of officers. He questioned whether this bill would serve to create a situation where officers become wary and don't want to serve.

[9:10:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR, to Representative McCarty's first point, reiterated the 80 percent voluntary participant rate. Regarding officers' behavior, she said HB 256 would not direct them to do anything differently, and she thinks they would continue making the right decision. She explained that the purpose of the reporting is to discern the incidences and why things are

happening, thus preventing casualties "on both sides." She said the data is used to show trends. She spoke about de-escalation to avoid a deadly result.

[9:14:26 AM](#)

MS. PURINTON added that currently in state law, the data is reported. She said the majority of the reporting will show that there is nothing to report, which requires little time. In response to a follow-up question, she said currently the report must be made in the FBI's database; the Department of Public Safety is exploring the option to streamline the process. She also noted that the FBI reporting requirement just went live in 2019; 60 percent of law enforcement agencies in the country are part of the reporting at present. She talked about a goal to provide good statistics out of the data.

[9:20:55 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HANNAN clarified that this is collection of data; it is not deciding when use of force is justified or not. She described how it could be helpful to have the data, and she remarked that 60 percent reporting that data across the country is not a lot.

[9:24:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCABE remarked how the data could be used to determine, for example, whether a certain drug is creating the need for the use of deadly force.

[9:25:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TARR made closing comments. She expressed appreciation for law enforcement professionals in Alaska's communities.

[9:26:32 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR SCHRAGE moved to report CSHB 256, Version 32-LS1341\B, Ambrose/Radford, 3/11/22, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection CSHB 256(CRA) was reported out of the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee.

[9:27:21 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:27 a.m.