

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 8, 2024

8:04 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. 131

"An Act requiring education in the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders."

- MOVED SB 131 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 131

SHORT TITLE: ASIAN AMERICAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER PROGRAM

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) GRAY-JACKSON

04/21/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/21/23	(S)	STA
02/08/24	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/08/24	(S)	Heard & Held
02/08/24	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/12/24	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/12/24	(S)	Moved SB 131 Out of Committee
03/12/24	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/13/24	(S)	STA RPT 2DP 2NR
03/13/24	(S)	DP: KAWASAKI, CLAMAN
03/13/24	(S)	NR: WIELECHOWSKI, BJORKMAN
03/13/24	(S)	FIN REFERRAL ADDED
04/23/24	(S)	FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
04/23/24	(S)	Heard & Held

04/23/24 (S) MINUTE (FIN)  
04/25/24 (S) FIN AT 1:30 PM SENATE FINANCE 532  
04/25/24 (S) Moved SB 131 Out of Committee  
04/25/24 (S) MINUTE (FIN)  
04/26/24 (S) FIN RPT 3DP 2NR  
04/26/24 (S) DP: OLSON, KIEHL, BISHOP  
04/26/24 (S) NR: WILSON, MERRICK  
05/03/24 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)  
05/03/24 (S) VERSION: SB 131  
05/06/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
05/06/24 (H) EDC  
05/08/24 (H) EDC AT 8:01 AM DAVIS 106

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SENATOR ELVI GRAY-JACKSON  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** As prime sponsor, presented SB 131.

BESSE ODOM, Staff  
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on SB 131 on behalf of Senator Gray-Jackson, prime sponsor.

KAYE ROLDAN, Board Member  
Filipino Community Hall  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 131.

KEIRA KOCH, representing self  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 131.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[8:04:23 AM](#)

**CO-CHAIR JAMIE ALLARD** called the House Education Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:04 a.m. Representatives Prax, McCormick, McKay, Himschoot, Story, Allard, and Ruffridge were present at the call to order.

**SB 131-ASIAN AMERICAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER PROGRAM**

[8:05:01 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD announced that the only order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 131, "An Act requiring education in the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders."

[8:05:29 AM](#)

SENATOR ELVI GRAY-JACKSON, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented SB 131 and thanked committee members for scheduling the bill. She noted that the co-founder of the organization, titled "Make Us Visible," visited last week and met with legislators on the importance of the bill. She said seven states have passed similar legislation, and she summarized that SB 131 would require Asian American Pacific Islander education in K-12 and cover their contributions and their history.

[8:06:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked whether there is incorporation into school districts currently.

[8:07:01 AM](#)

BESSE ODOM, Staff, Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson, Alaska State Legislature, answered questions during the hearing on SB 131 on behalf of Senator Gray-Jackson, prime sponsor. She addressed Representative Prax and said that currently, the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders is optional in all schools.

[8:07:18 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD opened public testimony on SB 131.

[8:07:35 AM](#)

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

[8:07:57 AM](#)

KAYE ROLDAN, Board Member, Filipino Community Hall, testified in support of SB 131 and noted that she was also a steering committee member at "Make Us Visible." She shared that she had been living in Juneau for the past 30 years, and while attending

the University of Alaska Southeast (UAS), she noted she did not hear much about Asian American history. She further provided her family's background and contributions. She stressed the importance of sharing contributions with classmates about Asian American and Pacific Island culture and history and thanked the committee for hearing her testimony.

[8:12:25 AM](#)

KEIRA KOCH, representing self, testified in support of SB 131. She shared her experience that in schools, she had noticed a "handful" of Filipino students and noted that an event called "Filipino Fridays" was offered where food and stories were shared, which she observed resulted in an uptick in children's happiness. She said she did not learn about Asian American history and culture growing up and that she experienced ignorance regarding the facts that she would hear from fellow classmates. She thanked the committee for the opportunity to speak to SB 131.

[8:14:48 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ALLARD, after ascertaining no one else wished to testify, closed public testimony on SB 131. She noted that anyone could submit their written testimony to the committee.

[8:15:11 AM](#)

SENATOR GREY JACKSON thanked the committee for hearing the legislation.

[8:15:28 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR RUFFRIDGE moved to report SB 131 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, SB 131 was reported out of the House Education Standing Committee.

[8:16:03 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:16 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.

[8:20:33 AM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

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