

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 12, 2024
8:00 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

SENATE BILL NO. 13

"An Act relating to costs of and charges for textbooks and other course materials required for University of Alaska courses; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED SB 13 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 55

"An Act relating to allocations of funding for the Alaska Workforce Investment Board; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 13

SHORT TITLE: UNIVERSITY: TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS COST

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MYERS

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|----------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 01/18/23 | (S) | PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23 |
| 01/18/23 | (S) | READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS |
| 01/18/23 | (S) | EDC |
| 03/13/23 | (S) | EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) |
| 03/13/23 | (S) | Heard & Held |
| 03/13/23 | (S) | MINUTE(EDC) |

03/20/23 (S) EDC AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
 03/20/23 (S) Moved SB 13 Out of Committee
 03/20/23 (S) MINUTE(EDC)
 03/22/23 (S) EDC RPT 4DP
 03/22/23 (S) DP: TOBIN, GRAY-JACKSON, STEVENS, KIEHL
 05/05/23 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 05/05/23 (S) VERSION: SB 13
 05/08/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 05/08/23 (H) EDC
 02/02/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
 02/02/24 (H) Heard & Held
 02/02/24 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
 02/12/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 55

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND WORKFORCE INVEST BOARD ALLOCATIONS

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) CARRICK

02/01/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 02/01/23 (H) EDC, L&C, FIN
 01/31/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
 01/31/24 (H) Heard & Held
 01/31/24 (H) MINUTE(EDC)
 02/12/24 (H) EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR ROBERT MYERS

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, introduced SB 13.

CHARLES EDWARDSON, Director

Generations Southeast

Prince of Wales Island, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 55.

ACTION NARRATIVE

8:00:25 AM

CO-CHAIR JAMIE ALLARD called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Representatives McKay, Allard, and Ruffridge were present at the call to order. Representatives Prax, McCormick, Himschoot, and Story arrived as the meeting was in progress.

The committee took an at-ease from 8:01 a.m. to 8:02 a.m.

SB 13-UNIVERSITY: TEXTBOOKS/MATERIALS COST

[8:02:23 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the first order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 13, "An Act relating to costs of and charges for textbooks and other course materials required for University of Alaska courses; and providing for an effective date."

[8:02:50 AM](#)

SENATOR ROBERT MYERS, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, introduced SB 13. He reminded the committee that the bill had a simple concept: to give students as much information as possible to financially plan when they sign up for their classes. He said it is copied from policy that is making its way around the U.S., and he said he would appreciate the committee's support.

[8:03:33 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE moved to report SB 13 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, SB 13 was reported out of the House Education Standing Committee.

[8:03:50 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:03 a.m. to 8:07 a.m.

HB 55-EXTEND WORKFORCE INVEST BOARD ALLOCATIONS

[8:07:03 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 55, "An Act relating to allocations of funding for the Alaska Workforce Investment Board; and providing for an effective date."

[8:07:24 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 8:07 a.m.

[8:07:30 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD opened public testimony on HB 55.

[8:08:10 AM](#)

CHARLES EDWARDSON, Director, Generations Southeast, said that in the Southeast, Alaskans had waited 20 years to be heard on this issue. Prince of Wales Island, he explained, is an economic hub which has a state-sponsored regional training center that was completed in 2014 through the capital appropriations process. He said it has been very taxing on the community to keep it up and running, and the opportunity to get into technical vocational education program (TVEP) funding has not presented itself because of the reauthorization process. He opined that reauthorizing it now, considering the audit, would not serve Alaska well. He stated that he supported reauthorization but with amendments.

[8:11:07 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE referred to Mr. Edwardson's statement about waiting 20 years to speak to the issue and asked whether his organization was currently receiving funds under this program.

MR. EDWARDSON responded that there had been an awareness of the funding, and although they are not looking for full support, they are just looking to "come alongside" the rest of the state. He said representatives come and go through elections, and sometimes, unintentionally perhaps, Southeast Alaska gets overlooked. Through a competitive bid process, he said he hoped for the opportunity for Generations Southeast to be included in the bid.

[8:13:56 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE sought clarity as to what the name of the center was.

MR. EDWARDSON replied it was previously known as the Prince of Wales Vocational and Technical Education Center, now known as Generations Southeast, and that it is a hub.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE asked for a brief description of the technical and vocational educational opportunities at the facility.

MR. EDWARDSON responded that training is tailored specifically around the industries coming up in the region, such as

mariculture, kelp farming, and commercial driver's license (CDL) programs, to name a few. He pointed out that the region is accessible to Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, and many Southern Southeast regions in general. He further explained programs that are in development. He thanked the committee for their time and provided his contact information.

[8:19:18 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 55 and announced that HB 55 was held over.

[8:19:56 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 8:20 a.m.