

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

April 4, 2022

3:21 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Zack Fields, Co-Chair  
Representative Ivy Spohnholz, Co-Chair  
Representative Calvin Schrage  
Representative Liz Snyder (via teleconference)  
Representative Ken McCarty (via teleconference)

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative David Nelson  
Representative James Kaufman

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Board of Nursing

Lena Lafferty - Anchorage

- HEARD AND HELD

Alaska Labor Relations Agency

Paula Harrison - Anchorage

- HEARD AND HELD

Marijuana Control Board

Ely Cyrus - Kiana  
Eliza Muse - Anchorage

- HEARD AND HELD

Alcoholic Beverage Control Board

Janice Hill - Haines  
Douglas Moore - Talkeetna

- HEARD AND HELD

State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors

Sterling Strait - Anchorage

- HEARD AND HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 312

"An Act relating to dress codes and natural hairstyles."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 108

"An Act relating to concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs for students enrolled in public secondary schools; relating to child labor; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 312

SHORT TITLE: ALLOW NATURAL HAIRSTYLES

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) TARR

02/09/22	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/09/22	(H)	EDC, L&C
03/11/22	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/11/22	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
03/14/22	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/14/22	(H)	Heard & Held
03/14/22	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/23/22	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/23/22	(H)	Moved HB 312 Out of Committee
03/23/22	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
04/04/22	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 108

SHORT TITLE: CONCURRENT SECONDARY & TRADE SCHOOL

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) MCCARTY

02/22/21	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/22/21	(H)	EDC, L&C, FIN
04/09/21	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
04/09/21	(H)	Heard & Held

04/09/21	(H)	MINUTE (EDC)
02/23/22	(H)	EDC AT 3:30 PM DAVIS 106
02/23/22	(H)	Heard & Held
02/23/22	(H)	MINUTE (EDC)
03/04/22	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/04/22	(H)	Heard & Held
03/04/22	(H)	MINUTE (EDC)
03/14/22	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/14/22	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
03/16/22	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/16/22	(H)	Heard & Held
03/16/22	(H)	MINUTE (EDC)
03/23/22	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/23/22	(H)	Moved CSHB 108 (EDC) Out of Committee
03/23/22	(H)	MINUTE (EDC)
03/28/22	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
03/28/22	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
03/30/22	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
03/30/22	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
04/04/22	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

**WITNESS REGISTER**

LENA LAFFERTY, Appointee  
Board of Nursing  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Board of Nursing.

PAULA HARRISON, Appointee  
Alaska Labor Relations Agency  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Alaska Labor Relations Agency.

ELY CYRUS, Appointee  
Marijuana Control Board  
Kiana, Alaska

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

ELIZA MUSE, Appointee  
Marijuana Control Board  
Anchorage, Alaska

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

JANICE HILL, Appointee  
Alcoholic Beverage Control Board  
Haines, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.

DOUGLAS MOORE, Appointee  
Alcohol Beverage Control Board  
Talkeetna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.

STERLING STRAIT, Appointee  
State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors.

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, introduced HB 312.

DAVID SONG, Staff  
Representative Geran Tarr  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** On behalf of Representative Tarr, prime sponsor, provided the sectional analysis for HB 312.

ALYSSA QUINTYNE  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided invited testimony in support of HB 312.

JAMIE BURGESS, Superintendent  
Nome Public Schools  
Nome, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided invited testimony in support of HB 108.

MAGGIE COTHRON, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 108.

DON ETHERIDGE, Lobbyist

Alaska AFL-CIO  
Alaska Works Partnership, Inc.  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 108.

JIM ANDERSON, Chief Finance Officer  
Anchorage School District  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 108.

PAUL GROSSI, Lobbyist  
Ironworker Management Progressive Action Cooperative Trust  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 108.

ADAM WHITE, Government Relations Spokesperson  
Alaska Airmen's Association  
Nenana, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 108.

TOM GEORGE, Alaska Regional Manager  
Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 108.

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Division Operations Manager  
Division of Innovation and Education Excellence  
Department of Education & Early Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the hearing on HB 108, answered questions.

EUGENE HARNETT, Staff  
Representative Ken McCarty  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** During the hearing on HB 108, provided a sectional analysis on behalf of Representative McCarty, prime sponsor of the bill.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:21:30 PM](#)

**CO-CHAIR ZACK FIELDS** called the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:21 p.m. Representatives Schrage, Spohnholz, and Fields were present at

the call to order. Representatives Snyder (via teleconference) and McCarty (via teleconference) arrived as the meeting was in progress.

**CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :**  
**Board of Nursing**

[3:21:35 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the first order of business would be the confirmation hearing of the governor's appointee to the Board of Nursing.

[3:21:45 PM](#)

LENA LAFFERTY, Appointee, Board of Nursing, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, testified as appointee to the Board of Nursing. She noted that her nomination is a reappointment to the registered nurse seat on the board. She said she was in the Navy for 10 years as a hospital corpsman, has been a [licensed registered] nurse for eight years since leaving active duty, and currently works as an operating room nurse at Providence Alaska.

MS. LAFFERTY related that while on the board she has worked at accomplishing the board's mission of promoting and protecting the health of Alaska's citizens through safe and effective practices of nursing, as defined by law. During the [COVID-19] pandemic the Board of Nursing tried to make the lives of nurses easier while also protecting the citizens. For example, the board did not raise the licensing fees and lessened the number of continuing education units (CEUs) for those re-upping their nursing licenses. Ms. Lafferty related that since her first nomination she has been trying to make it possible for LPNs leaving the military to challenge the LPN board so they can swiftly move out of the military and into the job that they love, and which is 99 percent accomplished. Another goal of hers is to also include hospital corpsman.

[3:24:48 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR SPOHNHOLZ asked how Ms. Lafferty feels about the length of time it takes for nursing licenses to get processed.

MS. LAFFERTY replied that board staff are working tirelessly to ensure that the people coming to Alaska are nurses that everyone

would want to have caring for their own selves. Board staff must ensure that an applicant's license is unencumbered, that all the paperwork is done and done correctly, and the information provided. It is a long process, and the staff is working hard to make it quicker for people to begin working.

[The confirmation hearing was held over.]

### **Alaska Labor Relations Agency**

[3:26:39 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be the confirmation hearing of the governor's appointee to the Alaska Labor Relations Agency.

[3:26:46 PM](#)

PAULA HARRISON, Appointee, Alaska Labor Relations Agency, Department of Labor and Workforce Development, testified as appointee to the Alaska Labor Relations Agency. She noted that her nomination is a reappointment to the public member seat. She has served on the agency for three years and is approaching 40 years of experience in human resources and labor relations. She said the agency is very small but does a big job for the State of Alaska.

MS. HARRISON, responding to Co-Chair Spohnholz and Co-Chair Fields, agreed to provide the committee with her resume.

[The confirmation hearing was held over.]

### **Marijuana Control Board**

[3:28:36 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be the confirmation hearings of the governor's appointees to the Marijuana Control Board.

[3:28:46 PM](#)

ELY CYRUS, Appointee, Marijuana Control Board, Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, testified as appointee to the Marijuana Control Board. He related that he is a city administrator in Kiana and because Kiana operates a beverage package store he

knows the similarities between alcohol and marijuana. He said he is interested in serving on the board because he sees the marijuana industry as a good opportunity, especially for employment in rural Alaska. He applauded the state for being progressive and allowing the industry to grow to where it is today; it is setting up a bright future for Alaska amongst the archaic federal laws regarding marijuana. He said he has served on the tribal council, the city council, the regional corporation board, was previously chairman for NANA Development Corporation and vice-chairman for NANA Regional Corporation, has been Kiana City Manager for about four years, and is president of the Native Village of Kiana.

[3:30:51 PM](#)

ELIZA MUSE, Appointee, Marijuana Control Board, Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, testified as appointee to the public health seat on the Marijuana Control Board. She noted she has a master's degree in health policy and administration, and has worked for the Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), since 2011. She said she has tracked cannabis policy since the ballot initiative in 2014. As part of the Division of Public Health she has participated in efforts to understand health and safety implications for Alaskans resulting from increased access to cannabis products. She has worked to put in place a system for collecting data to help understand how cannabis use is changing over time for adults and youth, as well as develop methods to summarize these findings. She developed what is now the Positive Youth Development Afterschool Program that funds quality after school programs statewide, which is a known protective factor for reducing youth cannabis use.

MS. MUSE stated she wants to serve on this board because she believes in and supports a well-regulated cannabis industry. A well-regulated industry, she continued, will balance the needs of consumers with that of public health to ensure that products are safely available, tested, labeled in a way that makes sense, and packaged in a childproof manner. She said her record and actions taken on the board to date are proof that she believes in this industry and wants to see it succeed. A key to [the industry's] success is when the public health has a voice and that is her role on this five-person board. She brings to the board her training, knowledge, and willingness to work with other board members and industry to ensure that rule making will be used in a manner that balances industry and public health.

[3:33:04 PM](#)

MS. MUSE, in response to Co-Chair Fields, confirmed she is currently employed by the DHSS.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS surmised that Ms. Muse would serve on the board as a public health expert who happens to be employed by DHSS, and that she would be voicing her personal views about marijuana regulation, not the department's.

MS. MUSE replied that is correct. She said DHSS has, to date, been on the record for opposing certain regulations, but her role on this board is to represent the public health of all Alaskans, not the opinions or positions of the department. She said she sees those two as being separate.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked whether Ms. Muse received any guidance from the department when she applied for the board. He further asked whether current state employees serving on boards occurs frequently.

MS. MUSE offered her belief that a [current] State of Alaska employee sits in the board's other public safety seat. She said her understanding of the statutory requirement of this board is that the position may be filled by someone who works in public health at the federal, state, or local level, and may be a government employee.

CO-CHAIR SPOHNHOLZ recounted that when the legislature put the public health seat into the statute it was with the idea that having that expertise on the board would help inform policy moving forward. It is nice to see that happening, she added.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS requested that his questions not be taken as hostile as he was just wondering if departmental employees encounter this frequently. He offered his appreciation for Ms. Muse offering her service.

[The confirmation hearings were held over.]

**Alcoholic Beverage Control Board**

[3:35:49 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be the confirmation hearings of the governor's appointees to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board.

[3:35:56 PM](#)

JANICE HILL, Appointee, Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, testified as appointee to the rural public seat on the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board. She said she has spent much of her adult life in service to her community, region, and state, and recently retired after four terms as the Haines Borough mayor. She said she currently serves on the board of directors of the Southeast Conference, as a counselor on the Chilkoot Indian Association Tribal Council, serves as a director for the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC), serves on the Alaska Miners Association board of directors, and for many years she has served on the Lynn Canal Icy Strait Resource Advisory Committee. She related that her interest in serving on the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board comes from having served on the Alaska Native Health Board where she was appointed to the steering committee that was rewriting Title IV, and she felt she could bring a small-town perspective with her variety of experiences to the ABC Board. She noted that she has served several months on the ABC Board already while awaiting confirmation and has enjoyed her time on the board.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHRAGE thanked Ms. Hill for stepping up to serve on the ABC Board.

[3:39:33 PM](#)

DOUGLAS MOORE, Appointee, Alcohol Beverage Control Board, Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, testified as appointee to the public seat on the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board. He noted that he began serving on the board in about May 2021 shortly after he was appointed and has participated in four meetings so far. He said he owns a business in Talkeetna, which he purchased from his parents. He has participated in about 10 boards, he continued, and the ABC Board is the most professional and thoughtful group he has ever been part of.

MR. MOORE, in response to Co-Chair Spohnholz, confirmed that his business is Moore's Hardware.

CO-CHAIR SPOHNHOLZ remarked that she has frequently shopped at Mr. Moore's store over the years.

[The confirmation hearings were held over.]

**State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors**

[3:41:42 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be the confirmation hearing for the governor's appointee to the State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors.

[3:41:50 PM](#)

STERLING STRAIT, Appointee, State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development, testified as appointee to the State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors. He stated that he is a trained structural engineer, and he has been an engineer in Alaska for about 15 years. He said that being able to give back by serving on this board is a pinnacle in his career as an engineer. The board investigates issues and guides the engineering profession, he added.

MR. STRAIT, in response to Co-Chair Spohnholz, stated that he is a civil structural engineer.

[The confirmation hearing was held over.]

**HB 312-ALLOW NATURAL HAIRSTYLES**

[3:43:33 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 312, "An Act relating to dress codes and natural hairstyles."

[3:43:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR, Alaska State Legislature, as the sponsor, introduced HB 312. She explained that HB 312 would prohibit schools and workplaces from enacting dress codes that

restrict someone from wearing his or her natural hair. She thanked Senator Dave Wilson who introduced the companion bill. She said it is important for student success for students to feel welcome and included in their school, and this policy will help a student feel welcome and included. It is important to have schools be a positive learning experience, she continued, because the academic achievement of students improves when they feel welcome and included in their school environment.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR explained that HB 312 would also ensure that no employee would be prohibited from participating in work or attending school because the employee is wearing natural hair. People rely on their job, she continued, and this would speak to having a strong nondiscrimination policy. She pointed out that through discussion of this legislation people have learned what a natural hairstyle is and why it's important to allow these hairstyles. She said that [disallowing natural hairstyles] can be damaging due to the chemicals and procedures used to alter the natural hair. The bill, she stated, defines what standards are unacceptable for school districts and employers to place on hair; providing this clarity and policy statement is the right thing to do.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR related that the US House of Representatives recently passed the CROWN Act [Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair Act], the national version of this [state] legislation. She said 14 states and 34 municipalities have passed this legislation, and the Dove brand of soap has a website and is a corporate sponsor and participant in this national effort. She said it is exciting to think of Alaska joining the 14 states and 34 municipalities.

[3:47:20 PM](#)

DAVID SONG, Staff, Representative Geran Tarr, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Tarr, sponsor, provided the sectional analysis for HB 312. He explained that Section 1 would amend AS 14.03 by adding Section 135. He stated that this new section would disallow school districts from adopting a school dress code that: prohibits a student from wearing a hairstyle that is commonly or historically associated with race; prohibits a student from wearing a natural hairstyle, regardless of the student's hair texture or type; or requires a student to permanently or semi-permanently alter the student's natural hair. He said the bill would make an exception to allow school districts to restrict hairstyles in any way necessary to comply with existing health or safety laws. Mr. Song explained that

Section 2 would amend AS 23.10, which is related to employment practices and working conditions, by adding Section 450. He said this new section is identical to Section 1 of the bill except it deals with an employee-employer relationship.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced the committee would hear invited testimony on HB 312.

[3:48:40 PM](#)

ALYSSA QUINTYNE, provided invited testimony in support of HB 312. She stated that discrimination, and in particular hair discrimination, is a part of life for black people in Alaska. She said every black person she knows has, at some point in their life, been harassed or talked to about their hairstyle at work or been sent home from school. Since elementary school, she related, she has had classmates, teachers, and administrators make inappropriate comments and questions about her hair. She has been barred from chemistry and home economics classes and from swimming because of her hair. She has been thrown down the stairs by her hair and had her hair cut and burned in the classroom. While her parents and other appropriate people were involved, nothing came of it.

MS. QUINTYNE shared that as she grew up and started working it was no better. She has worked in the Interior in customer service, university departments, training facilities, labs, and various organizations, but the only place where she hasn't experienced hair discrimination is where she is working now. She has had comments, questions, and touching, as well as having the human resources (HR) department write policies specifically targeting her hair and her hairstyles. She has been given ultimatums from supervisors and HR to either come back to work with her hair straight or don't come back at all. As a young adult in college working two jobs, she shared, there wasn't a choice, she had to do what she had to do to survive.

MS. QUINTYNE stated that throughout her life she has tried to address this problem on her own within the community, including testifying at age 13 before the North Star Borough School District, but to no avail. She said she just termed off the district's diversity committee after three years where she worked with the school board and district administration on the dress code and specifically on hair. She tried to educate them on bonnets, du-rags, natural and protective hairstyles, and why the whole gang affiliated rhetoric and language was completely unacceptable and irrelevant; it was racial micro-aggression

rooted in fear that targeted black and indigenous students. She provided resources and suggestions on how to make dress codes more responsible and aware to students' financial access, cultures, identities, and expressions, but she doesn't know if those suggestions were taken.

MS. QUINTYNE pointed out that someone who doesn't deal with this discrimination every day has no understanding of how detrimental it is. A person is told to stand up for themselves or to tell a teacher or HR, but that is exactly where the harm being faced is coming from, she explained. The city council won't do anything because of the Lower 48 problem which doesn't occur in Alaska. The borough assembly throws up its hands because it doesn't know what to do. The school board is the very source of black student trauma and pain. Nothing is really happening in the legislature yet. The local stores lock up the hair products needed for taking care of a black person's hair and few salons have the expertise or carry the necessary hair management products. What is a black kid supposed to do when the only people who understand what the kid is going through are their friends and mother?

MS. QUINTYNE said she is telling this to the committee to give members the context of what she and other black Alaskans go through. She stated that HB 312 gives hope to the marginalized black community and gives her hope that it will create much-needed conversations about discrimination, micro-aggression, and violence. She said she further hopes that the pain and violence she and others have gone through in school and work can be prevented and that when children grow up they can grow up out of love and not out of survival.

[3:56:30 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS thanked Ms. Quintyne for her testimony and noted that he believes the Senate companion bill was passed today.

REPRESENTATIVE TARR offered her thanks and appreciation to Ms. Quintyne for sharing her experiences.

[3:57:50 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS [held over HB 312].

**HB 108-CONCURRENT SECONDARY & TRADE SCHOOL**

[3:58:04 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 108, "An Act relating to concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs for students enrolled in public secondary schools; relating to child labor; and providing for an effective date." [Before the committee was CSHB 108(EDC).]

[3:58:29 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:58 p.m. to 3:59 p.m.

[3:59:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCARTY, as prime sponsor, presented CSHB 108(EDC). He stated that Alaska has concurrent high school and college enrollment where students get both high school and college credit, but Alaska does not have the same opportunity for students to get concurrent high school and trade training. The bill would avail for master trades people to assist secondary education programs using their skill sets in a trade to train high school students so they can earn certification. The bill would also avail the student to work not only for their parents, but also extended family. The bill would further allow the student to be in the workforce from age 16 rather than 17, and the bill would allow them to work until 10:00 p.m., which would be an extra hour of work each day. Alaska, he continued, has a big need for a strong workforce and infrastructure money is coming to the state. Employers need employees who are here for the long term, and this tends to be residents of the state. The bill would provide real life application to a student's high school studies.

[4:02:13 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced the committee would hear invited testimony on CSHB 108(EDC).

[4:02:31 PM](#)

JAMIE BURGESS, Superintendent, Nome Public Schools, provided invited testimony in support of CSHB 108(EDC). She stated that the proposed bill would provide for students in all districts to participate in high quality certified concurrent vocational education in high school. It is the equivalent of providing dual enrollment for college credit, she continued, and is desperately needed in today's rapidly changing workplace. She

allowed that providing this program may provide challenges for rural districts but stressed that it is these districts which are in the greatest need of skilled individuals in the trades to support their communities. In a rural community such as hers, she related, electricians, construction workers, welders, boiler technicians, plumbers, and other tradesmen must be brought in from Anchorage or Fairbanks for projects or to service residential needs due to the lack of skilled labor locally. Or, if there are any local skilled companies or individuals, they are often overwhelmed with work. The need is great and the pipeline for new workers at the local level and rural areas is down to a trickle or completely absent, she advised.

MS. BURGESS recognized that there is often a concern for how small and rural districts will find a way to provide these types of programs when there may be only a few or just a single student interested in participating. There may also be a lack of a qualified instructor as defined in the bill's language or the inability to offer enough classes or practicum hours for a few students to make an appropriate program a reality within a small school setting. However, she explained, small rural districts often collaborate amongst themselves with a larger rural district or may partner with a road district to provide programs and services to their students. The Department of Education & Early Development (DEED) can function as a centralized clearinghouse of information or a source of support to connect districts through a career technical education (CTE) department. Perkins grant funding, she noted, can potentially be utilized to support these programs, as well as other grant programs. Nome and Bering Strait School District have a joint CTE program called [Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center] (NACTEC) which utilizes an intensive two-week to three-week residential program where students from a village school fly into Nome to garner hours needed in a variety of programs from health care to aviation to welding or construction. She said CSHB 108(EDC) would allow students to have potentially life-changing educational opportunities in high school and to be better prepared for the rapidly evolving workforce in Alaska.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS [opened public testimony on HB 108].

[4:06:33 PM](#)

MAGGIE COTHRON, representing self, testified in support of HB 108. She stated that HB 108 would give students like her more opportunities and would help students realize the importance of their regular classes and learning lifelong skills. She related

that she had the wonderful opportunity to take a culinary class during an after-school session at the King Career Center which allows students to have a similar experience to what this bill would do. She said it was incredible to be taught by someone so knowledgeable and in the industry for years. She found that culinary isn't for her, not because of the cooking but rather the kitchen environment which is loud and fast paced and requires good communication. She learned that she prefers to take her time.

MS. COTHRON said that these are the types of experiences she wants to go through because she, like others, doesn't know what she wants to do after high school. These experiences, she continued, provide hands-on experience and development of a passion in a career that one would otherwise not have access to, or be aware of, and this has a huge impact. Also, it prepares students to have a successful future in often overlooked industry in Alaska.

[4:08:12 PM](#)

DON ETHERIDGE, Lobbyist, Alaska AFL-CIO, Alaska Works Partnership, Inc., testified that the Alaska AFL-CIO and the Alaska Works Partnership, Inc. support HB 108. He said it is important to start training youths at a younger age than has been done and to get them into the trades because nowadays [Alaska is] running short on trades people. It's a good idea to give kids an example of what the trades look like, he continued, and these programs provide help to kids who are still in school. He said he knows of two kids who would never have graduated had there not been programs such as the house building programs. These programs give kids an idea of why they need to have math and other skills. This bill will help the kids and give Alaska future tradesmen, he added.

[4:09:47 PM](#)

JIM ANDERSON, Chief Finance Officer, Anchorage School District (ASD), testified that the Anchorage School District supports HB 108 because it will help more students become career and life ready immediately upon graduation. He said the bill would strengthen the state's focus to provide high school students an opportunity to receive industry standard training so they will have viable skills for a trade and would further stress the importance of partnerships with businesses in areas that may not have state certified apprentice programs.

MR. ANDERSON related that for several years the ASD has partnered with dozens of businesses and programs in nearly two dozen distinct career fields, including art design, biomedical, telecommunications, carpentry, welding, veterinary assistants. Through these training and internship opportunities, he stated, students develop skills that allow them to join the workforce immediately upon graduation or shortly after. Participating students receive course credit for their time, effort, and acquisition of new skills. These partnerships, he noted, have generally been available at little or no cost to the district as it is a great opportunity for employers to build pipelines for their future employees. While there are some transportation costs for student travel to and from these opportunities, ASD looks at that as a minor investment in helping these students prepare to join the workforce.

MR. ANDERSON stated that in 2019 prior to the pandemic, ASD had 126 students participate in intern programs with its partners and another 190 students participate in job shadowing. The pandemic slowed down many of these opportunities, he said, but ASD is rebuilding partnerships in the community and will meet many of the needs and requirements stated in HB 108 because it is an investment in those students who don't plan to go to college as their career choice. He noted that HB 108 supports one of the district's three board goals, which is to ensure that students are life, college, and career ready upon graduation.

[4:12:59 PM](#)

PAUL GROSSI, Lobbyist, Ironworker Management Progressive Action Cooperative Trust, testified that the Alaska Ironworkers Union supports HB 108. He stated that the participants in this program probably won't be able to get on-the-job sites at age 14 due to federal [law], but it will produce candidates for the ironworkers at later dates. Students will be able to develop skills that are transferable to the ironworkers as well as to other trades. The most valuable transferable skill that this will teach is development of a work ethic - the ability to show up every day for work, work the time they are supposed to be there, and come back the next day.

[4:14:50 PM](#)

ADAM WHITE, Government Relations Spokesperson, Alaska Airmen's Association, testified in support of HB 108. He said the aviation industry supports these kinds of measures as there is a shortage of workers to do the job. He noted that written

testimony has been provided by the "next gen group," a subset of the Alaska Airmen's Association that is focusing on the younger generation by working with school districts to get programs going. He further noted that his association partners with the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA). He related that prior to the COVID-19 pandemic which ruined plans, the Alaska Airmen's Association had everything in place to start traveling to rural school districts to show aviation curriculums and get them going in the school districts. The number of people testifying in support of the bill, he continued, shows that it is a needed movement in the right direction.

[4:16:25 PM](#)

TOM GEORGE, Alaska Regional Manager, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), testified in support of HB 108 and the notion of concurrent vocational education and on-the-job trade experience in public secondary schools. He said there is a dire need for more pilots and mechanics and HB 108 would help provide [students with] more opportunities in the classroom and on-the-job exposure to this career. Aviation is a critical component to the transportation system in Alaska, he noted, and training pilots and mechanics who are already used to living in the state has potential benefit for meeting the state's labor needs.

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CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked Ms. Deborah Riddle how this training would look onsite for a school district where there is an apprenticeship program or CTE program that wants to deliver training in person in a school.

[4:18:08 PM](#)

DEBORAH RIDDLE, Division Operations Manager, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education & Early Development (DEED), explained that districts already have these types of arrangements in place with industry partners within their areas. The legislation would further define how that relationship could be organized. It would help districts organize the contract language memorandum of agreement that many districts already have in place with industry partners within their area to help them create programs that will provide the workforce that that individual community might need.

[4:19:16 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS invited Mr. Eugene Harnett to provide the sectional analysis for CSHB 108(EDC).

4:19:26 PM

EUGENE HARNETT, Staff, Representative Ken McCarty, Alaska State Legislature, said he would give the sectional analysis of CSHB 108(EDC) on behalf of Representative McCarty, prime sponsor of the bill. [What Mr. Harnett read matches the original bill sectional analysis available in the committee packet from the bill hearing of the prior committee of referral, the House Education Standing Committee, and it read as follows, original punctuation provided]:

Section 1

AS 12.62.400 National criminal history record checks for employment, licensing, and other noncriminal justice purposes.

Adds an instructor of students in a concurrent trade, vocational education, training, on-the-job training experience or apprenticeship to the list of individuals who must have a national criminal history record check performed.

Section 2

AS 14.07.020 Duties of the Department

Adds to the duties of the Department of Education and Early Development that they must provide schools and districts with opportunities for students to participate in concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs to students over 14 years of age enrolled in public secondary schools.

Section 3

AS 14.35 Vocational Education

Adds six (6) new sections to AS 14.35

Article 2. Concurrent Vocational Education, Training, and On-the-Job Trade Experience Programs.

Sec. 14.35.100. State policy.

New policy of the state to provide public secondary school students over 14 years of age the opportunity to participate in concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs from nonsectarian agencies providing industry-standard instruction.

Sec. 14.35.105. Program contracts.

The Department of Education and Early Development shall negotiate contracts with agencies providing industry-standard instruction and certifications to offer concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs for students enrolled in a public secondary school. The department may establish minimum program eligibility standards.

Additionally, this section provides contract guidelines and states that the Department of Education and Early Development may not contract with a sectarian agency.

Sec. 14.35.110. Program list.

Requires the Department of Education and Early Development to annually compile, provide to school districts and publish to the department's website a list of concurrent vocational education, training, and on-the-job trade experience programs that the department contracts with. The department must also identify any geographical attendance restrictions, and program availability for each listed program.

Sec. 14.35.115. Student enrollment.

Requires that the Department of Education and Early Development permit the enrollment of a student in a contracted concurrent vocational education, training or on-the-job trade experience program who is over the age of 14 years of age, who is enrolled in a public secondary school eligible for the program, and who submits a timely application. If the number of applicants for a program exceed capacity of the program or age group, the department shall select students by random drawing.

A secondary school shall pay the program tuition for an enrolled student who participates in a contracted concurrent vocational education program in accordance with the terms of the contract.

Sec. 14.35.120. Individual learning plan.

Requires that the secondary school create an individual learning plan for each student enrolled who participates in a contracted vocational program in collaboration with the student, parent or guardian of

the student, a school counselor and any other individuals involved in the student's learning plan.

The individual learning plan must also provide for an in-school and concurrent vocational education program course of study appropriate for the student's age and grade level consistent with state and district standards, provide for an ongoing assessment plan that includes industry-standard certification progress and statewide assessments required for public schools provide for monitoring of the student's work and certification progress by the counselor assigned to the student.

Sec. 14.35.125. Instructor certification.

Requires that an instructor of students in a concurrent vocational education, training or on-the-job trade experience program possess and valid instructor certificate and an industry-standard master skill certification or equivalent.

Requires the Department of Education and Early Development to submit fingerprints and fees to the Department of Public Safety for criminal justice information and a national criminal history check.

The department may not issue an instructor certificate to a person who has been convicted of a crime, or an attempt, solicitation, or conspiracy to commit a crime, involving a minor.

Section 4

AS 23.10.330 (a) Exempted Employment.

Amends the supervision requirement for an employed minor on to include an adult, parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, or uncle.

Section 5

AS 23.10.332 Authorization of Children under 17 to work.

Lowers the allowable employment age to 16 years old.

Section 6

AS 23.10.340 Employment of Children under 16.

Extends the hours of the day a minor may work to 10pm but does not exceed 23 allowable work hours in a week.

Section 7  
Effective Date  
Provides for July 1, 2021 effective date.

[HB 108 was held over.]

[4:25:28 PM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.