

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 22, 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**

HOUSE BILL NO. 382

"An Act relating to education; relating to the rights of the parents of public school students; relating to the rights of public school teachers; relating to the records of public school students; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 230

"An Act repealing the limit on the number of years of out-of-state school experience that may be substituted for in-state experience in teacher salary scales."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 391

"An Act relating to charter schools; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

HOUSE BILL NO. 236

"An Act relating to the duties of the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska; establishing the University of Alaska major maintenance and modernization fund; repealing the

University of Alaska building fund; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

HOUSE BILL NO. 147

"An Act relating to teacher certificates for retired teachers."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 382

SHORT TITLE: EDUCATION; PARENT/TEACHER RIGHTS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) CARPENTER

02/20/24	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/20/24	(H)	EDC, JUD
03/20/24	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/20/24	(H)	Heard & Held
03/20/24	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/22/24	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 230

SHORT TITLE: OUT-OF-STATE TCHG EXPERIENCE & SALARIES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) HIMSCHOOT

01/16/24	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/24
01/16/24	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/16/24	(H)	EDC
02/07/24	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
02/07/24	(H)	Heard & Held
02/07/24	(H)	MINUTE(EDC)
03/22/24	(H)	EDC AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE BEN CARPENTER

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HB 382.

MORGAN LIM, Lobbyist

Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

STARLA MILLER, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

CAROLE BOOKLESS, representing self  
Douglas, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

SALIM HOUCK, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

KIM HAYS, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

JOSH SMITH, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

MONICA WHITMAN, representing self  
Eagle River, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

MARY SZATKOWSKI, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

LINDSEY BANNING, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

MEGHAN GERVAIS, representing self  
Homer, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

KC CASORT, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

BREANNE MEATH, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

OLIVIA LYNN, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

MARIETTA HALL, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

EMILY COHEN, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

XOCHITL MUNOZ, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

DIDI PETERS, representing self  
Kenai, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

MIKE COONS, representing self  
Palmer, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 382.

TAMI TODD, representing self  
Wasilla, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

MIA CHEYDLEUR, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

KAY RILEY, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

AMANDA THOMPSON  
Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 382.

MENEKA THIRU, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

RACHEL LORD, representing self  
Homer, Alaska  
**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

ED MARTIN, representing self

Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified during the hearing on HB 382.

REBECCA BERNARD, representing self

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

PHIL MOSER, representing self

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to HB 382.

JESSICA VAUDREUIL, representing self

Shishmaref, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 382.

LINDA BRANSON, representing self

Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 382.

RANDY GRIFFIN, representing self

Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 382.

DAVID BOYLE, representing self

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 382

REPRESENTATIVE REBECCA HIMSCHOOT

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented HB 230.

CAROL MOOERS, representing self

Unalakleet, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 230.

EMILY VANDERPOOL, representing self

Aniak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 230.

RACHEL LORD, representing self

Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 230.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:00:37 AM](#)

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

**HB 382-EDUCATION; PARENT/TEACHER RIGHTS**

[8:01:43 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 382, "An Act relating to education; relating to the rights of the parents of public school students; relating to the rights of public school teachers; relating to the records of public school students; and providing for an effective date."

[8:02:16 AM](#)

BEN CARPENTER, Alaska State Representative, as prime sponsor, presented HB 382. He said that HB 382 is an attempt to improve the outcomes of the education system that Alaska currently has. He said that HB 382 would allow for increased parental participation and consideration in the public education system. He gave a broad overview of the statutes HB 382 would change and create and how these changes and additions reflect the policy goal of the proposed bill.

[8:04:32 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on HB 382.

[8:05:32 AM](#)

MORGAN LIM, Lobbyist, Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates, testified in opposition to HB 382, stating that Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates (PPAA) strongly opposes the bill. He said HB 382 is a blatant attack on LGBTQ+ youth in Alaska, as it would force educators to "out" students to their parents and ban students from using bathrooms that align with their gender. He said forcing school employees and educators to out LGBTQ+ youth to their parents could result in mental, emotional, and physical abuse to these kids that otherwise would have not occurred had they not been outed. He said HB 382 also targets transgender youth by forcing them to use a bathroom or locker room that doesn't match their gender identity, which would

create an unsafe and invasive environment for all students. He said, "HB 382 is part of the movement that promotes extremist rhetoric that empowers politicians and legislators to extend the heavy hand of government into classrooms and hallways at the expense of LGBTQ+ youth."

8:08:01 AM

STARLA MILLER, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said that children should always feel safe at school and emphasized that the government getting involved in this issue is an overstep. She said that the proposed legislation would create an environment of fear where a student wouldn't be able to have a conversation with their teacher without fear of being reported to their parents. She opined that HB 382 would do a lot of harm and no good and is not necessary.

8:10:24 AM

CAROLE BOOKLESS, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She shared her experience as a kindergarten teacher where she learned that gender dysphoria is real and has real effects on children. She suggested that Alaska provided a non-gendered bathroom and changing room in every school as a solution to the issue of bathroom use controversies, and she recommended statewide training on the use and understanding of nongendered pronouns in public schools.

8:13:14 AM

SALIM HOUCK, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. He said this bill is blatantly discriminatory and would make schools unsafe for LGBTQ+ youth. He shared his experiences as a trans person in Alaska, particularly the shared fear of violence when they began his transition. He explained how the support of the staff at his high school allowed him to succeed with his learning, extracurricular activities, and friends. He said HB 382 would make it near impossible for schools and staff to support their LGBTQ+ students and make schools unsafe for those children.

8:15:09 AM

KIM HAYS, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She expressed her "unequivocal belief" that the job of adults is to protect children, including LGBTQ+ children. She said that forcibly outing LGBTQ+ children does nothing to protect the

child. She said that children might choose to confide in a teacher that they identify as LGBTQ+, and forcing teachers to report this will erode the relationship of trust and understanding that so many students find in their teachers.

[8:17:26 AM](#)

JOSH SMITH, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. He shared his knowledge of transgender students in the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Valley whose only safe place is the bathroom in the school nurse's office and asked why [the legislature] would exacerbate the issue by creating a hostile environment by law. He shared his experience as a queer youth in Alaska and said it makes him happy to know that kids are finding safety in schools today, because there was no safety or support when he was growing up. He said creating a safe environment at school by affirming who [LGBTQ+ youth] are and supporting them is the only way to get them to talk to their parents, and HB 382 does not aim to achieve that.

[8:19:56 AM](#)

MONICA WHITMAN, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said this bill is being framed as a parental/teachers' bill of rights legislation, but that was not her takeaway. She said HB 382 attempts to address concerns of a small group of parents that do not understand there is already a strong set of parental rights in Alaska. She said HB 382 attempts to intimidate teachers and codify the use of "reasonable force" when disciplining students. She said that HB 382 does not solve any real problems and emphasized her opposition.

[8:21:36 AM](#)

MARY SZATKOWSKI, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said HB 382 would forcibly out LGBTQ+ students, violate their basic right to privacy, and put them in danger. She said LGBTQ+ youth often choose to confide to their teachers about their identity because they can't in anyone else, and she warned that taking that away could have grave consequences.

[8:22:25 AM](#)

LINDSEY BANNING, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She cited a statistic that found that less than one in three transgender kids live in an affirming household and said that the other two-thirds of students who could be outed by this

bill would be harmed by this reality. She said that forced outings leads to increased rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm, and suicide. She said often, the only supportive adult in a transgender student's life is a teacher, who can have a massive impact on their feeling of acceptance and wellbeing. She opined that HB 382 aims to protect only the "egos of a small group of unsupportive parents who think being trans is a mental illness." She urged committee members to oppose HB 382.

[8:24:27 AM](#)

MEGHAN GERVAIS, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She expressed her appreciation to the prior testifiers and said the main aspect of HB 382 that is troubling is the part of the bill that forces transgender students to use a bathroom that doesn't align with their gender. She said there is already too much hate for transgender people in general, and HB 382 only adds to that hate.

[8:26:43 AM](#)

KC CASORT, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said all students deserve to feel welcome and safe in their school and no student should be forced to come out before they are ready. She said HB 382 threatens the privacy of all students and sets a dangerous precedent for law in Alaska.

[8:28:58 AM](#)

BREANNE MEATH, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said HB 382 would result in young people being harassed to prove their identity to those who will not respect or honor it. She echoed her gratitude for previous testifiers and encouraged the committee's opposition to HB 382.

[8:30:22 AM](#)

OLIVIA LYNN, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said requiring teachers to report to parents when their child seeks mental health treatment would negatively affect all children. She said Alaska's schools should be a safe place for kids to seek help and HB 382 would take away that chance for kids.

[8:31:35 AM](#)

MARIETTA HALL, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She shared her experiences as a parent of a transgender child and said that the teachers and counselors involved are professionals and do not need legislation. She shared her child's struggles as a transgender youth and said they are constantly in fear of violence and hate, and HB 382 would only further that hate. She cautioned that HB 382 would cause more harm than good.

[8:34:28 AM](#)

EMILY COHEN, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said HB 382 is a reactionary piece of legislation that is unimportant to education and doesn't address the real needs and problems faced by school districts around the state today.

[8:35:48 AM](#)

XOCHITL MUNOZ, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said, "It is scary enough to be a trans kid without this legislation." She warned that the proposed legislation would be detrimental to transgender children throughout the state; it would further hatred and divide kids by their identity and encouraged the committee's opposition to HB 382.

[8:37:04 AM](#)

DIDI PETERS, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She shared a recent story about a transgender child in Oklahoma who was a victim of fatal violence because of who they were as a transgender person. She said the legislature is afraid that Alaskans might realize they are deliberately trying to harm a group of people, so lawmakers are hiding the intentions of the bill in the name of parental rights. She spoke of previous invited testifiers on HB 382 and shared how they are linked to hate groups and subsequently explained how they delegitimize HB 382.

[8:39:59 AM](#)

MIKE COONS, representing self, testified in support of HB 382. He spoke in support of the academic success committees proposed under HB 382 and shared his belief that they would allow for more say from parents in what their children are being taught. He said the bill is not just about transgender students but also about "keeping kids safe from Critical Race Theory, 'LGBDTQ,' et

cetera." He said HB 382 would allow supervision of academic operation of schools from "outside influences."

[8:42:08 AM](#)

TAMI TODD, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She shared her experience as a school nurse in seeing the fragile mental health state that Alaska's youth are currently in. She said that in 2020, the Alaska Department of Health found that Alaska has the second-highest rate of maltreatment to youth struggling with mental health issues, and HB 382 would further exacerbate that. She said it is unfair for legislators who do not understand what it means to be transgender to take out their uncertainty on that group of people through harmful legislation. She added that the bill sponsor is hypersexualizing young people through his statement on preventing boys from using the girl's locker room and is making it seem like girls are defenseless creatures who need the nurturing and help of men to keep them safe.

[8:45:02 AM](#)

MIA CHEYDLEUR, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She cited the privacy clause of the Alaska State Constitution and said that HB 382 would directly violate this clause. She said there is no evidence to link transgender bathroom use to increased rates of sexual assault or violence, and this legislation is a reflection of a bias that only a minority of Alaskans hold. She predicted that any benefits of HB 382 would be completely outweighed by the negative impacts it could have.

[8:46:09 AM](#)

KAY RILEY, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She spoke on the previously mentioned accused sexual assaults occurring in the girl's bathroom by transgender women and said these were false; the problem is clearly cisgender men. She stated, "Voting yes for this bill is making yourself complicit in the emotional, physical, or possibly sexual abuse of these [transgender] children."

[8:48:05 AM](#)

AMANDA THOMPSON, Planned Parenthood Alliance Advocates, testified in support of HB 382. She said she supports certain aspects of HB 382 and expressed concern that there seemed to be

an organized opposition to a specific part of the proposed bill. She claimed that there was "sexually explicit material" in the middle school libraries of the Anchorage School District and said HB 382 would allow those materials to be removed from said libraries. She gave an example of a time that she experienced administrative discipline for her teaching and said HB 382 would make education fairer.

[8:50:43 AM](#)

MENEKA THIRU, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She opined that HB 382 clearly discriminates against LGBTQ+ youth and makes school a less safe and welcoming place for them. She said these youth should have a safe place to be who they are, and she shared her experiences in high school where she was not accepted fully and how that affected her.

[8:52:19 AM](#)

RACHEL LORD, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said, "Nearly every aspect of this bill is an excuse of law," saying HB 382 would not achieve anything but further division and animosity between Alaskans. She said she was uncertain where Representative Carpenter came up with the provisions of HB 382, saying many of them are already in place. She said there are parents and community members at all levels of school administration, boards, and councils and said that HB 382 is being written as a piece of fear-mongering legislation.

[8:55:22 AM](#)

ED MARTIN, representing self, testified during the hearing on HB 382. He said that HB 382 lacks clarity and definition in its writing and said that the proposed legislation would not achieve the goal of furthering and improving education in Alaska. He expressed concern about drug use in schools by educators and students alike and said that Alaska shouldn't limit the number of charter schools to only 60 in the state.

[8:58:41 AM](#)

REBECCA BERNARD, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. She said there is a crisis in public education that has nothing to do with LGBTQ+ kids but rather the lack of financial support for the entire system itself. She cautioned that requiring teachers to tell parents if a student has confided in them about their differing pronouns or gender identity could

have disastrous effects on the health and well-being of already marginalized LGBTQ+ youth across Alaska.

[9:01:31 AM](#)

PHIL MOSER, representing self, testified in opposition to HB 382. He said that since the issue of transgender rights has been politicized in the last ten years, states that have adopted similar laws have seen a quadrupling of the rates of hate crimes in their state. He added that bills like HB 382 cause harm and are supported only through fear or willful ignorance.

[9:03:57 AM](#)

JESSICA VAUDREUIL, representing self, testified in support of HB 382. She shared a story of students in certain [student LGBTQ+] school clubs "handing out stickers to kids trying to recruit them" and recalled how much it scared a female student to put that sticker on her lapel. She said people who have called in opposition to HB 382 are victims and bullies that don't allow anyone to retain their Judeo-Christian beliefs.

[9:06:35 AM](#)

LINDA BRANSON, representing self, testified in support of HB 382. She began by saying "there is discrimination on both sides". She said children know what their genitalia is, and "we" can't change how they think in regard to that. She said "LBTQ" people deserve to have access to public schools but should not be allowed to push their "agenda to those who don't agree with it" as that is [purportedly] discrimination. She said parents in Alaska need to be parents, not the schools, and reiterated her support for HB 382.

[9:08:35 AM](#)

RANDY GRIFFIN, representing self, testified in support of HB 382. He spoke in support of the provision of HB 382 that would makes it mandatory for teachers to report to parents when a student confides in them about anything related to their pronoun use or sexual orientation and said teachers should not be required to report to parents if the student discusses gender identity.

[9:10:45 AM](#)

DAVID BOYLE, representing self, testified in support of HB 382. He said it is time for parents to be in the conversation of their child's education and said the privacy for all students is paramount. He suggested transgender youth use the staff bathroom to "see if the staff wants to accommodate them" and said there would be unintended consequences of absenteeism and parents withdrawing their students from public schools if HB 382 were not to pass.

[9:13:13 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 382.

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that HB 382 was held over.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said she had made a request to Legislative Legal Services to review HB 382 to determine whether it would raise privacy concerns with the Alaska Constitution and Legislative Legal Services has already preliminarily found that it would raise privacy concerns.

CO-CHAIR ALLARD indicated that she has also put in a request to Legislative Legal Services, and she opined there has been partisan legal advice from that agency.

[9:15:07 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 9:15 a.m. to 9:20 a.m.

#### **HB 230-OUT-OF-STATE TCHG EXPERIENCE & SALARIES**

[9:20:32 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 230, "An Act repealing the limit on the number of years of out-of-state school experience that may be substituted for in-state experience in teacher salary scales."

[9:20:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE REBECCA HIMSCHOOT, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, reintroduced HB 230. She gave a brief overview of HB 230, explaining that the goals of the proposed legislation are in alignment with some of the recommendations that came with the teacher recruitment and retention task force that the governor put together in 2021. She said HB 230 is a one-line

bill that would repeal requirement for districts in Alaska to recognize the experience of out-of-state teachers for a limited amount of years proportionate to their actual time in teaching instead of recognizing their full time in teaching.

[9:22:29 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on HB 230.

[9:23:10 AM](#)

CAROL MOOERS, representing self, testified in support of HB 230. She began by giving her personal history of her experience and professional background in teaching, and explained how she is only being paid for 9 years of experience when she actually has 18 years of experience in teaching.

[9:25:54 AM](#)

EMILY VANDERPOOL, representing self, testified in support of HB 230. She urged the repeal of AS 14.20.220 as proposed under HB 230 and explained how school districts are burdened and limited by the current restrictions on prior experience in teaching out of state. She said that currently, teacher recruitment and retention has posed the greatest challenge in recent years and HB 230 is a great way to combat that.

[9:28:45 AM](#)

RACHEL LORD, representing self, testified in support of HB 230. She shared her background in teaching and school administration and emphasized her strong support of HB 230.

[9:30:00 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE, after ascertaining there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 230.

[9:30:46 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked if HB 230 had the word "repeal" in it and encouraged the committee to move HB 230 out of committee.

[9:31:21 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 9:31 a.m.

[9:31:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked Representative Himschoot if the purpose of HB 230 is to save money for the state.

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT replied that she thinks the history of limited time experience being allowed to be utilized in paying teachers is related to the previous defined benefits system used in Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY commented that Alaska is desperate for teachers and any way to remedy that would be welcomed.

[9:33:24 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCCORMICK commented that he supported HB 230 and gave an anecdote about a book he is reading about Bethel, Alaska, that describes education as a competitive and desirable position for anyone, a far cry from today's shortage of teachers across the State.

[9:34:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HIMSCHOOT said she had applied to a school district in 1994 and was not given an interview until she had more experience due to the competitive nature of education in the state at the time.

[HB 230 was held over.]

[9:35:40 AM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Education Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:35 a.m.