

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 24, 2023

8:01 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Jamie Allard, Co-Chair
Representative Justin Ruffridge, Co-Chair
Representative Mike Prax
Representative CJ McCormick
Representative Tom McKay
Representative Rebecca Himschoot
Representative Andi Story

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 105

"An Act relating to parental rights in a child's education; relating to access to school records; relating to sex education, human reproduction education, and human sexuality education; relating to school disciplinary and safety programs; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 106

"An Act authorizing lump sum payments for certain teachers as retention and recruitment incentives; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 111

"An Act relating to public school students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 105

SHORT TITLE: SEX/REPRODUCTION EDUCATION; SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(s) : RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

03/08/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/08/23 (H) EDC, JUD
03/13/23 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/13/23 (H) Heard & Held
03/13/23 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
03/29/23 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/29/23 (H) Heard & Held
03/29/23 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
03/30/23 (H) EDC AT 5:15 PM DAVIS 106
03/30/23 (H) Heard & Held
03/30/23 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
04/13/23 (H) EDC AT 5:15 PM BARNES 124
04/13/23 (H) Heard & Held
04/13/23 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
04/24/23 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 106

SHORT TITLE: TEACHER RECRUITMENT; LUMP SUM PAYMENT

SPONSOR(s) : RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

03/08/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/08/23 (H) EDC, FIN
03/13/23 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/13/23 (H) Heard & Held
03/13/23 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
04/12/23 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
04/12/23 (H) Heard & Held
04/12/23 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
04/24/23 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 111

SHORT TITLE: EDUCATION FOR DEAF & HEARING IMPAIRED

SPONSOR(s) : ALLARD

03/13/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/13/23 (H) HSS, EDC
03/22/23 (H) HSS REFERRAL REMOVED
03/22/23 (H) BILL REPRINTED
04/24/23 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

ED MARTIN, representing self
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 106.

LINDSEY CAUSER, Staff
Representative Jamie Allard
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Allard, prime sponsor, presented a PowerPoint, titled "HB 111 - Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children's Bill of Rights" and gave the sectional analysis on HB 111, Version S.

ANDREA SAMUEL, Speech-Language Pathologist
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony on HB 111, Version S.

RICHARD SAVILLE, Program Coordinator
Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony on HB 111, Version S.

DONALD ENOCH, Special Education Administrator
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 111, Version S.

HEATHER BATCHELDER, representing self
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 111.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:01:25 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR JAMIE ALLARD called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:01 a.m. Representatives Prax, McCormick, McKay, Himschoot, Ruffridge, and Allard were present at the call to order. Representative Story arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 105-SEX/REPRODUCTION EDUCATION; SCHOOLS

[8:02:22 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 105, "An Act relating to parental rights in a

child's education; relating to access to school records; relating to sex education, human reproduction education, and human sexuality education; relating to school disciplinary and safety programs; and providing for an effective date." [Public testimony was left open from the meeting on 4/13/23.]

CO-CHAIR ALLARD closed public testimony on HB 105.

[8:02:37 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE addressed the confusion on whether public testimony should be left open, as his office has received multiple accounts of individuals wanting to testify.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD responded that the bill was listed as "a previously heard bill."

[8:03:15 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that HB 105 was held over.

HB 106-TEACHER RECRUITMENT; LUMP SUM PAYMENT

[8:03:41 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 106, "An Act authorizing lump sum payments for certain teachers as retention and recruitment incentives; and providing for an effective date."

[8:03:45 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD opened public testimony on HB 106.

[8:03:51 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:03 a.m. to 8:08 a.m.

[8:08:33 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, announced that public testimony would be left open on HB 106.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that HB 106 was held over.

[The committee returned to HB 106 during the meeting at 8:21 a.m.]

HB 111-EDUCATION FOR DEAF & HEARING IMPAIRED

[8:09:13 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 111, "An Act relating to public school students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment."

[8:09:37 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 111, Version 33-LS0504\S, Marx, 4/22/23, as a working document. There being no objection, Version S was before the committee.

[HB 111, Version S, was set aside until 8:31 a.m.]

[8:10:13 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:10 a.m. to 8:21 a.m.

HB 106-TEACHER RECRUITMENT; LUMP SUM PAYMENT

[8:21:17 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the next order of business would be a return to HOUSE BILL NO. 106, "An Act authorizing lump sum payments for certain teachers as retention and recruitment incentives; and providing for an effective date."

[8:21:35 AM](#)

ED MARTIN, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 106. He stated that money should be spent with regards to colleges, as Alaska does not have an accredited education course in the state. He argued that this is why the state is having problems filling education positions. He expressed shock at the legislature's spending, and he suggested the bill should die in committee. He opined that money should go towards teachers in rural communities and asked the committee to "honor their oaths."

[8:23:54 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, announced that public testimony would be left open on HB 106.

[8:24:49 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that HB 106 was held over.

[8:24:55 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:24 a.m. to 8:31 a.m.

HB 111-EDUCATION FOR DEAF & HEARING IMPAIRED

[8:31:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 111, "An Act relating to public school students who are deaf or have a hearing impairment."

[8:32:29 AM](#)

LINDSEY CAUSER, Staff, Representative Jamie Allard, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Allard, prime sponsor, presented a PowerPoint, titled "HB 111 - Deaf & Hard of Hearing Children's Bill of Rights" [hard copy included in the committee packet]. She began with a summary of the information shown on slide 2, titled "Who Does HB 111 Effect?," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

WHO DOES HB 111 EFFECT?

There are currently 149 deaf or hard of hearing children in the State of Alaska.

79 Students in Anchorage
3 Students in Annette Island
12 Students in Fairbanks
3 Students in Galena
3 Students in Juneau
9 Students in Kenai Peninsula
5 Students in Kodiak Island
14 Students in Mat-Su
9 Students in Northwest Arctic

[8:33:39 AM](#)

MS. CAUSER continued to slide 3, titled "What services are currently being offered?" She explained that the services being offered are based on the district and its available resources. She added that there is nothing currently which requires school districts to provide information about available resources to students. She stated that the proposed legislation would ensure that students and parents are aware of the resources available, and each district is providing the same resources. She further noted that the school for the deaf is currently in administrative code, but not provided in statute.

[8:34:53 AM](#)

MS. CAUSER continued to slide 4, titled "What Does HB 111 Do?," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

WHAT DOES HB 111 DO?

01. School District shall provide parent of child who is deaf or hard of hearing with comprehensive, neutral, and unbiased information on hearing technology, methods of communication, services and programs, and support and advocacy services offered by public and private agencies.
02. Allows the parent of a child who is deaf or hard of hearing to choose the method of communication that the parent determines is the most appropriate.
03. Requires school district to provide services using the parent's chosen method of communication for the child.
04. School district shall deliver services to a child who is deaf or hard of hearing through professionals with training, experience, and background in the chosen method of communication and shall inform a parent of a child who is deaf or heard of hearing of the school districts duties and of the parent's rights provided.
05. Defines the following terms; bilingual approach, cued speech, deaf, hard of hearing, listening and spoken language, and total communication
06. Will codify the existence of a centralized school of the deaf, moving it from Admin Code to Statue for

those that it is determined placement at the program is appropriate for a child who resides in the district.

MS. CAUSER further explained that the proposed bill would not force students in the state who are deaf or hard of hearing to go to school in Anchorage. Instead, it would provide services for those who want to stay with family and be in the school they are already enrolled in.

[8:36:47 AM](#)

MS. CAUSER presented the sectional analysis for HB 111, Version S, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1: amends AS 14.30.272 by adding new subsections:

1. School district must provide parent with comprehensive information regarding,
 - a. Hearing technology
 - b. Different methods of communication
 - c. Services and programs designed to help children who are deaf and hard of hearing
 - d. Information on support and advocacy services offered by public and private agencies.
2. Parent chooses the method of communication that will be the most appropriate for their child.
3. Services are delivered to child through professionals with training, experience and a background in the chosen method of communication.
 - d. School District must inform parent of school districts duties and the parents rights under section c.
- e. In this section,
 1. Definition of "bilingual approach"
 2. Definition of "cued speech"
 3. Definition of "deaf"
 4. Definition of "hard of hearing"
 5. Definition of "Listening and spoken language"
 6. Definition of "total communication"

Section 2: amends AS 14.30.276 by adding a new subsection that requires the department to establish and operate a centralized program for students whose primary language is American Sign Language in the

least restrictive environment for those students, provide residential services as part of the program, establishes that a school district may operate the program under specific requirements, and provide funding for the students who attend the program operated by a school districted under this subsection to that school district.

MS. CAUSER added that the attached fiscal note shows a one-time legal fee of \$6,000 to implement the necessary regulation changes.

8:39:16 AM

The committee took a brief at-ease at 8:39 a.m.

8:39:52 AM

ANDREA SAMUEL, Speech-Language Pathologist, provided invited testimony in support of HB 111, Version S. She shared that her daughter uses cochlear implants to listen and talk, and she informed the committee that for the last ten years she has practiced speech and language pathology. She said that she helps individuals with communication disorders regain their ability to access language; however, she does not participate in the education of these children. She continued that currently there is not a universal means for screening [for hearing loss], creating different difficulties for families whose child's hearing loss was not detected at birth. She stated that these families need unbiased counseling to make a good decision for their child; therefore, the right professionals need to be available. She reiterated her support for HB 111, Version S, and all things recognized within the bill.

8:45:45 AM

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX questioned who diagnosed her child's [hearing] issue.

MS. SAMUEL replied that in 2008 [Early Hearing Detection and Intervention] was mandated for newborns in Alaska; therefore, hospitals had screeners in place, and this is how she found out about her child's hearing. Because of the lack of resources in Alaska, she said she was forced to go out of state for help.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX questioned whether she financed her child's care through personal finances, insurance, or other means.

MS. SAMUEL replied, "All of the above." In response to the concerns about delays in detection, she concurred that it is a worry; however, she noted that most children have their hearing assessed at birth. She added that late onset of hearing loss would not be caught right away.

[8:52:27 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE questioned how the proposed legislation would help any barriers to her child's education.

MS. SAMUEL responded that her family lives in the Anchorage School District (ASD), which is well resourced. She said that she would like to see more awareness among teachers and administrators in supporting students with hearing loss. She added that environmental modifications are important, as well as a well-versed educational audiologist on hand to counsel staff.

[8:56:14 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE questioned whether more statutory mandates are needed for districts to be able to provide more resources.

MS. SAMUEL replied yes. She expressed the opinion that when districts are not resourced for a task, they "kick the can down the road." She opined that the bill would correct many issues facing the treatment and education of hearing-impaired students and their parents. In response to a follow-up question, she expressed the opinion that the proposed bill would provide the structure. She added that the bill would make clear to school districts that all options must be presented for helping deaf and hearing-impaired students.

[9:00:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY reiterated that Version S would have a \$6,000 fiscal note for the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED). She questioned whether districts need resources. She questioned the Special Education Service Agency (SESA).

MS. SAMUEL discussed the funding that would be attached to the bill. She acknowledged the state's current deficit; however, she stressed the importance of the proposed bill. She added that funding also comes from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which serves special education (SPED).

Regardless of how much money the state has, she opined, the proposed legislation is the right thing to do.

[9:03:58 AM](#)

MS. CAUSER drew attention to page 2, lines 3-7 of the bill, reiterating that parents would be able to choose the method of communication most appropriate for their child.

[9:04:38 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD argued that deaf and hearing-impaired students should be provided with the same opportunities as hearing children. If students choose not to attend a specialized school, they should be able to go to any public school of their choosing.

[9:05:08 AM](#)

MS. CAUSER revisited the fiscal note and shared her belief that the increase for intensive-needs students and SPED would fall underneath the base student allocation (BSA); therefore, it would be a part of the [Foundation Funding Formula] increase.

[9:05:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT reinforced her support for the bill. She highlighted page 3, line 3. She questioned whether the statement "must provide residential services" would generate an additional fiscal note.

MS. CAUSER expressed the belief this was already addressed in the fiscal note but offered to follow up with the committee.

[9:06:23 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY expressed concern about the language on page 3, line 9, and she questioned whether the word "parent" should replace the phrase "school district."

CO-CHAIR ALLARD expressed the opinion that this was addressed in the first part of the bill.

[9:08:14 AM](#)

MS. SAMUEL offered closing comments and said there is funding in place through federal law, adding that [the proposed

legislation] would not go above what is already in federal law. She reiterated that the bill would inform school districts concerning deaf and hearing-impaired students.

[9:09:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY addressed the school districts' funding through IDEA. She expressed the belief that many deaf and hearing-impaired students do not receive the "intensive times 13" funds [in the Foundation Funding Formula] because of the required criteria for intensive-needs students. She suggested that districts would struggle to meet the need and opined that more fiscal monies should be in the bill.

MS. SAMUEL acknowledged the shortage of individual aides in the districts. She explained that some children do not need a one-on-one aide; however, they need other support, such as environmental support.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY clarified that the funding which comes with a full-time aide is needed in many cases.

MS. SAMUEL likened students to bonds, indicating that an early investment would make a difference. She suggested that the proposed bill would give students the access they need to learn.

[9:12:19 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD related that she worked with Ms. Samuel on the proposed legislation, and she was an intricate part. She opined that no cost is too high to establish education for all children, and she expressed the belief that no child is less important than another.

[9:13:15 AM](#)

RICHARD SAVILLE, Program Coordinator, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, testified in support of HB 111, Version S, and provided a summary of his role in the council. He noted that he is the vice chair for the Alaska Advisory Board for the Education of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. He explained that 17 other states have passed similar legislation, which is based on the federal Bill of Rights for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children. He reiterated several reasons to support the bill, emphasizing that it should be a parent's choice. He added it would also ensure that families of deaf and hearing-impaired children understand the available

resources. He said that the aspirational aspect of the bill is the deaf and hearing-impaired children in the state would be treated as equals and receive the needed support to fulfill their full potential.

[9:18:42 AM](#)

MR. SAVILLE pointed out that the statewide school for deaf and hearing-impaired is located in Anchorage and funded through both ASD and DEED. He briefly explained how housing works for rural children. He noted that he also works with SESA.

[9:21:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX pointed out that some services provided through ASD meet some of the needs; however, he questioned how much is not being met.

MR. SAVILLE replied that he could not provide an answer currently. He reiterated that the funding is not only through ASD.

[9:22:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY questioned whether a larger fiscal note is needed. In reference to the gaps in services, she requested clarification.

MR. SAVILLE stated that there are staffing shortages everywhere, and anything to promote recruitment is welcomed. He expressed uncertainty whether the specific needs of children were being met. He offered to gather information and report back to the committee.

[9:25:07 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD reported that the number of deaf and hearing-impaired students in Alaska is 149. She added that few people know American Sign Language (ASL) and pointed out that the proposed legislation would allow a parent to go into a child's classroom and interpret.

[9:25:51 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE referenced DEED's Guidance for Special Education Personnel and the section on teachers with students who are visually impaired or deaf. He expressed the

understanding that there is an issue finding teachers who meet the requirements. He highlighted page 2, line 7 of the bill, which referenced delivering services to deaf children, and stated this provision would codify the regulation which is already currently not being met. He asked what the state is currently doing for the 149 deaf or hard of hearing students, and he further questioned how the services would be blended so all students' needs are met in one classroom.

[9:28:06 AM](#)

MR. SAVILLE expressed the understanding that the language in Section 2 is no different than language which requires that students with disabilities be in an educational environment along with other students, which has been required by federal law for over 30 years. He requested that the question be repeated.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE questioned whether having a special school specifically for the deaf and hearing-impaired children would fall outside what [educators] are already asked to do, which is educate students in the environment in which they live.

MR. SAVILLE expressed the belief that having a school for deaf and hearing-impaired students is good because it allows families to make the choice about what is best for their children.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE asked how the state was doing in terms of following the guidance for special education personnel.

MR. SAVILLE replied that he would look into specifics and report back to the committee at a later date.

[9:32:30 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY asked whether the 149 [deaf and hard of hearing students] fall under the intensive needs portion of the [Foundation Funding Formula] fully, partially, or not at all.

MR. SAVILLE expressed uncertainty concerning the intensive needs portion in the formula. He deferred to DEED.

[9:33:46 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD questioned whether passing the proposed legislation would encourage schools to be more willing to provide education to deaf or hearing-impaired students.

MR. SAVILLE expressed the opinion that statutes carry more weight.

[9:35:07 AM](#)

DONALD ENOCH, Administrator, Special Education, Department of Education and Early Development, in response to the question from Representative McKay, explained that it is a district's responsibility to submit a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for review for intensive-needs funding. He added that students who require specialized instruction because of hearing and visual impairments are exempt from the seven criteria for intensive-needs students. He added that a full-time aide would be waived. He confirmed that students considered deaf would still qualify for the intensive-needs funding under the category of "deafness."

[9:37:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT commented that IEP "carries a lot of weight" and people are responsive to it; nonetheless, she suggested that more needs to be done.

[9:37:48 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX referred to a previous testifier's story about discovering the hearing loss of her child well before the child's involvement in the education system. He said by focusing only on the school district, many children may be missed, and he opined that assessments for potential problems should be done earlier by the Department of Health (DOH).

MR. SAVILLE agreed that children may be missed between birth and preschool, and he encouraged a legislative solution to this problem. He opined that including this language in the bill would only have positive results.

[9:40:20 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD related a personal story about her daughter's hearing issue, explaining that the discovery was made by a school nurse. She expressed the opinion that there are still students struggling with hearing loss and emphasized the importance of addressing it as early as possible.

[9:41:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT questioned the Child Find program.

MR. ENOCH explained that Child Find is a federal requirement, and all school districts must participate; however, not all districts participate the same way. He explained that larger districts participate monthly while smaller districts participate on an as-needed basis.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT asked what ages are covered and whether hearing loss in a child would be detected in a Child Find screening.

MR. ENOCH replied that the ages for SPED services are typically children from 3- to 5-years old, but it could reach up to 22-year-olds.

[9:43:46 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE offered his understanding that in order for IEP to qualify for intensive-needs funding, the student would need a full-time interpreter. He referred to Ms. Samuel's testimony about the technology which allows children to have education given in multiple language formats, as this does not always require an interpreter. He asked whether individuals who do not need one-on-one time would qualify for intensive-needs funding. He questioned whether these students would still qualify as deaf or hard of hearing.

MR. ENOCH responded that students who require an interpreter at any point during the day would qualify for intensive-needs funding.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE questioned whether a student who required an interpreter only one day of the week would still qualify for the intensive-needs funding.

MR. ENOCH replied that intensive-needs funding provides a foundation for how the files are reviewed. He continued that these intensive-needs reviews have gone through many changes, including regulatory changes. He said that on the rare occasion where a student requires an interpreter only once a week, the district would be contacted and informed of a waiver process available to them.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE asked whether a student who does not require an interpreter would qualify for intensive-needs funding.

MR. ENOCH said that would be a district decision. He added that the state does not require districts to ask for additional funding, but most districts do. Based on criteria written in the regulations, the student would qualify, he said.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE, per the 149 children identified as deaf or hard of hearing in the state, asked for an estimate of the percentage of these individuals who qualify for intensive-needs funding.

MR. ENOCH confirmed that he could provide the answer at a later date.

[9:48:14 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether DEED would know an estimate of how many children may be "falling through the cracks."

MR. ENOCH replied that is typically handled at the district level through the Child Find process and referrals. The issue is making sure the districts are aware of the Child Find requirements.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there have been any complaints from parents concerning school districts not providing services under the current system.

MR. ENOCH confirmed that he has received a number of complaints from parents who were not satisfied with services being received at the school district level; however, he offered his understanding that none have been specific to deafness.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX questioned DEED's follow-up procedures to complaints.

MR. ENOCH explained that in the event of a complaint, the district investigates, and all parties are spoken to. Afterwards, he said, a report is generated for all levels, and if a district is in default, a corrective action would be issued.

[9:51:25 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD opened public testimony on HB 111.

[9:51:41 AM](#)

HEATHER BATCHELDER, representing self, testified in support of HB 111. She clarified that Child Find and early intervention services exist under Part C of IDEA. She stated that children who are deaf and hard of hearing are born with the same ability to acquire language as any other child, and they deserve the same opportunities. All families of deaf and hard of hearing students should have access to appropriate early intervention, family education services, and state resources.

[9:55:06 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, announced that public testimony would be left open on HB 111.

[9:56:31 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX commented that he would contact the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District and obtain its perspective on Version S. He opined that [the proposed legislature] was rushing the issue, and DOH needs to be questioned. He suggested that the legislature should move slowly and deliberately with the bill.

[9:58:25 AM](#)

MS. CAUSER echoed Mr. Saville's sentiments about statutes holding more weight.

[9:58:48 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that HB 111 was held over.

[9:59:29 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:59 a.m.