

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
April 3, 2024  
1:06 p.m.

1:06:24 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Johnson called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Bryce Edgmon, Co-Chair  
Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair  
Representative DeLena Johnson, Co-Chair  
Representative Julie Coulombe  
Representative Mike Cronk  
Representative Alyse Galvin  
Representative Sara Hannan  
Representative Andy Josephson  
Representative Dan Ortiz  
Representative Will Stapp  
Representative Frank Tomaszewski

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Alexei Painter, Director, Legislative Finance Division;  
Senator Click Bishop; Representative Jesse Sumner;  
Representative Mike Prax.

SUMMARY

HB 268      APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET; CAP; SUPP; AM

HB 268 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 270      APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

HB 270 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Johnson reviewed the meeting agenda. The committee would continue to consider amendments to the operating and mental health budgets.

#hb268

#hb270

HOUSE BILL NO. 268

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; amending appropriations; making capital appropriations; making supplemental appropriations; making reappropriations; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska, from the constitutional budget reserve fund; and providing for an effective date."

HOUSE BILL NO. 270

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; and providing for an effective date."

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^AMENDMENTS

Co-Chair Johnson relayed that the committee left off on Amendment N 71.

[1:07:23 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 71 (copy on file):

Agency: Natural Resources  
Appropriation: Administration & Support  
Allocation: Mental Health Trust Land Admin

Transaction Details  
Title: Delete Funding for Trust Land Office Salary Increases  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: -55.9  
Travel: 14.9  
Services: 0.0  
Commodities: -4.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1092 MHTAAR -45.0

Explanation

This amendment reverses the pay increase for the employees at the Department of Natural Resources, Trust Land Office.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Coulombe explained that the amendment pertained to a salary merit increase within the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for the Trust Land Office (TLO). The amendment was a decrement of \$45,000 and would reverse the pay increase. She highlighted that the TLO personal services line showed an expenditure of \$3.5 million. She recalled that the office had generated about \$11 million for the trust. She thought the personal services expenditure was a hefty cost. She highlighted positions making \$317,000, \$259,000, \$240,000, \$200,000, \$247,000, \$327,000 within the TLO. She explained that half the money produced by the TLO went into the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA) and the remainder was used. She was offering the amendment to make a point that the TLO needed to keep its operating cost as limited as possible because it impacted the amount going into the trust and how much money went towards mental health services in the state.

[1:09:44 PM](#)

Representative Ortiz found the salaries listed by Representative Coulombe to be eye popping. He asked if the figures included salary only or salary and benefits.

Representative Coulombe responded that the figures included salary and benefits.

Representative Hannan was in opposition to the amendment. She stated her understanding that merit increases were contractual. She thought it was bad precedent to give demerits to contracted employees based on other policy issues. She did not support taking away something that was an expectation when an individual accepted a position. She considered the argument that she had supported an amendment [for a decrease] to a specific state employee in another area. She highlighted that Alaska Gasline Development Corporation (AGDC) employees were exempt staff with no contractual pay. She thought the two situations were very different. She noted that the staff working for the TLO were DNR employees. She thought it was bad precedent and practice for lawmakers to make cuts to specific PCNs [position control numbers] and not others. She remarked that she had many criticisms of the TLO for a variety of reasons, but she thought the proposed reduction was a bad practice.

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Representative Cronk opposed the amendment. He pointed out that the increment was requested and approved by the AMHTA Board and authorized by the [DNR] budget subcommittee. He would oppose the amendment, but he appreciated the maker of the amendment bringing it forward and the effort to slowly chip away at some of the budget.

Co-Chair Johnson appreciated the that the amendment sponsor had brought the amendment forward.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

[1:13:38 PM](#)

AT EASE

[1:14:55 PM](#)

RECONVENED

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Coulombe, Tomaszewski, Ortiz, Stapp, Johnson  
OPPOSED: Galvin, Cronk, Hannan, Josephson, Edgmon, Foster

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 71 FAILED (5/6).

[1:16:26 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 72 (copy on file):

Agency: Natural Resources  
Appropriation: Parks & Outdoor Recreation  
Allocation: Parks Management & Access

Transaction Details

Title: Increase Funding for Improvements within  
Chugach State Park.  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Inc

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 269.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 42.0  
Commodities: 5.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 25.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 2  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 2

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1200 VehRntlTax 341.0

Explanation

The Chugach park, in FY2022, operated on a \$2.1 million budget, while bringing in \$1.68 million in receipts. The park needs additional resources to operate the most utilized State Park in Alaska.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Coulombe explained the amendment pertaining to Chugach Park. She detailed that in FY 22, Chugach Park operated on a \$2.1 million budget while bringing in \$1.68 million in receipts. She relayed that additional resources were needed to operate the most utilized state park in Alaska. The park had the highest traffic and was almost 500,000 acres and about the size of Yosemite National Park. The park was one of the four largest state parks in the U.S. with year-round access to a variety of recreational pursuits. The public use in the park had increased 47 percent between 2019 and 2021. Generally, through the COVID-19 pandemic there had been a huge surge of park access.

Representative Coulombe highlighted that the park had not received an increase in funding associated with the increase in usage. She met with the parks department over the interim and had learned that Chugach State Park subsidized a lot of maintenance at the other parks throughout the state because it brought in substantial funding. She pointed out that trailheads in her district were being overrun with trash and there were not enough employees to keep the trails clear. She elaborated that an increase in sanitation maintenance was needed. There were a lot of issues because traffic had increased rapidly, and the park had not received sufficient funds to deal with the issues.

Representative Coulombe stated that the \$341,000 increment in the amendment would go to waste and sanitation funding, a resource technician, volunteer stipends, a park specialist, trail crew staff, and tools and building materials for trail crew. She explained that the funds would go a long way towards the situation at the park in the summer. The fund source was the vehicle rental tax. She had received data from the Legislative Finance Division (LFD) and detailed that rental tax revenue in FY 23 was \$15 million. Currently, the legislature appropriated about \$12 million of the funding. She noted that the amount was well within the expenditure window. She added that much of the park budget came from vehicle rental tax. The increase would work to get trailheads cleaned up.

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Representative Galvin thanked the member from south Anchorage for putting the amendment forward. She

underscored that the Chugach Park was a state jewel. She considered the number of statewide visitors who enjoyed the particular area. She saw value in the small increment and appreciated that the sponsor had found funding other than general funds. She viewed the increment as a tiny seed that would hopefully grow. She stated it would have an incredible return on investment and it was necessary to ensure the parks were welcoming, clean, and safe. She supported the amendment.

Representative Josephson spoke in strong support of the amendment. He noted there had been a veto of some funds in the past and he thought they may have been general fund dollars. He considered that perhaps the alternative funding source would be viewed more favorably. He thanked Representative Coulombe for offering the amendment.

Representative Cronk spoke in friendly opposition to the amendment. He shared that the topic had been discussed in his subcommittee. Over the past three years, the Division of Parks received an increase exceeding \$4.7 million. He noted that Anchorage had voted on Proposition 4, which he believed was \$4.35 million that could leverage an additional \$16 million in federal funding. He asked if it would have anything to do with the park. He directed a question to LFD and asked if the addition of the vehicle rental tax exceeded the fund balance.

Co-Chair Johnson asked Mr. Painter to come to the table to address the question. She noted she did not want to consult LFD on every amendment. She thanked Mr. Painter for being present and available for questions.

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ALEXEI PAINTER, DIRECTOR, LEGISLATIVE FINANCE DIVISION, responded that prior to the amendment LFD projected there was about \$2.7 million available from the vehicle rental tax. Funds from the account were spent on a lag basis, meaning the legislature used funds from previous years' collections. After the amendment there would be over \$2 million available in the fund.

Co-Chair Edgmon highlighted that if the committee deducted \$341,000, it would be \$341,000 that could not go somewhere else. He asked Mr. Painter about any insight on the net impact.

Mr. Painter responded that there was an increase in vehicle rental collections in FY 23 versus the previous year. He relayed that the governor did not increase use of the fund source with the increase in collections. Currently, the additional amount would lapse to the general fund. He noted that the funding could be used in the capital budget or elsewhere; it had often been used for the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) grant, which the governor had funded with undesignated general funds (UGF). There was currently over \$2 million available from the fund source based on the governor's budget.

[1:25:14 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe highlighted that the exact amendment had passed in the committee the previous session with vehicle rental tax as the fund source. She explained that somehow the fund source had been switched to UGF in the other body and it had been vetoed [by the governor]. She thought it sounded like the increment would make it through if the fund source remained as vehicle rental tax. She noted that a proposition that was currently winning in Anchorage was to address the roads to the trails; the state had to deal with the trailheads. She elaborated that all of the roads were residential and were limited road service areas (LRSAs). She explained that people who lived in the neighborhoods paid into the road maintenance and unfortunately, they were paying for all of the traffic to the trailheads. She stated it was unfair and it was wearing the roads out much faster than necessary. The bond would help support the road maintenance. She was grateful for the increase to the parks department; however, it did not guarantee Chugach Park would receive more funding. She noted that the parks department had to deal with many areas that did not make much revenue; therefore, she was uncertain the increase would help the issue in her district.

Representative Ortiz directed a question to Representative Cronk as the DNR subcommittee chair. He asked if the particular request was considered by the subcommittee.

Representative Cronk replied that he did not believe the topic was considered in subcommittee.

Co-Chair Johnson asked if the amendment included the access to Goldstar Peak that went all of the way to Eagle River. She noted that Goldstar Peak was a well trafficked trail.

Representative Coulombe answered that the funds would go to the highest use access points to the park. She stated that her district had the highest traffic, but any access to Chugach Park through Eagle River and elsewhere could use the funds.

Representative Cronk WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 72 was ADOPTED.

[1:29:09 PM](#)

AT EASE

[1:41:34 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 73 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Statewide Support  
Allocation: Commissioner's Office

Transaction Details

Title: Remove Funding for Department of Law RSA for Criminal Division Attorneys  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: -418.2  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)  
1004 Gen Fund -418.2

Explanation

Remove additional funding for an existing RSA with the Department of Law for two Criminal Division Attorneys. The Department of Law has added three new Attorney 5 positions in the Criminal Division in their FY25 budget with associated funds.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED for discussion.

Representative Coulombe shared that she had a couple of amendments regarding the Department of Public Safety (DPS). She relayed that she had not offered the amendments in subcommittee because she had needed to talk with the department and do more research. She clarified that she was not picking on DPS, but the department had 968 budgeted positions. She explained that DPS had a huge budget with huge increases, and she wanted to make sure all of the requests were absolutely necessary. She found some issues with some of the requests in the FY 25 budget request.

Representative Coulombe explained that the amendment was a decrement of \$418,000 to remove additional funding for an existing RSA [reimbursable services agreement] with the Department of Law (DOL) for two Criminal Division attorneys. The department had added three new attorney V positions in the Criminal Division in its FY 25 budget with associated funds. She elaborated that the new positions were covered with existing resources. The department had explained that the cost had been absorbed, but it did not want to absorb the cost any longer. She was asking the department to continue to absorb the cost.

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Representative Stapp stated his understanding that under an RSA, DPS was paying DOL attorneys for their time. He asked for verification that Representative Coulombe was arguing that the department had been absorbing the cost and should continue to do so.

Representative Galvin noted that she had spoken with Mr. Painter earlier about the absorbing of the funds. She appreciated the amendment and supported it.

Co-Chair Johnson thought it sounded like Representative Galvin had spoken with Mr. Painter and it had resolved her questions.

Representative Galvin agreed.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Galvin, Hannan, Ortiz, Coulombe, Stapp,  
Tomaszewski, Foster  
OPPOSED: Cronk, Edgmon, Johnson

Representative Josephson was absent from the vote.

The MOTION PASSED (7/3). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 73 was ADOPTED.

[Note: action on Amendment N 73 was rescinded at 2:39 p.m. and the amendment was adopted by a vote of 8/3.]

[1:47:15 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 74 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Alaska State Troopers  
Allocation: AST Detachments

Transaction Details

Title: Delete Funding Associated with Unfilled  
Rural State Trooper Post  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: -21.6  
Services: -41.0  
Commodities: -7.2  
Capital Outlay: -17.4  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)  
1004 Gen Fund -87.2

Explanation

Removes funding for additional costs associated with an unfilled rural Alaska State Trooper post. This position was added in FY2024 with full funding, but is not going out to bid until the fourth quarter of CY2024.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Coulombe explained that the amendment would delete \$87,200 for additional costs associated with an unfilled rural Alaska State Trooper (AST) post. She read the amendment explanation above. She noted that she wanted state troopers to have their equipment. She elaborated that the specific position was unfilled and would not go out to bid until towards the end of the year. She stated that if the position was filled, the department could request the equipment cost funding the following year. She stated that the request was in anticipation of filling the position.

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Representative Galvin observed that when the state was short on ASTs it meant other troopers had to work overtime. She wanted to ensure there was adequate funding in order for that to happen. She wanted to make sure the committee was not lessening opportunity for the services needed in public safety.

Co-Chair Edgmon opposed the amendment. He understood the rationale being offered; however, the fiscal year started on July 1 and the fourth quarter started September 1. He estimated it would be around two months to get the position filled. He understood DPS had a sizeable vacancy list currently. He noted that the recruit population through the Sitka academy had been somewhat robust over the past few years, but overall, the department was losing a lot of senior presence. He stated that getting troopers out in rural areas had always been challenging, which was tied to

housing and other factors. Given the unknowns and the lack of ASTs in rural Alaska, he opposed the amendment.

Representative Coulombe provided wrap up on the amendment. She relayed that there were currently 95 AST vacancies (18 percent). She noted there was quite a bit of vacancy money. She did not want to hold up filling trooper positions; however, the position was not going out to bid until the fourth quarter. She thought it would not necessarily be filled quickly. The amendment aimed to be more responsible in terms of when the money was released. She referred to comment about overtime and reiterated there were 95 positions open. She did not think the one equipment request would hold anything up. She stated it was one position out of a \$320 million budget and she did not think it was unreasonable to have DPS fill the position and then request the funding.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

[1:51:55 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Hannan, Coulombe, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Galvin  
OPPOSED: Ortiz, Cronk, Josephson, Edgmon, Foster, Johnson

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 74 FAILED (5/6).

[1:53:03 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe WITHDREW Amendment N 75 (copy on file).

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 76 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Alaska State Troopers  
Allocation: Aircraft Section

Transaction Details  
Title: Remove Funding for Aircraft Maintenance  
Inspector  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: -131.3  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: -16.0  
Commodities: -1.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: -1  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund -148.3

Explanation

Delete Full-Time Aircraft Maintenance Inspector and start-up costs. In 2022, the Department reclassified three Labor, Trades, and Crafts (LTC) positions to add additional Aircraft Maintenance Inspectors. The Department uses a vendor-based maintenance program for its statewide fleet, therefore the duties of a fourth Inspector should be performed with existing resources.

Agency: Public Safety

Appropriation: Alaska State Troopers

Allocation: Aircraft Section

Transaction Details

Title: Remove Funding for Aircraft Maintenance  
Inspector Start-up Costs  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)  
1004 Gen Fund -18.4

Explanation

Delete Full-Time Aircraft Maintenance Inspector start-up costs.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED for discussion.

Representative Coulombe explained that the amendment was a decrement of \$148,000 to remove funding for a full-time aircraft maintenance inspector position and associated startup costs. She elaborated that in FY 22, DPS reclassified three labor, trades, and crafts positions to add additional aircraft maintenance inspectors. She stated that the department used a vendor-based maintenance program for its statewide fleet; therefore, the duties of a fourth inspector should be performed with existing resources. She believed one of the reclassified positions was still vacant and DPS used contracts to fill in the gaps. She thought the department should fill its existing positions first. She suggested that if the positions were filled and the department was using contracts and still felt there was enough work to be done, the issue could be addressed later. She was weary of adding PCNs when there were vacancies.

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Representative Ortiz asked if there was any direct communication with DPS about any potential impact on the safety of troopers if the position was not filled in the long-term.

Representative Galvin thought it seemed the amendment was getting into the weeds and deciding what DPS decisions should and should not be. She wondered if the action would send the message that the legislature did not want the positions filled. In general, there was a great need for public safety. She was hesitant to support the amendment if the DPS commissioner recommended the position.

Co-Chair Foster thought the argument made sense and he understood the rationale; however, he was very hesitant when it came to aircraft safety to make a reduction. He did not know what the department's argument would be, but he would rather fall on the side of caution. He highlighted that there had recently been a loss of state workers in an

aviation accident. He noted that sometimes accidents were related to mechanical, weather, or other things. He would rather fall on the side of caution and would oppose the amendment.

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Co-Chair Edgmon spoke to the importance of aircraft maintenance and stated that the aviation industry was a vital link for residents living off the road system. He preferred to be on the side of caution and would not support the amendment.

Representative Tomaszewski asked how much the department spent on the vendor-based program. He asked if the position would reduce the costs by more than the position cost.

Co-Chair Johnson remarked that it always made her concerned when looking at reducing funding for aircraft maintenance; however, she found the existing vacancies in the area more worrisome. She reasoned that having the position in place [but unfilled] would not improve aircraft maintenance. She was inclined to support the amendment. She highlighted items that had been added to DPS including a new airplane and pilot. She stated that DPS had requested numerous new positions, which were fairly high paying. She thought it may mean more maintenance positions were needed. She highlighted that there were many good aircraft mechanics in the private sector around the state. She believed it was how DPS filled in its maintenance already. She considered whether there needed to be people on state payroll doing maintenance or if it was better to have private businesses in place. She thought it was a good question for DPS and she would like to hear from the department. She anticipated the committee may see the request the following year. She hoped the department would fill its existing maintenance positions and come back the following year to explain why the additional position was needed. She supported the amendment.

Representative Coulombe clarified that she was not against aircraft maintenance, and it was not the intention of the amendment. She explained that the amendment was about being responsible in the timing of requests and filling vacant positions. She detailed that DPS had two aircraft maintenance inspectors stationed in Anchorage and the requested funding would add a third inspector in Fairbanks

to meet the agency's workload. She noted that the previous year, DPS added an aircraft maintenance position in Fairbanks, but it was where some of the vacancies were. She thought the department should fill its vacant positions in Fairbanks prior to requesting an additional position. She recalled hearing in subcommittee that Fairbanks was a hub for many rural areas, so it was important that they have the positions, but they were relying heavily on vendors because the positions had not been filled. She did not know the cost of the vendors, but surmised it was likely higher than normal. She would support an additional position in the future if the department filled its existing positions and still needed another.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Coulombe, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Hannan, Johnson  
OPPOSED: Josephson, Ortiz, Cronk, Galvin, Edgmon, Foster

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 76 FAILED (5/6).

[2:05:25 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 77 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Statewide Support  
Allocation: Commissioner's Office

Transaction Details

Title: Remove Funding for Criminal Justice  
Technician 2  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: -110.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: -31.0  
Commodities: -1.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions  
Permanent Full-Time: 1  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)  
1004 Gen Fund -142.0

Explanation

Delete one full-time Criminal Justice Technician 2 position. The Department is requesting this position for the Mobile Audio and Video Recording Equipment team to assist with public records requests relating to body-worn cameras.

In FY24, the Legislature appropriated \$471.1 to add four full-time positions to increase the Public Information Office staff related specifically to body-worn cameras. The mid-year status report for the Department states that they have not yet filled these positions.

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Statewide Support  
Allocation: Commissioner's Office

Transaction Details

Title: Remove Funding for Criminal Justice  
Technician 2 Start-up Costs  
Section: Section 1

Type: Dec  
Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)  
Personal Services: 0.0 Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0

Positions  
Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)  
1004 Gen Fund -18.4

Explanation

Delete one full-time Criminal Justice Technician 2 position start-up costs.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Coulombe explained the amendment was a reduction of \$142,000 plus funding for position start-up costs. The amendment would delete one full-time criminal justice technician 2 position. She detailed that DPS requested the position for the mobile, audio, and video recording equipment team to assist with public records requests related to body worn cameras. She detailed that in FY 24, the legislature appropriated \$471,000 to add four full-time positions to increase the public information office staff related specifically to body worn cameras. The department's mid-year status report stated it had not yet filled the positions. She understood there were a larger number of information requests associated with body worn cameras and it took more people to fulfil the requests. She explained that the department had submitted the position request with the anticipation it would be needed. She pointed out that funding had been appropriated for positions that had not yet been filled. She suggested filling those positions before requesting an additional one. She believed the legislature would approve the request the following year if the other positions had been filled.

Co-Chair Edgmon commended the amendment sponsor and acknowledged it was not easy to put cuts forward. He thought the amendment highlighted the difficulty agencies were having filling positions and the difficulty in budgeting for the positions departments needed and had to keep recruiting for. He thought the department likely would not have made the budget request if the position was not needed because the Dunleavy administration and the legislature were all looking for agency reductions. He added that overall, the governor's budget included an agency reduction of approximately 4 percent. He was hesitant to select a position to cut. He thought the department was likely aggressively recruiting to fill the position. He would oppose the amendment.

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Representative Hannan shared that she had served on the DPS subcommittee for six years. She highlighted that the

department had seen significant growth and there had been a lot of vacancies in a variety of its sections. She had a variety of concerns about a prior amendment (Amendment N 18) offered earlier in the process that would have eliminated long-term empty positions. She was supportive of the current amendment because she viewed it as a surgical approach by the chair. She recollected that in addition to the four positions funded in FY 24, there was a request for two more positions, which would result in six unfilled positions related to body worn cameras. She reasoned that once body worn cameras were used, it would require additional DPS staff. She thought it made sense to wait a year until four of the positions were filled and the office was operational prior to adding two more positions. The position requests were in anticipation there would be a substantial need for processing and storing data once it was used by the public and criminal prosecution.

Representative Galvin thought the amendment proposed the deletion of one position. She asked if it deleted one or two positions.

Representative Coulombe clarified that the department's request was to add one full-time criminal justice technician 2. The legislature appropriated funding for four of the positions in FY 24. She explained that the amendment denied the request for an additional position and did not cut an existing position. She understood the department would need to fulfil the public information requests. She thought the current vacancies should be filled before the department requested more. She highlighted that the department had 165 vacancies and any of those positions could be reclassified to fill its needs if an emergency situation arose.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Oritz, Coulombe, Cronk, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Galvin, Hannan, Johnson

OPPOSED: Josephson, Edgmon, Foster

The MOTION PASSED (8/3). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 77 was ADOPTED.

[2:12:52 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe WITHDREW Amendment N 78 (copy on file).

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 79 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Alaska State Troopers  
Allocation: AST Detachments

Transaction Details

Title: Retention Initiative to Fund Relocation  
Costs for Alaska State Troopers.

Section: Section 1

Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0

Travel: -400.0

Services: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0

Permanent Part-Time: 0

Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund -400.0

Explanation

Delete funding for Alaska State Trooper relocation costs related to tax liabilities. The Department states that it will enter into Letters of Agreement to cover airfare, temporary lodging, and packaging and shipping of household goods. While the Department may cover these costs, it is unnecessary to also cover the tax liability associated with a benefit of employment.

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Alaska State Troopers  
Allocation: AST Detachments

Transaction Details

Title: Retention Initiative to Fund Relocation  
Costs of Wildlife Troopers.

Section: Section 1

Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0

Travel: -37.5

Services: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0

Permanent Part-Time: 0

Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund -37.5

Explanation

Delete funding for Wildlife Trooper relocation costs related to tax liabilities. The Department states that it will enter into Letters of Agreement to cover airfare, temporary lodging, and packaging and shipping of household goods. While the Department may cover these costs, it is unnecessary to also cover the tax liability associated with a benefit of employment.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Coulombe explained the amendment was a decrement of \$400,000 to delete funding for AST relocation costs related to tax liabilities. She read the amendment explanation above. The second page of the amendment would delete \$37,500 for Alaska Wildlife Trooper (AWT) relocation costs related to tax liabilities. She recognized it was important for the state to cover the cost of relocation to get troopers in position. She took issue with covering the taxes associated with relocation costs. She detailed that there were 530 AST positions and 129 AWT positions. She remarked that it was costing the state \$400,000 to cover AST relocation taxes. She did not think paying the taxes seemed like a huge burden to the troopers. She apologized for using the word "unnecessary" in the amendment. She questioned whether the state should be covering the tax portion because everything else was covered including housing, equipment, and other items listed in the amendment.

[2:15:17 PM](#)

Representative Galvin opposed the amendment. She believed whatever the state could do to bring in and attract troopers needed to remain in place. She understood that the state had already done many things including bonuses. She highlighted that taxes could cost up to 40 percent of the relocation cost, which could be a heavy burden for a new trooper. She considered that covering the taxes could be quite a benefit and attractive to new troopers.

Representative Stapp thought he would likely be in opposition to the amendment. He thought it appeared that a state trooper would pay out of pocket and would be reimbursed by the state for the expenses (e.g., airfare, hotel stay, packaging and shipping of goods). He considered that potentially an individual moving for the job would be coming from a state with a high sales tax and would have to pay sales tax on top of the movers. He considered that at the end of the year, in theory, the individual would have to pay tax on the cost. He thought the budget item looked like an incentive for recruitment. Given the trooper shortage, he did not think he would support the reduction in what appeared to be a clear incentive structure to hire people.

Representative Coulombe agreed that the comments were a valid argument. She noted that her intention had been to bring the amendment forward in order to discuss the topic with the committee. She understood there was an incentive piece. She did not have a list of all the trooper costs and what the amendment would impact. She WITHDREW Amendment N 79.

Co-Chair Edgmon highlighted that the last five amendments were all to the one agency that he thought had received the most funding in the past six years of the Dunleavy administration and it underscored the dire issue Alaska was facing with state positions. He found it troubling. He viewed the last five amendments as "a microcosm of where we are at as a state."

[2:19:56 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 80 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Victim Services  
Allocation: Victim Services Admin & Support

Transaction Details

Title: Remove Funding for Administrative Assistant  
1 Position Start-up Costs  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0  
Commodities: -18.4  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund -18.4

Explanation

Remove start-up costs associated with funding for a full-time Administrative Assistant 1 position.

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Victim Services  
Allocation: Victim Services Admin & Support

Transaction Details

Title: Remove Funding for Administrative Assistant  
1 Position  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: -92.3  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: -16.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)  
1004 Gen Fund -109.3

Explanation

Remove funding for a full-time Administrative Assistant 1 position. The new Victims Services Division's Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault's organizational chart currently lists an Administrative Officer 2 and an Administrative Assistant 2. In addition, the Violent Crimes Compensation Board lists an Administrative Officer and an Administrative Assistant 3. Finally, the Victims Services Administration and Support component has one Administrative Assistant 2. The new division has been stood up, and the duties performed by the three combined components should be streamlined and absorbed by existing resources.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Coulombe believed committee members were aware that the DPS commissioner was proposing to create a Victims Services Division. She detailed that the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) and the Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB) would be housed under one division. Associated with the new division, DPS was requesting two paralegal positions and two administrative support positions. She highlighted that it took a while for a division to meld, and she understood the division would need some supports; however, she wanted the money to go to victims and did not want the funds to go to a large administrative cost. She supported the commissioner's idea, but in order to do that she believed there should be better performance working with victims and more money going to victims. The amendment left the paralegal positions and removed one administrative position for \$109,000 and the associated support for \$18,000. She highlighted that the new division CDVSA organizational chart currently listed an administrative officer 2 and an administrative assistant 2. Additionally, VCCB listed an administrative officer and administrative assistant 3. She

relayed that the victim services administration and support component had one administrative assistant 2. She stated that the new division had been stood up and the duties performed by the three combined components should be streamlined and absorbed by existing resources.

2:22:30 PM

Representative Galvin understood how streamlining was helpful and she also understood the importance of having staff. For example, she leaned heavily on admin to figure out why a constituent was not receiving their Permanent Fund Dividend, or when they needed help with a food card or renters' rights. She wondered if cutting the position would mean fewer people services for victims. She wanted to make sure the division had enough staff to operate well.

Representative Coulombe replied that she could not speak to how the new division would work. She was suggesting that there were numerous administrative assistant positions in the different agencies going under one umbrella and she believed the department could likely pull one to help at the top. She stated that the agencies' load would lighten when they had someone at the top assisting with duties. She highlighted that the cost of the one position was \$109,000 plus another \$18,400 for startup costs. She wanted the victims' services to work. She thought that if the new division hinged on the one administrative position, it should not be a new division. She added that the new division also had two paralegal positions to help with the set up.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Coulombe, Cronk, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Hannan, Foster, Johnson

OPPOSED: Josephson, Ortiz, Galvin, Edgmon

The MOTION PASSED (7/4). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 80 was ADOPTED.

2:27:03 PM

Representative Hannan MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 81 (copy on file):

Bundle Description

For several years now the Legislature has had to backfill Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault funding because of the loss of federal Victims of Crime Act funds. Most of us are in strong agreement on the importance of CDVSA. The time has come to add the shortfall funding to the base budget so that we don't have to revisit the issue every year. This amendment removes the \$3.7 million one-time increment for CDVSA grants and then restores the funds as a base budget appropriation.

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Victim Services  
Allocation: Domestic Viol/Sexual Assault

Transaction Details

Title: Re-instating the \$3.7 Million for CDVSA as an Increment in the Base Budget  
Section: Section 1  
Type: IncM

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 3,700.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund 3,700.0

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Victim Services  
Allocation: Domestic Viol/Sexual Assault

Transaction Details

Title: Delete One-Time Increment for CDVSA with the  
Intent to Add the Appropriation to the Base Budget  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)  
Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0

Positions  
Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)  
1004 Gen Fund -3,700.0

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Hannan relayed that the amendment had zero cost. She detailed that for several years, the legislature had backfilled CDVSA funding because of the loss of federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funds. She stated there was clear and strong legislative support for CDVSA and she believed the time had come to move the funding into the base budget instead of a one-year, one-time allocation. The amendment would take it out of the one-time funding and put it into the base budget. The net cost was currently zero. She urged support for the amendment.

[2:28:04 PM](#)

Representative Stapp was in opposition to the amendment, primarily because there was currently legislation looking at switching revenue from a different fund source to go into CDVSA. He stated it was a substantial amount of money. He stated that currently the CDVSA funding was a one-time increment, but if the separate legislation passed, there would be a different fund source to pay for CDVSA. He hoped it would be the last time the legislature had to revisit domestic violence money. He thought it was wiser to go the route of the separate legislation.

Co-Chair Edgmon supported the amendment and believed it was a necessity and beyond the definition of well-deserved. He noted that the bill, HB 162, had yet to pass and depended

on the size of the PFD every year. He highlighted that the committee had heard from the [Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault] director Brenda Stanfill that \$3.7 million was less than it would cost for the organization to fulfill all of its duties. He believed the legislature owed it to CDVSA and victims to give them the higher priority. He reiterated his support for the amendment.

Representative Coulombe stated that the amendment was tricky for her due to the separate legislation with a different fund source. She pointed out that putting something in the base budget indicated to the recipient that they would receive the funds every year; however, she stated that with appropriation it was not true. She considered that although they may not necessarily have to come back every year to keep the funding in the base, it would be a constant battle of being certain the state government appropriated the funding. She had discussed the possibility of looking at different sources of income other than state government with CDVSA. She remarked that CDVSA always seemed to be the first on the chopping block whether the funds were in the base or one-time increments. She recognized that one-time funding was worse. She thought there were other creative ways to find funding outside of state government. She supported the funding and the one-time increment, but she believed it was a bit disingenuous to say CDVSA would be able to sit on its laurels if it was in the base. She remarked that a future legislature could put the funding to another use if they did not view CDVSA as a priority. She would likely oppose the amendment, but definitely supported funding CDVSA for FY 25 and trying to find some stable solutions.

Co-Chair Edgmon hoped he did not imply that CDVSA sat on its laurels or anything of that nature.

Representative Coulombe apologized for her use of term. She clarified that she was trying to say that perhaps CDVSA would feel like their funding was safe [if it was in the base budget].

Representative Galvin strongly supported the amendment. She shared that she had visited many women's and family shelters where there had been deep difficulties in coming up with funds. She agreed that it would be great to find other funding sources; however, she had been to many

fundraisers and had personally helped to raise funds. Additionally, federal funds were leveraged. She stressed that one-time funding was worse than putting funding in the base budget. She thought putting the item in the base may help secure federal funds. She thought it was a shame CDVSA had to spend so much energy on fundraising due to the erratic nature of the funding. She thought the state should do better and the amendment represented one step better.

[2:33:29 PM](#)

Co-Chair Johnson had some concern about putting the funding in the base without paying attention for at least one more year to find out the total amount or what should be done. She stated that the one-time increment in the FY 25 budget was the amount for the current year. She considered that maybe it was the right number or maybe it was not the right number [going forward]. The budget included the full request from CDVSA for FY 25. She preferred to see the one-time increment remain in the budget with an analysis to find out what the number should be. She stated it was a difficult vote to take. She would stand by the item in the budget as is and hoped for better information going forward. She clarified that it had nothing to do with the work provided by CDVSA. She noted there were some bills that were pending, which would change some of the things CDVSA had to do and she suspected the funding would be addressed in future bills as well.

Representative Hannan thanked members of the committee for putting the money in the budget. She highlighted the committee heard hours of public testimony and heard repeatedly about the demands across Alaska for ongoing service needs of domestic violence and sexual assault shelters. She stated it was a shame that it was one of the places where Alaska led the nation. She pointed out that the problem was not easily resolved and was not going away. She recognized that putting something in the base did not change that the legislature could always change the fund source. She hoped HB 162 passed and that the legislature would be talking about extra revenue because she believed the funding was far below where it should be for preventative programs. She noted that the funding reflected the full request by CDVSA. She thought most domestic violence shelters were used to "bake saling" their way to surviving and piecing things together. She believed it would always be an obligation of the state to provide for

that public safety aspect. She thought it was time to put the funding in the base so that at a minimum it would save the agency from having to beg for grant funding. She suggested they could start talking about program growth needs and prevention. She hoped there was a point in several years where the legislature was talking about the absence of a need for general funds because there were funds from other sources. She urged support for the amendment. She viewed it as a public safety program that Alaska had an obligation to provide.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

[2:37:31 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Cronk, Galvin, Hannan, Josephson, Ortiz,  
Coulombe, Edgmon, Foster  
OPPOSED: Stapp, Tomaszewski, Johnson

The MOTION PASSED (8/3). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 81 was ADOPTED.

[2:38:17 PM](#)

Representative Josephson MOVED to RESCIND action on Amendment 73 (copy on file).

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

[2:39:08 PM](#)

AT EASE

[2:39:58 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Representative Coulombe MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 73 (copy on file)[see 1:41 p.m. for amendment details].

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson stated that he had heard about the other side of the issue through the Department of Law (DOL) budget subcommittee. He was told that the positions at DPS would focus on offering advice on excessive use of force, general training, contracts, and issues related to the

enforcement of the sex offender registry. He wanted to be on record opposing the amendment.

Representative Stapp clarified that the amendment was a reduction in the money appropriated for a reimbursable services agreement (RSA) from DPS to DOL. He did not believe the amendment would cut attorney positions. The amendment sponsor explained that the amendment would reduce a cost the department had been absorbing for the purposes of the RSA.

Representative Coulombe did not have any additional comments.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Coulombe, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Hannan, Ortiz, Galvin, Foster, Johnson

OPPOSED: Cronk, Josephson, Edgmon

The MOTION PASSED (8/3). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 73 was ADOPTED.

[2:43:27 PM](#)

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 82 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Victim Services  
Allocation: Domestic Viol/Sexual Assault

Transaction Details  
Title: Additional One-Time Grant Support for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault  
Section: Section 1  
Type: IncOTI

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 3,000.0

Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0

Permanent Part-Time: 0

Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund 3,000.0

Explanation

Brenda Stanfill testified March 25th that this increment was necessary to CDVSA.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson highlighted that he had asked Brenda Stanfill how much funding CDVSA really needed in a recent House Finance Committee meeting. He relayed that her response had been that the agency needed an additional \$3 million on top of the requested \$3.7 million. He stated it was consistent with the outcry from the domestic violence and sexual assault community. The total amount requested from victim services programs when they applied to CDVSA for FY 24 funding was \$3 million more than was available under the flat funding plan appropriated by the legislature. The individual programs asked for what was needed to keep their doors open to continue emergency services. He detailed that allowing the one-time funding gave breathing room to keep level services continuing in FY 25, while seeking additional resources. The amounts included covered child advocacy center services. He noted he had offered a previous amendment to start funding the services, but it was denied. Additionally, the amendment would fund domestic violence and sexual assault services at just over \$2.8 million.

Representative Josephson stated that the \$3 million included child abuse advocacy centers and the domestic violence shelters. He noted it was on the low end of the estimate. He highlighted that a CDVSA PowerPoint from earlier in the session requested almost \$3.5 million. He relayed that Alaska Beacon reported on March 6<sup>th</sup> that Brenda Stanfill identified the funding gap as 20 percent. He noted that the budget covered that amount. He relayed that she had stated the amendment would restore the funding level from the previous year, which the entity recognized as a

cut due to high inflation rates. The funds would prevent the closure of shelters and reduction of programs. He referenced another article by Alaska Beacon on December 4th where Diane Casto, former director of ANDVSA had stated that the \$5 million difference was a significant slice of the council's funding. She had elaborated that the past year, the council's budget was close to \$25 million and nearly \$21 million went to grants. Ms. Casto had stated that the loss was exacerbated by inflation, especially in remote parts of the state. He stated that the council needed \$2.6 million just to inflation proof the money that came from the state's general fund. The \$2.8 million was a recurring expense, but the amendment was a one-time increment. He thought the amendment would give the conference committee some flexibility to drive home the best result. He asked for support.

[2:48:57 PM](#)

Co-Chair Edgmon thought the amendment was the perfect illustration about why budgeting was an imperfect process. He had supported the past couple of amendments pertaining to CDVSA including providing administrative support in the department and to put funding in the base budget. He remarked that at some point tough choices had to be made. While he appreciated the intent of the amendment, he reluctantly would vote in opposition.

Representative Ortiz concurred with the comments about the imperfect budget process and moving forward with a workable budget. However, he remarked that every budget was a reflection of where the legislature's priorities resided. He highlighted that the committee had just unanimously passed an amendment to support the state parks program. He thought the committee would want to be supportive of CDVSA. He supported the amendment.

Co-Chair Johnson wanted to be clear that the money was not in the [original] budget. She stated that the committee had received the request and people had called in [during public testimony]. The request from CDVSA was for \$3.7 million and it had been added to the budget. She did not expect to feel a little beat up about it. She was standing by the budget and believed the increment included was what had been requested to maintain services and provide funding for a shortfall. The budget fully funded CDVSA's request.

She opposed the amendment. She looked forward to having further conversations with Ms. Stanfill in the future.

Representative Cronk stated that every vote was a hard vote. He noted that he had not been on finance as a minority member and did not know how that worked. He did not appreciate how the votes were prioritized because every vote was hard and impacted someone's life in one way or another. He stated that if he voted no on the amendment, it did not mean he deemed it to be unimportant.

Representative Stapp reiterated the fact that the item started out with \$3.7 million in additional one-time funding and there had been an amendment to put it in the base budget. He stated that the amendment asked for another \$3 million. He did not appreciate the idea that the committee was not funding something when the committee just passed an amendment to change the length of the funding source to include it in the base.

[2:54:29 PM](#)

Representative Ortiz agreed that all of the votes were tough. He clarified that he had been speaking to the broader issue and recognizing that adopting the amendment it would reduce the amount of money for things like the PFD. He was comfortable with that, and he realized that some other people were not. He was not intending any disrespect to any committee members on their votes. He elaborated that every vote was a statement about choosing to do one thing or another. He personally felt comfortable with providing the funds in the amendment.

Representative Coulombe considered that when dealing with shifting priorities it meant removing funding from one item that was no longer the priority and moving funding to another item. She stated that when priorities shifted it did not mean continuing to repeatedly add funding to the budget. She may have been able to support the amendment if there was a corresponding decrement.

Representative Tomaszewski stated that the committee prioritized the funding by voting to include the funding in the base budget instead of as a one-time increment. He remarked that now there was an amendment for an additional \$3 million. He found the comments distasteful indicating that the item was not a priority. He suggested committee

members should not impugn the motives of other committee members. He stated the committee had worked hard and had included requested funding in the budget.

2:57:02 PM

AT EASE

2:57:44 PM

RECONVENED

Representative Josephson thought that nonprofits strategized on the best approach when requesting funding from the legislature. He had asked Ms. Stanfill what CDVSA really needed and the amount in the amendment reflected the answer. Additionally, Ms. Casto had provided the same number. He asked for support for the amendment.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Ortiz, Josephson, Hannan, Galvin

OPPOSED: Tomaszewski, Stapp, Cronk, Coulombe, Edgmon, Foster, Johnson

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 82 FAILED (4/7).

2:59:45 PM

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 83 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety

Appropriation: Victim Services

Allocation: Domestic Viol/Sexual Assault

Transaction Details

Title: Funding for Costs Related to Utilities  
(FY2025-FY2026)

Section: Section 1

Type: IncT

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0

Travel: 0.0

Services: 0.0

Commodities: 0.0

Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 500.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)  
1004 Gen Fund 500.0

Explanation

Operating costs for the CDVSA are flat funded in the FY25 budget. The past two years, the CDVSA received an appropriation for these costs but that appropriation has ended. This would provide funding needed to pay for operating costs for the next two fiscal years.

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson explained there was a drop off in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding. He detailed that VOCA funds were related to white collar crime, which had decreased. Consequently, there were fewer federal VOCA dollars available. Additionally, COVID-19 funds had been used to cover some of the domestic violence network's costs. He stated that things had been so desperate for domestic violence shelters that they were worried about paying their utility bills. The programs had been flat funded for the past five years. In the FY 23 budget, the legislature appropriated a one-time amount of \$500,000 to assist programs with utility costs. In FY 24, CDVSA was able to provide utility assistance one more time through other funds in its budget. In FY 25, the victims' services programs were currently in the House budget at the amount necessary for programs to be flat funded, not including the additional \$500,000 dispersed from CDVSA during the past two years for utility increases. The increased cost of utilities in the 33 member organizations exceeded \$500,000 in FY 23 and FY 24.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Ortiz, Hannan, Galvin, Josephson

OPPOSED: Tomaszewski, Coulombe, Cronk, Stapp, Foster, Edgmon, Johnson

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 83 FAILED (4/7).

[3:03:14 PM](#)

Representative Cronk MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 84 (copy on file):

Agency: Public Safety  
Appropriation: Victim Services  
Allocation: Victim Services Admin & Support

Transaction Details  
Title: Add Intent  
Wordage Type: Intent  
Linkage: Agency - Public Safety

#### Wordage

It is the intent of the legislature that the department, when preparing its FY26 budget submission to the legislature, consider how to maintain Child Advocacy Center (CAC) service in regard to the loss of federal Department of Justice funding.

#### Explanation

The legislature is expressing its intent for the administration to recognize the importance of Child Advocacy Center's in their FY26 budget submittal in light of the knowledge that the current federal funding will be expiring.

Co-Chair Foster OBJECTED for discussion.

Representative Cronk explained the amendment would add intent language to the budget. He read the wordage above. He detailed that the Alaska Children's Alliance (ACA) was a statewide association of the Child Advocacy Centers, which were multidisciplinary centers providing law enforcement, prosecutors, tribal welfare officials, and social workers to families and victims in cases of child abuse investigations. The legislature aimed to assist ACA in raising red flags that three of its federal funding streams were in jeopardy of running out in FY 26, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), VOCA, and Department of Justice funds. The organization had funds for

FY 25, but the intent language highlighted to the administration that the funds would run out in FY 26.

Co-Chair Foster WITHDREW the OBJECTION. There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment 84 was ADOPTED.

3:04:55 PM

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 85 (copy on file):

Agency: Transportation  
Appropriation: Highways/Aviation & Facilities  
Allocation: Stwd Contracted Snow Removal

Transaction Details

Title: Improve Public Snow Removal Services  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Inc

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 500.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund 500.0

Explanation

\$915,000 is currently in the budget for this allocation, but that is obviously not enough for statewide services. This amendment increases the appropriation by almost 50%.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson highlighted that the past three years had experienced higher than usual snowfall in Juneau

and Anchorage. The amendment was designed to allow for more statewide contracted snow removal. He noted that Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) Commissioner Ryan Anderson had been asked about snow by both bodies in February.

[3:06:27 PM](#)

Co-Chair Edgmon thought the \$500,000 would fit Dillingham. He corrected that the House Finance Committee had heard from the deputy commissioner Katherine Keith and two other department employees. He did not believe the overall effort from DOT was adequate in terms of providing a strategy and gearing up to properly address the amount of snow. He would vote against the amendment.

Representative Galvin supported the amendment. She noted that she resided in the same town as the amendment sponsor. She understood that other towns had done okay moving snow, but legislators had learned that more than half of the state graters in Anchorage were broken. She had received hundreds of emails and phone calls about the snow problems. She noted that some of the roads were taken care of by the city and others were taken care of by the state. She believed there had been a lack of funds to hire contractors, a lack of funds to fix the equipment, or lack of choosing to use the funds correctly. She wanted to ensure there were funds available if there was another high snow year.

Representative Coulombe stated that she lived in Anchorage and was fully aware of its snow removal issues. She relayed that she had been in several meetings with DOT and the department was not requesting the money [put forward in the amendment]. She remarked that the committee had asked DOT what it needed from the legislature to improve the situation; however, the department did not have a clear strategy for Anchorage. She highlighted that changing the priority status of the roads in her district and getting off of the contracting plan for the Anchorage hillside (that had failed miserably) would make a difference in her district. She stated that those two things did not cost money but had cost her a lot of time and effort to try to fix. She believed when there was a problem like the one at hand, it was a gut instinct to try to throw money at it to try to fix it. She did not believe the amendment was particularly focused on Southcentral. She asked the sponsor

if the funding would go into the base budget. She would support the amendment if she believed it would solve Anchorage's problems, but she did not think it was the targeted approach that was needed to correct the issue.

3:11:05 PM

Representative Stapp opposed the amendment. He noted he did not live in Anchorage. He looked at the amendment language stating the funds would be for statewide contracted snow removal, which he viewed to mean outsourcing the work from state employees to contractors. He thought the practice was generally fine, but he did not think the state needed to do more of that. He thought the department had done a good job in the northern region in Fairbanks had done an excellent job at snow removal. He was uncertain whether the appropriation would help what happened in Southcentral. Additionally, there was no decrement to balance out the increase.

Representative Tomaszewski relayed that the particular allocation had been discussed in subcommittee. He elaborated that DOT had indicated the ~\$900,000 in the DOT budget for the particular line item would be sufficient. He believed the department had other sources as back up if more money was needed. He opposed the amendment.

Co-Chair Johnson noted that DOT had come before the committee and the committee had asked if the department needed more money to address snow removal issues. She relayed that the department had told the committee it did not need more money. She elaborated that funding had been provided for emergency snowplowing the previous year due to heavy snowfall. She had asked the department how much of the funding had been spent out of the amount appropriated for emergency plowing services. The department had told the committee that it did not know. She had learned that the department had not spent down the funding. There was \$3 million left from the previous capital appropriation. She stated that sometimes it was not about how much money, it was about getting out there, doing the job, and getting it done. She felt mad knowing there was \$3 million in funding available and the roads had not been plowed the past winter. She was unwilling to appropriate more money to a fund for the department to not plow the roads.

Co-Chair Edgmon remarked that the committee had added intent language in other provisions in the budget. He considered why the committee should not include intent language asking DOT to develop a specific plan to tackle the problem head on. He was not satisfied with the approach DOT took when it presented to the committee. He recognized the problem in Anchorage; however, he felt like the amendment was well intentioned but a piecemeal approach. He requested to take a break to craft some language.

[3:15:35 PM](#)

AT EASE

[5:22:07 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Johnson stated that the committee had left off on Amendment N 85.

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment N 85 (copy on file). He explained that the conceptual amendment would delete the entirety of the amendment and replace it with the conceptual amendment:

DEPARTMENT:	Department of Transportation
APPROPRIATION:	Highways/Aviation & Facilities
ALLOCATION:	Stwd Contracted Snow Removal

INTENT: It is the intent of the Legislature that the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities shall submit a report regarding a state-wide snow removal plan by December 20, 2024, and provide a presentation to the Finance committees during the next legislative session. This plan should include strategies to effectively remove snow from streets and sidewalks in a timely manner, including the purchase and maintenance of equipment, salary increases, and methods to ensure public services remain operational.

Co-Chair Johnson asked Representative Josephson to explain the intent language. She acknowledged Senator Click Bishop in the room.

Representative Josephson read the intent language above.

[5:24:01 PM](#)

Co-Chair Edgmon OBJECTED for discussion. He thought the second sentence of the intent language had a "statewide sort of feel to it." He asked if it was Representative Josephson's intent to make it statewide in scope.

Representative Josephson responded affirmatively.

Representative Ortiz asked if there would be an emphasis in Ketchikan.

Representative Galvin referenced the language "to ensure public services remain operational." She assumed the language was referring to ensuring schools remain open and operational. She thought it perhaps applied to private businesses as well. She highlighted that Anchorage had lost a whole week of school over the current winter. She commented on that on a Monday it had been known schools would be closed the entire week because of a lack of a strategy, equipment, or something else. She asked the sponsor to clarify what he meant by public services during wrap up on the amendment. She had heard from many people that getting down Northern Lights Boulevard was tricky. She stated it should never be the case.

Co-Chair Johnson remarked that it had been more than tricky, and it had nearly destroyed her four-wheel drive car.

[5:26:03 PM](#)

AT EASE

[5:27:35 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Representative Josephson MOVED a conceptual amendment to conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment N 85. The amendment would insert the language "report made to the Chairs of the Finance Committees and Legislative Finance Division" after the words "December 20, 2024." The amendment would also include the words "(schools, private businesses, and hospitals)" after the words "public services."

There being NO OBJECTION, the conceptual amendment to conceptual Amendment 1 was ADOPTED.

Co-Chair Johnson asked if there were any objections to conceptual Amendment 1 as amended.

There being NO OBJECTION, conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment N 85 was ADOPTED as amended.

Representative Cronk wanted to make sure the committee was not expecting a miracle. He stated that snow removal crews could only work so many hours before being done. He stated that snow removal operations would not occur on a 24/7 basis. He understood the intent. He noted there were a limited number of workers and there were not backup crews in the wings to take over. He wanted to be clear the committee was not expecting a miracle, but it was expecting improvement.

Co-Chair Johnson asked Representative Josephson to provide wrap up and a review of the amendment.

Representative Josephson explained that the amendment would include intent language in the budget. The intent language called for DOT to prepare a report on December 20, 2024, that reflected a serious effort to respond to legislators' dismay and unhappiness connected to snow removal in the state.

Representative Cronk WITHDREW his OBJECTION to Amendment N 85 as amended.

There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 85 was ADOPTED as amended.

[5:31:52 PM](#)  
AT EASE

[5:33:36 PM](#)  
RECONVENED

Representative Josephson WITHDREW Amendments N 86, N 87, and N 88 (copy on file).

[5:34:29 PM](#)  
AT EASE

[5:34:41 PM](#)  
RECONVENED

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 89 (copy on file):

Agency: University of Alaska  
Appropriation: University of Alaska  
Allocation: Systemwide Reduction/Additions

Transaction Details

Title: University of Alaska Indigenous Student Support  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Inc

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 2,021.3

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 11  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund 1,146.0  
1048 Univ Rcpt 875.3

Explanation

Indigenous Student Support and Leadership: Improve indigenous student support and leadership.  
UAA Supporting Alaska's Future Workforce  
UAF Indigenous Leadership, Humanities and Social Science  
UAS Advancing Graduation Rates and Workforce Entry by Strengthening the Knowledge and Teaching of Indigenous Culture

Representative Stapp OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson stated that the committee when acting as subcommittee of the whole had rejected the amendment 30 days earlier; however, the updated spring forecast had come out since that time, which suggested \$150 million in additional revenue spanning the 18 months. The amendment reflected a University of Alaska Board of

Regent's request. He noted that almost all of the regents had been selected by Governor Dunleavy. The amendment would offer indigenous student support and leadership at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). Additionally, the amendment would provide funding for UAA Supporting Alaska's Future Workforce, University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Indigenous Leadership, Humanities and Social Science, and University of Alaska Southeast (UAS) Advancing Graduation Rates and Workforce Entry by Strengthening the Knowledge and Teaching of Indigenous Culture. He stated that the amendment would benefit each of the major regional campuses. He asked for members' support.

Representative Hannan was in support of the amendment because she believed it dovetailed closely and supported UAF's R1 efforts. She highlighted that indigenous studies programs were one of the areas of growing Ph.D. opportunities. She detailed that Ph.D. programs were available at UAF but the feeder colleges at UAF and UAA offered cohorts of indigenous programs that could lead to Ph.D. programs in a fairly quick progression. She believed the support would help and enhance R1 efforts.

[5:37:35 PM](#)

Co-Chair Edgmon called the question on the amendment.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Galvin, Hannan, Josephson, Ortiz, Foster  
OPPOSED: Stapp, Tomaszewski, Coulombe, Cronk, Edgmon, Johnson

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 89 FAILED (5/6).

[5:38:31 PM](#)

Representative Galvin stated that she would not offer Amendment 90 at the current time.

Representative Galvin MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 91 (copy on file):

Agency: University of Alaska  
Appropriation: University of Alaska  
Allocation: Anchorage Campus

Transaction Details

Title: Improve Campus Public Safety and Physical Security at UAA  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Inc

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 1,020.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 6  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund 1,020.0

Representative Stapp OBJECTED for discussion.

Representative Galvin explained the amendment would increase funding for UAA public safety and mental health response capacity at UAA and Southcentral community campuses including Kenai and Mat-Su. The UAA police department (UPD) provided safety and crisis response in the Anchorage U-Med District including the UAA campus. The UPD responded to over 21,000 calls annually including major incidents relating to mental health, drugs, property crimes, and weapon assaults. She elaborated that public safety issues were increasing sharply, and funding was needed to ensure student safety. The amendment was also found in the red book by universities. She had a conceptual amendment to change the line items to include university receipts in addition to general funds.

[5:41:24 PM](#)

Representative Galvin MOVED to ADOPT conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment 91.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED for discussion.

Representative Galvin explained that the conceptual amendment would change the fund source to \$816,000 UGF and \$204,000 from university receipts. The amendment incorporated university receipts as a funding source supporting public safety and physical security services.

Representative Stapp WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

Co-Chair Johnson OBJECTED.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Representative Tomaszewski, Galvin, Hannan, Josephson, Ortiz, Representative Coulombe, Cronk, Stapp, Edgmon, Foster

OPPOSED: Johnson

The MOTION PASSED (10/1). There being NO further OBJECTION, conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment N 91 was ADOPTED.

[5:43:20 PM](#)

Representative Galvin asked for support for the amendment to ensure students were safe. The University decided the funding was needed and she supported the needs. She detailed that \$615,000 would go toward the use of officers and \$405,000 went to physical security.

Representative Coulombe thanked the sponsor for bringing the amendment forward. She stated it was a modest amount for a security issue that spanned three different campuses. She supported the amendment.

Representative Cronk MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Hannan, Galvin, Josephson, Ortiz, Coulombe, Stapp, Edgmon

OPPOSED: Cronk, Tomaszewski, Foster, Johnson

The MOTION PASSED (7/4). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 91 was ADOPTED as amended.

[5:45:10 PM](#)

AT EASE

[5:45:58 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Representative Josephson WITHDREW Amendments N 92 and N 93  
(copy on file).

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 94  
(copy on file):

Agency: University of Alaska  
Appropriation: University of Alaska  
Allocation: Fairbanks Campus

Transaction Details

Title: UAF Ensuring Alaska's Food Security and  
Resilience  
Section: Section 1  
Type: IncOTI

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 625.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 3  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund 425.0  
1048 Univ Rcpt 200.0

Explanation

This investment will respond to the needs of the agriculture industry in Alaska, improve food security, and independence, and strengthen Alaska's food system. This funding will support hiring additional agricultural research faculty and contributing to expanding soil research, varietal trials, and product development within

Alaska as part of the Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extension's mission. ROI: Faculty will provide the expertise needed to support Alaskans' success in pursuing and expanding farming, agriculture-related businesses, and sustainability in Alaska. This allows UAF more competitive federal funding estimated at \$200K/year. This will improve the economic yield for farmers, promote self-sufficiency, and provide an economic boost for the state.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson noted that the amendment had not previously been seen in subcommittee. The University was seeking a \$425,000 increase in the operating budget for the UAF Institute of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Extension campus to ensure Alaska's food security program. The program would use waste products from seafood and mariculture industries and would turn them into soil amendments. He read the amendment explanation above. He asked for members' support.

[5:48:51 PM](#)

Representative Stapp opposed the amendment because it added three permanent full-time positions to UAF in the agricultural department. He remarked that it was a robust program and he encouraged members to visit to see the work being done. He stated that the University had a lot of positions in its budget and numerous vacancies. He explained that the University had enough vacant positions it could reclassify for the agriculture section. He appreciated the sponsor for offering the amendment, but he would vote in opposition.

Representative Stapp MAINTAINED the OBJECTION.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Hannan, Josephson

OPPOSED: Coulombe, Cronk, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Galvin, Ortiz, Edgmon, Foster, Johnson

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 94 FAILED (2/9).

[5:50:42 PM](#)

Representative Stapp MOVED to RESCIND action on Amendment 67 (copy on file). [Note: Amendment N 67 was previously adopted on a vote of 6/5 during the 4/2/24 10:30 a.m. meeting. See separate minutes for detail.]

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 67 (copy on file):

Agency: Law  
Appropriation: Civil Division  
Allocation: Dep. Attny General's Office

Transaction Details

Title: Delete Increase for Statehood Defense (FY25-FY27) Section: Section 1  
Type: Dec

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: -1,500.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund -1,500.0

Explanation

The Governor sought for a temporary increment of \$2,018,000 to increase funding for Statehood Defense each year between FY25 -FY27. This appropriation would be used to challenge federal environmental decisions by the Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies. The department has claimed that cases taken on under the umbrella of statehood defense

are "not controversial," but this is factually inaccurate.

The House Finance Department of Law subcommittee decremented \$518,000 from the Governor's request, and this amendment seeks to eliminate the rest of the appropriation.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED.

Representative Stapp MOVED to ADOPT conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment N 67. The conceptual amendment would remove the \$1.5 million decrement to statehood defense and would replace it with a \$500,000 decrement to statehood defense. He referenced a handout he had provided to committee members (copy on file) regarding discussions he had with the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and DOL pertaining to existing actions and many reasons why he believed the funding was valuable. He was interested in compromising. He noted that the representative from Tok had decremented the amount of money during the subcommittee process and the House Finance Committee had voted to decrement the full amount on 4/2/24. He was requesting a second bite at the apple and asked members to review the information from DEC and DOL in terms of what the money was spent on. He highlighted that DOL reported that actions were coming out on a weekly basis. Additionally, many of the statehood defense issues DEC dealt with were technical and pertained to legal analyses and technical resources that DEC was currently unequipped to handle without the funding. He reminded committee members that the funding was allocated to numerous cases. He noted he had passed information out related to the various cases. He asked for members' support on the conceptual amendment.

[5:53:33 PM](#)

Co-Chair Edgmon OBJECTED for discussion. He supported the conceptual amendment.

[5:54:11 PM](#)

AT EASE

[5:56:44 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Edgmon WITHDREW the OBJECTION to conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment N 67.

Co-Chair Edgmon called the question on the underlying amendment.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Cronk, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Coulombe, Edgmon, Johnson

OPPOSED: Josephson, Hannan, Ortiz, Galvin, Foster

The MOTION PASSED (6/5). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 67 was ADOPTED as amended.

[5:58:41 PM](#)

Representative Josephson MOVED to RESCIND action on Amendment N 25 (copy on file). [Note: Amendment N 25 was offered and failed to be adopted during the 4/1/24 morning meeting. See separate minutes for detail.]

Representative Cronk OBJECTED.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Ortiz, Coulombe, Galvin, Hannan, Josephson, Edgmon, Foster, Johnson

OPPOSED: Cronk, Stapp, Tomaszewski

The MOTION PASSED (8/3). There being NO further OBJECTION, action on Amendment N 25 was RESCINDED.

[6:01:20 PM](#)

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 25 (copy on file):

Agency: Commerce, Community & Econ Dev  
Appropriation: Community and Regional Affairs  
Allocation: Community & Regional Affairs

Transaction Details  
Title: Grant to the Municipality of Anchorage:  
State Match for East 56th Avenue Shelter  
Section: Section 1  
Type: IncOTI

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 0.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 4,000.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund 4,000.0

Explanation

The former Solid Waste Services Administration building at 1111 E 56th Avenue has been identified and used as an emergency cold weather shelter in Anchorage this year. The current operating costs of the shelter are estimated to be \$3.94 million for the total cost between October 15 - April 30. This funding is covered. However, the shelter is also able to be used as a low-barrier shelter that could be used between May 1 - October 15. The cost for doing so would amount to another \$3.6 million.

The Anchorage Assembly and Mayor have jointly requested (through Anchorage Resolution 2023-37 and the 2024 Anchorage Legislative Program) a \$4 million match for the Alaska Legislature to keep the shelter running year-round. This amendment would allow this to happen.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson explained that the amendment was a repeat request of \$4 million for the Municipality of Anchorage to operate a year-round shelter. The shelter would close. Anchorage Assemblymember [Anna] Brawley was currently describing the urgency of the increment to the Anchorage delegation. He relayed that the municipality had invested considerable sums as Representative Coulombe had previously noted, including in the proposal at hand. He

recognized that although it was easier to survive in the summer, the increment had a lifesaving component. He indicated that about half of the homeless population in Anchorage was not from Anchorage. He was making the request on behalf of the Anchorage Assembly and Mayor Bronson.

Representative Coulombe emphasized how crucial the amendment was for Anchorage. She noted that everyone in the state was impacted by what was happening in Anchorage. She urged the committees' support.

Representative Galvin emphasized that finally people had come together on a plan, and it was serving the entire state because of who the particular homeless shelter housed. She highlighted she and others had heard from constituents that homelessness was one of the top crises. She thought it was the one space in the operating budget where the legislature could make a difference. She understood there were other things happening in the capital budget side. She believed the amendment would send a message that policymakers were looking to do what they could to make a difference. She strongly supported the amendment.

Representative Ortiz stated that he voted for the amendment previously and would vote for it again. He asked how the amendment helped the homeless situation in Ketchikan, Dillingham, or Juneau.

[6:04:39 PM](#)

Co-Chair Edgmon believed the amendment had a statewide impact. He knew from firsthand experience being on the site in Anchorage. He stated that the homelessness problem in Anchorage had ties to rural Alaska. He did not have an exact percentage, but the appropriation would lend itself to assisting with the problem in other areas.

Co-Chair Edgmon called the question on the amendment.

Representative Stapp MAINTAINED the OBJECTION to Amendment N 25.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Coulombe, Galvin, Hannan, Josephson, Ortiz, Edgmon, Foster

OPPOSED: Cronk, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Johnson

The MOTION PASSED (7/4). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment N 25 was ADOPTED.

6:06:01 PM

AT EASE

6:07:36 PM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Johnson noted that the committee was on Amendment N 95.

Representative Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment N 95 (copy on file):

Agency: University of Alaska Appropriation:  
University of Alaska Allocation: Anchorage Campus

Transaction Details

Title: Anchorage Athletics Funding Increase  
Section: Section 1  
Type: Inc

Line Items (Amounts are in thousands)

Personal Services: 0.0  
Travel: 0.0  
Services: 2,500.0  
Commodities: 0.0  
Capital Outlay: 0.0  
Grants: 0.0  
Miscellaneous: 0.0

Positions

Permanent Full-Time: 0  
Permanent Part-Time: 0  
Temporary: 0

Funding (Amounts are in thousands)

1004 Gen Fund 2,500.0

Explanation

Collegiate level athletics is an integral part of college, but it is also a great way to build community cohesion and attract talented students from inside and outside the state.

This amendment would appropriate funding for Seawolves athletics which have seen a 90% cut to the athletics department since FY16. This funding would match private gifts and sponsorships.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson relayed that some of the Anchorage delegation met with UAA Chancellor Sean Parnell in early March regarding an FY 25 operating request for Seawolves athletics. He relayed that general funds for athletics had been cut 90 percent since FY 16. The increment in the amendment was designed to match private gifts and sponsorships. He elaborated that \$4.3 million had been nearly zeroed out over recent years for the athletics program. He relayed that state funds of \$256,000 UGF accounted for less than 3 percent of the budget for Seawolf Athletics and the athletic arena. Chancellor Parnell had told the delegation the funding was unsustainable and put UAA athletic programs at risk. The chancellor communicated that state funding was needed to match and sustain Seawolf Athletics. He highlighted that several years back the UAA gymnastics, cross country, and hockey teams had been threatened with demise if they did not fundraise aggressively. He noted they had successfully staved off certain death. He asked for members' support.

[6:10:33 PM](#)

Representative Stapp did not support the amendment. He asked how full the sports complex was during games.

Representative Josephson responded that hockey had returned to the Sullivan arena. The events he attended men's and women's basketball games at the sports arena under discussion. He described the events as being popular. He noted Anchorage lost its shootout, which was a renowned national event. He believed UAA was raising all it could for ticket sales through designated general funds.

Representative Coulombe asked if the funding was a one-time increment.

Representative Josephson responded, "no." The proposed increment would be in the base budget.

Representative Coulombe supported UAA but did not support including the increment in the base.

Representative Galvin wondered if the maker of the amendment would be open to a conceptual amendment to change the funding to a one-time increment. She stated that former Governor Parnell was careful with his requests, and he felt the request was important. She stated that the athletes representing the university system had been incredible.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED. He called the question on the amendment.

Representative Josephson did not have an objection to the conceptual amendment.

[6:14:21 PM](#)

AT EASE

[6:14:41 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Representative Stapp WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

There being NO further OBJECTION, conceptual Amendment 1 to Amendment N 95 was ADOPTED.

Representative Stapp MAINTAINED the OBJECTION to Amendment N 95 as amended.

Representative Josephson remarked that there was much he could read from the University of Alaska FY 25 operating budget description about UAA's contribution to the funding including private donations and fundraising efforts. He noted that the request was also included on a one page priority list from the Board of Regents. He stated it fell under the category of reputational enhancement through nationally ranked athletics. He asked for members' support.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Coulombe, Galvin, Hannan, Josephson, Ortiz  
OPPOSED: Cronk, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Edgmon, Foster, Johnson

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 95 as amended FAILED (5/6).

[6:18:07 PM](#)

Representative Josephson MOVED Amendment N 96 (copy on file):

DEPARTMENT: Education & Early Development  
APPROPRIATION: Libraries, Archives, and Museums  
STRUCTURE: Create Live Homework Help Allocation  
ADD: \$75,000, 1004 Gen Fund (UGF)

DEPARTMENT: Education & Early Development  
APPROPRIATION: Libraries, Archives, and Museums  
ALLOCATION: Library Operations  
DELETE: \$75,000, 1004 Gen Fund (UGF)

EXPLANATION:

The Institute of Museum and Library Service (IMLS) Grants to States Program uses a population-based formula to distribute around \$180 million among the State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs) each year. The Alaska State Library serves as the SLAA for Alaska. The Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums directly manages the IMLS funds that are used to support statewide initiatives and services, distributed through competitive subawards, or used to support cooperative agreements with Alaskan libraries or consortia. The IMLS Grants to States award for Alaska has increased an average of \$79.0 each year from 2019 to 2023. The 2023 IMLS Grants to States award was \$1,280.2, an increase of \$171.6 from the 2022 IMLS award. The division transferred federal authority from Museum Operations to Library Operations component in FY2024 to cover the increased award amount. However, there will not be sufficient federal authority in FY2025 to cover another increase in the IMLS Grants to State award. This proposal requests additional federal receipts authority to have sufficient authority to accept the 2024 IMLS Grants to States award.

This amendment transfers Live Homework Help funding from the Library Operations allocation to a separate allocation within the Library, Archives and Museums appropriation. The entire \$75,000 UGF associated with Live Homework Help is transferred. There are no associated positions.

Representatives Stapp and Cronk OBJECTED.

Representative Josephson requested a brief at ease.

6:18:28 PM

AT EASE

6:18:33 PM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Johnson acknowledged Representative Jesse Sumner in the room.

Representative Josephson explained that the amendment would cost the state nothing. He had received a call from one of the chief librarians in the University of Alaska system who had informed him that the Live Homework Help program had been subsumed into the library operations allocation and would no longer be in its own allocation. He relayed that individuals who "love and defend" the program did not know what the ramifications would be. He reported that the program had received state funding since former Governor Parnell was in office. The program was successful and provided needed on-demand help for student homework and class assignments. The program could help increase retention and graduation rates that were too low. Students who were looking for help at their library's reference desk after school and on weekends could be directed to the Live Homework Help website.

Representative Josephson elaborated that schools, homeschoolers, and universities were seeking supplemental learning opportunities to help students succeed. He emphasized that nearly 9,000 tutoring sessions had been conducted online across the state the previous year. The program was available for K-12 students and for intro level university students. The service was offered every day of the week. Based on feedback from students, 98 percent of the reporting students were able to complete their homework on time, 96 percent thought the service helped improve their grades, 98 percent felt the service increased their confidence, and 98 percent would recommend the program to a friend. He stated that advocates of the program were concerned that being subsumed inside another allocation would leave them in the dark. The request was to receive their own allocation.

[6:22:08 PM](#)

Representative Galvin shared that she had visited many schools throughout the state, and she had heard from many students that they had used the program. She highlighted that with 9,000 students using the service, it was a cost of \$0.83 each. She stressed the program was a "golden jewel." She believed the request made sense. She supported the amendment.

Co-Chair Edgmon called the question.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Galvin, Hannan, Josephson, Ortiz, Edgmon  
OPPOSED: Cronk, Coulombe, Stapp, Tomaszewski, Foster, Johnson

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 96 FAILED (5/6).

[6:24:05 PM](#)

Co-Chair Johnson believed the amendment process was concluded. She thanked members.

[6:24:26 PM](#)

AT EASE

[6:27:03 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Representative Coulombe MOVED to RESCIND action on Amendment N 18 (copy on file). [Note: Amendment N 18 was previously considered and failed on a vote of 5/6 during the 4/1/24 morning meeting. See separate minutes for detail.]

Representative Coulombe explained that the amendment would cut slightly over \$40 million UGF in vacancies. She stated they were finished with the other amendments and as of Amendment 70 the committee had added \$48 million to the budget. Her amendment would remove \$44 million. She stated that the amendment could provide headroom in the budget.

She remarked that a lot of priorities had been passed during the amendment process. She requested another vote on the amendment within the context.

Co-Chair Johnson acknowledged Representative Mike Prax in the room.

Representative Josephson was grateful to Representative Coulombe offering Amendment N 18 the second time; however, the amendment would cut almost \$12 million from the Department of Corrections. The committee had already cut \$32 million from the department. He stressed that the cut to Family and Community Services included the Alaska Psychiatric Institute, Office of Children's Services, and Juvenile Justice. He found the proposed cut to the governor's office to be impressive as it suggested someone was an equal opportunity player. The budget already cut \$10 million from Medicaid and the amendment would cut \$4 million from the Department of Health. The committee had added some money for prosecutors under the Department of Law and had cut some other funding. The amendment would cut \$2 million from the Department of Law. He did not see the problem letting the money lapse or letting it go into one of two other funds previously reviewed by Mr. Painter. He could not support the amendment.

[6:29:55 PM](#)

AT EASE

[6:30:25 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Johnson remarked that there had been a motion to call the question by Representative Cronk.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Tomaszewski, Stapp, Cronk, Coulombe, Johnson  
OPPOSED: Ortiz, Josephson, Hannan, Galvin, Edgmon, Foster

The MOTION to adopt Amendment N 18 FAILED (5/6).

Co-Chair Johnson thanked members for their work. She relayed that the amendment process was complete, and amendments would be incorporated into a new committee substitute to be considered on Friday.

Co-Chair Foster discussed the schedule for bill hearings.

HB 268 was HEARD and HELD for further consideration.

HB 270 was HEARD and HELD for further consideration.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[6:34:59 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.