

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

May 8, 2024

4:04 p.m.

4:04:37 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Foster called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, 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

Representative Bryce Edgmon, Co-Chair
Representative DeLena Johnson, Co-Chair

ALSO PRESENT

Senator Matt Claman, Sponsor; Emily Nenon, Alaska Government Relations Director, American Cancer Society and Cancer Action Network; Sylvan Robb, Director, Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development; Senator Kelly Merrick, Sponsor; Kerry Crocker, Staff, Senator Kelly Merrick; Hunter Lottsfeldt, Staff, Senator Bill Wielechowski.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Gail Braten, Self, Anchorage; Tim Jennings, Self, Anchorage; Beverly Wooley, Self, Big Lake; Brooke Lavender, ALS Care Services Manager, ALS Association, Girdwood; Jeffrey Schmitz, Director, Department of Motor Vehicles, Department of Administration; Doug Fifer, Retired, Anchorage Police Department, Norfolk, Virginia; Kelly

Manning, Deputy Director, Division of Innovation and Education Excellence, Department of Education and Early Development.

SUMMARY

HB 275 SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION KITS/TRACKING

HB 275 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

CSSB 74 (FIN)

PHYSICAL THERAPY LICENSURE COMPACT

CSSB 74 (FIN) was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

CSSB 75 (FIN)

AUD. & SPEECH-LANG INTERSTATE COMPACT

CSSB 75 (FIN) was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

CSSB 91 (FIN)

TELEHEALTH: MULTIDISCIPLINARY CARE TEAM

CSSB 91 (FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with seven "do pass" recommendations and one "no recommendation" recommendation and with one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

CSSB 95 (STA) am

LIC. PLATES: SPECIALTY ORGS/PEACE OFFICER

HCS CSSB 95 (STA) was REPORTED out of committee with eight "do pass" recommendations and one "no recommendation" recommendation and with one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Administration.

CSSB 99 (EDC)

FINANCIAL LITERACY PROGRAM IN SCHOOLS

CSSB 99 (EDC) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 228 EXTEND BOARD OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS

SB 228 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

Co-Chair Foster reviewed the meeting agenda. He noted that the committee would meet for roughly one hour before returning to the House floor.

#sb91

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 91 (FIN)

"An Act relating to telehealth; relating to multidisciplinary care teams; and relating to the practice of medicine."

[4:06:57 PM](#)

SENATOR MATT CLAMAN, SPONSOR, read from prepared remarks:

Good afternoon, Co-Chairs and members of the House Finance Committee. For the record, this is Matt Claman, Senator for District H in West Anchorage.

Our office began work on Senate Bill 91 in the summer of 2022 after we were contacted by a constituent who had recently been diagnosed with ALS, a rare degenerative disease that leads to paralysis and death within 2 to 5 years. There is no cure for ALS.

Upon receiving her diagnosis, Sheila Swanson flew to Seattle to receive specialty treatment at an ALS multidisciplinary care clinic, where multiple types of healthcare professionals work together to treat her complex illness. The multidisciplinary care team model of healthcare has become the standard of care for people with ALS because it's proven to extend their quality of life. When Sheila was ready to return home after treatment, she was told that she could continue to receive telehealth care from her physician, but she would need to fly to Seattle to receive in-person care from the other seven members of her multidisciplinary care team, including a respiratory therapist, speech language pathologist, a physical therapist, and other health care providers.

Sheila travels each quarter to receive care from her multidisciplinary care team, but there will come a day that she is unable to do so. Sheila's written testimony is included in your bill packet, and I encourage you to read her letter to learn about her experience.

Receiving the kind of care Sheila needs is not possible in Alaska. There are about 30 Alaskans with ALS diagnoses and no clinics that specialize in this area of care. I would prefer for this healthcare to be available in Alaska, but as a practical matter, specialized care for rare diseases is available in large cities with major medical centers and a higher volume of patients.

In 2022, the legislature passed House Bill 265, which created a framework in statute for various in-state healthcare professions to practice telehealth and ensured Alaskans' access to critical health care. SB 91 only amends House Bill 265 for out-of-state providers by adding members of out-of-state "multidisciplinary care teams" as an option for telehealth when an Alaskan is suffering from a life-threatening condition and the multidisciplinary care is not reasonably available in-state.

To address patient protection, SB 91 ensures that all out-of-state members of multidisciplinary care teams are subject to Alaska's regulatory authority. SB 91 also aligns multidisciplinary care teams with the current registration process for Alaska's telemedicine business registry.

Senate Bill 91 will expand telehealth options so that Alaskans with life-threatening health conditions can receive the specialized care they need while remaining at home and in their local support network whenever possible.

Thank you for hearing this legislation today. If the Committee would like, my staff, Claire Lubke, will take you through a sectional analysis of the bill. I'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

[4:10:53 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster moved to invited testimony.

GAIL BRATEN, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), and TIM JENNINGS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified at the same time. Mr. And Ms. Braten were both long-time residents of Alaska. Mr. Braten shared that he has Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). Ms. Braten stated that

healthcare for ALS was a challenge and SB 91 would allow the Braten's to remain in Alaska for part of the treatment via telehealth. The disease was tremendously difficult, and the disease progresses rapidly with the loss of bodily functions. She stressed that there was no known cure, but research was advancing at a fast pace. She shared that they were informed that a multidisciplinary collaborative approach among a multiple disciplined healthcare team provided that best care. Alaska lacked specialized, multidisciplinary care teams for ALS and other rare, life-threatening diseases. She delineated that they travelled to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota in February 2024 to attend an ALS Multidisciplinary Clinic. They met with a neurologist, physical rehabilitation specialist, speech pathologist, registered dietician, occupational therapist, respiratory therapist, research coordinator for clinical trials, and a social worker. It was recommended that we attend the clinic every 3 months. Travel was time consuming, expensive, and eventually, it would become more and more difficult to travel. However, Mr. Braten would still need the expertise and developing therapies found at the Mayo Clinic. Telemedicine with the healthcare team will be key to managing his disease, but unless SB 91 passes, that will not be an option. She emphasized that time was critical for Mr. Braten to continue his multidisciplinary care. She urged the committee to adopt the legislation. Ms. Braten thanked the committee.

[4:15:33 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster OPENED public testimony.

EMILY NENON, ALASKA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS DIRECTOR, AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY AND CANCER ACTION NETWORK, favored the legislation. She voiced that telehealth created more options in healthcare. She reported that 85 percent of all cancer care was available locally. However, for a small number of patients outside access to care was critical. She exemplified a follow up appointment after treatment or surgery as a reason for telehealth. A telehealth appointment would allow the patient to continue care relieving the burden of travel.

Representative Hannan recounted that the bill had been described to be related to terminal diagnoses. She asked if all individuals with a cancer diagnosis would be able to receive services via telehealth. Ms. Nenon answered that

when the original telehealth bill was adopted the definition of life threatening was included and currently in statute. She delineated that the definition was based on federal law that applied to any condition that without intervention a person's life would be shortened. Therefore, without intervention the condition would progress, and it applied to stage 1 cancer and other conditions. She concluded that it applied to timely intervention.

[4:19:23 PM](#)

Representative Galvin asked about deep depression and anything along the lines of mental health. She asked whether telehealth applied if one could not get the care in Alaska. Ms. Nenon replied that she was not a healthcare provider. She thought that there were many mental health conditions that could be life threatening without proper intervention.

[4:20:28 PM](#)

BEVERLY WOOLEY, SELF, BIG LAKE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the legislation. She elaborated that HB 265 (Health Care Services by Telehealth, Chapter 38 SLA 22, 07/13/2022) created a statutory framework for telehealth provided by out-of-state physicians offering greater access to care. The bill went further allowing multidisciplinary care teams to also participate in telehealth. She shared that she was a 20 year cancer survivor and often needed to travel out-of-state for care related to earlier treatment. She delineated that treating cancer was complex and often required a multi-disciplinary team; the standard of care at cancer center throughout the world. Currently, telehealth with out-of-state providers were only allowed between the patient and the physician. However, much of her care and the care of other cancer patients was provided by other members of the physician's team like a nurse or physical therapist, etc. She emphasized that it would be a great benefit to her and other Alaskans to receive care via telehealth without having to fly out of state for a brief or follow up appointment. The bill would alleviate much of the issues regarding travelling for follow up appointments with members of a physician's multidisciplinary care team. She urged the committee to pass the bill.

[4:24:22 PM](#)

BROOKE LAVENDER, ALS CARE SERVICES MANAGER, ALS ASSOCIATION, GIRWOOD (via teleconference), spoke in support of SB 91. She shared that the organization's mission was to serve individuals with ALS and ensure they have support and access to care. Alaska was one of two states that did not have an ALS multidisciplinary care team. She elucidated that traveling for care was a financial burden and added a physical and emotional toll on patients and families. She had awarded several quality of life grants in the current year so patients could travel out-of-state to see their multidisciplinary care team. The bill would reduce the current burden. The goal was to make multidisciplinary care more available to community members and improve quality of life. Alaska had an above average prevalence of ALS and the fewest resources. The bill would offer the access to care. She thanked the committee.

Co-Chair Foster CLOSED Public Testimony.

Co-Chair Foster CLOSED Public Testimony for SB 34, which was left open during the morning meeting.

SYLVAN ROBB, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS, AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, reviewed the new Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) fiscal impact note dated May 5, 2024. She indicated that the fiscal note showed a first year cost of \$159.3 thousand that would continue into the out years in Designated General Funds (DGF) and the fund source was Receipt Services where the costs were paid for by the licensees' fees. The additional cost reflected the need for an additional investigator.

[4:29:01 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster noted the committee could hear the sectional analysis if desired.

Representative Hannan was a strong supporter of the bill. She looked at lines 11-12 on page 1 of the bill and read: "service, as provided by the multidisciplinary care team, that is not reasonably available in the state." She wondered if the language was in the original bill. She was concerned by the language "not reasonably available in the state." She offered that there were areas of the state lacking certain specialists but existed in other parts of

the state. She wondered if it precluded someone if their preferred medical team was out-of-state. Senator Claman responded that the language was modified during the bill moving through the committee process. The section was specific to a multidisciplinary care team. Therefore if one type of specialist was available in the state but was not part of the multidisciplinary care team the language did not place any limitations on a person seeking telehealth for a specialist on their multidisciplinary care team out-of-state. He emphasized that the phrase only applied to multidisciplinary care teams. Representative Hannan wanted to know if the phrase could be eliminated, and the same goal could be achieved. She was concerned over how insurance companies would interpret the language and restrict coverage. She wondered if the language was critical, or whether the language was the only way to reach a compromise for the bill.

[4:32:08 PM](#)

Senator Claman answered that the language had been worked out with a number of interested parties and the language "not reasonably available" was familiar to the courts and there was flexibility in the standard. He reiterated that it was not a strict standard. He stated that the language was worked on in a number of iterations. Currently, the state lacked any multidisciplinary healthcare anywhere in Alaska that treat the conditions discussed in the bill.

Representative Coulombe understood that the service could not currently be provided in Alaska because the team was not registered in Alaska and would need to register with the state in order to provide telehealth. She wondered where the medical board fit in the process. Senator Claman answered that HB 265 required a business registry and not a registry for the individual physician. He exemplified that the University of Washington Medical Centers registered in the state and all of the physicians licensed there were able to provide telehealth to Alaskans. He referenced Sheila Swanson who had been going to Seattle for ALS care and was able to receive services via telehealth in Alaska. A multidisciplinary care team could have members in different medical businesses. In that case, all the businesses were required to register in the state to allow the team members to participate in telehealth in Alaska. In addition, once registered, the business would become subject to investigations regarding the care provided.

[4:35:23 PM](#)

Representative Coulombe surmised that the state medical board still had some disciplinary power over the team. She wondered how the board intersected in the process. Senator Claman responded affirmatively and affirmed the boards oversight jurisdiction due to the registration.

Senator Claman appreciated the bill hearing.

Co-Chair Foster asked for members to inform him if they did not anticipate submitting amendments and wanted to move bills faster.

Representative Josephson supported moving the bill.

[4:37:07 PM](#)

AT EASE

[4:40:48 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Foster noted they had to be back on the floor at 5:00 p.m.

Representative Stapp MOVED to REPORT CSSB 91(FIN) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSSB 91(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with seven "do pass" recommendations and one "no recommendation" recommendation and with one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

Co-Chair Foster thanked Senator Claman.

#sb95

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 95(STA) am

"An Act relating to special request specialty organization registration plates; relating to special registration plates commemorating peace officers killed in the line of duty; and providing for an effective date."

[4:41:48 PM](#)

SENATOR KELLY MERRICK, SPONSOR, she reviewed the bill with prepared remarks. She explained that SB 95 tasked the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) with issuing specialty plates and removed the requirement for legislation. The bill saved money by passing the cost of developing and issuing the plate onto the organization rather than the state. She stated that it was originally a license plate bill to end license plate bills. After a Senate amendment, the bill was the license plate bill to end license plate bills with the exception of one more license plate. She continued that after a House State Affairs amendment several more license plates were added. She believed that the bill created a state efficiency and asked the committee for its support of the legislation.

[4:43:27 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster OPENED Public Testimony.

Co-Chair Foster CLOSED Public Testimony.

Co-Chair Foster asked for a review of the fiscal note.

[4:45:00 PM](#)

JEFFREY SCHMITZ, DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES, DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION (via teleconference), reviewed the new fiscal impact note for the Department of Administration allocated to Motor Vehicles dated May 6, 2024. He explained that the total development cost was \$14,000 per different plate, which was described in the fiscal note analysis on page 2. The new organizations would pay the development costs. The assumptions used for the fiscal note was based on 16 new organizations per year, the development costs, and the anticipated revenues in addition to any additional fees the plate may generate above the \$100 fee established in the legislation. The fee may be set higher than \$100 as well.

Representative Josephson relayed a personal experience. He asked if the plate would identify a specific police officer or whether it was for all peace officers.

KERRY CROCKER, STAFF, SENATOR KELLY MERRICK, replied that the bill defined peace officers as follows: state trooper,

municipal police officer, correctional officer, village public safety officer (VPSO), an officer assigned to a court, and any other public servant vested by law with a duty to maintain public order or to make arrests. He added that if someone wanted to honor a fallen officer, they could purchase the plate. The plate would not specify a particular officer.

Co-Chair Foster moved to invited testimony.

DOUG FIFER, RETIRED, ANCHORAGE POLICE DEPARTMENT, NORFOLK, VIRGINIA (via teleconference), shared that he was a lifelong Alaskan born in Homer. He had retired in 2021 after 25 years of service. The idea of registration plates commemorating peace officers killed in the line of duty came to him as he traveled around the country noticing that most states had plates honoring fallen officers. In 2017, he had contacted state senators who overwhelmingly supported the idea. However, 8 years later there was still no law or license plate. He listed many other organizations that had specialty plates and asked that fallen officer plates be considered. The state had 50 officers killed in the line of duty in its history. He participated in a national memorial bicycle ride to honor fallen officers that culminated in Washington D.C. as a somber reminder of those officers killed in the line of duty. He asked the committee for support.

[4:51:26 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster inquired whether any committee members wanted to submit an amendment.

Representative Cronk stated it had come to his attention that the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) could not issue a second same license plate unless it was specifically authorized in statute. He exemplified not allowing the purchase of a second personalized license plate. He asked if the sponsor would be willing to accept a friendly amendment to allow a second plate. Senator Merrick replied that a personalized plate was not the same as a specialty plate. She relayed that a specialty plate references a non-profit organization. She asked for clarification. Representative Cronk answered that they both fall under the same title AS 28.10.108(g). He asked the director of DMV to clarify.

Mr. Schmitz responded that there was a difference between specialized and personalized plates. He agreed that current law passed two years ago authorized that only one plate was necessary. The state previously required that 2 licensed plates were displayed. Therefore, DMV only issued one plate based on AS 28.10 108(g). He reiterated that only one plate was issued as directed by statute.

[4:54:48 PM](#)

Representative Cronk left it up to the senator and stressed that he offered the amendment as a friendly amendment.

Senator Merrick did not oppose the idea. She thought the important thing was that the license plates were assigned a cost of \$100. She thought it would be important to find out if a second plate would have the same additional cost. Representative Cronk deferred to DMV.

Mr. Schmitz answered that the second plate would cost \$30, which was the same as a personalized plate.

Co-Chair Foster asked Representative Cronk how he wanted to proceed. Representative Cronk would be willing to offer a friendly amendment.

Co-Chair Foster noted that they did not need to set an amendment deadline and the committee could come back later in the evening when the amendment could be offered. He suggested that Representative Cronk work with the division.

Senator Merrick interjected that she felt comfortable with Representative Cronk offering a friendly amendment.

Representative Stapp suggested recessing and coming back with the amendment after floor.

Representative Hannan asked about the fiscal note. She cited the fiscal note analysis that estimated the development of \$14,000 per plate and 19 new plate types per year. She thought the number seemed high. She also recalled that the state changed from two license plates from one two years prior to deliver a cost savings. She recalled the sponsor had advocated that the savings would make the costs less than \$30 per plate. She wondered if all license plates typically cost \$30 per second plate.

Co-Chair Edgmon, and Co-Chair Johnson joined the meeting.

5:00:03 PM

RECESSED

7:16:06 PM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Foster returned to hearing SB 95.

Representative Cronk stated that he would not offer the amendment.

Representative Hannan voiced that many people believed that by requesting a specialty plate the revenue went to the organization. She stated that was not what happened. She wondered what happened to the revenue. Senator Merrick understood that the only current organization that did receive revenue from license plates was the State Council on the Arts. She deferred to her staff for further answer.

Mr. Crocker answered that the amount was often so minuscule it was not included in the operating budget. Representative Hannan inquired whether the bill changed the method of accountability leaving it up to the division. She wondered whether the legislature would need to obtain the amount from the division and appropriate it. Mr. Crocker pointed to page 4, line 14 of the bill [... organization plate may charge a fee on first issuance and renewal of the plates...] and responded that the language allowed organizations to charge an additional fee to recoup the revenue. He offered that it would be up to DMV and the administration to ensure the revenue was received and the legislature to appropriate it.

7:20:15 PM

Representative Stapp MOVED to REPORT HCS CSSB 95(STA)am out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note.

HCS CSSB 95(STA)am was REPORTED out of committee with eight "do pass" recommendations and one "no recommendation" recommendation and with one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Administration.

Senator Merrick thanked the committee.

#sb99

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 99 (EDC)

"An Act establishing a financial literacy education program for public schools; and providing for an effective date."

7:21:10 PM

Co-Chair Foster discussed the agenda items and how he would proceed through the remainder of session.

HUNTER LOTTSFELDT, STAFF, SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI, provided a description of the bill. He summarized that the legislation created a half credit requirement for financial literacy for high school students. He explained that there was a list of 14 topics found on page 2 of the bill. The point of the bill was to teach students how to balance a check book. He noted that 22 states had the same requirement and some school districts in the state required the course. Alaska led the nation in credit card debt at \$8,026 per person with the second highest state's debt at \$7,000. The average student loan debt was \$34,000. In addition, only one-third of Americans could cover a \$400. emergency. The American Public Education Foundation awarded Alaska a grade of F on its national report card for financial literacy. He delineated that the bill provided a flexible pathway to adopt the mandate. The program must be completed before graduation and the school district could choose how they wanted design and offer the course.

7:25:08 PM

Co-Chair Foster OPENED public testimony.

Co-Chair Foster CLOSED public testimony.

Co-Chair Foster asked for a review of the fiscal note.

KELLY MANNING, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF INNOVATION AND EDUCATION EXCELLENCE, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT (via teleconference), reviewed the published (FN2 (EED) fiscal impact note dated January 10, 2024, in the amount of \$71,000 in one-time funds. The appropriation supported the development of a rubric to evaluate courses against the requirements and would bring together a group of 20 educators that included paying a stipend. The

appropriation also enabled the hiring of a facilitator to develop the rubric and evaluation process and lastly, \$6,000 was for legal fees to implement regulation changes.

[7:27:18 PM](#)

Representative Galvin emphasized that she was fully supportive of the bill and the concept of learning life skills and financial literacy. She was concerned about the multitude of unfunded mandates and how class sizes were growing and growing. She asked the department how 20 teachers and stake holders would be enough to put the mandate in place and train hundreds if not thousands of teachers. Ms. Manning responded that the 20 educators would comprise a committee participating in the development of the rubric and evaluation of curriculum at the start of the process. She elaborated that the group would help create a process to ensure a course aligned with the standards. Moving forward the department would ensure that any curriculum districts submitted for approval would follow the process. The districts would be responsible for training educators and providing resources and the department would ensure the curriculum aligned with the requirements. Representative Galvin understood that the department would hand the curriculum to districts. She asked if there would be any support for districts in training or classroom management. Ms. Manning replied that the provisions of the bill required the department to evaluate the districts' courses and the districts to implement the course.

Mr. Lottsfeldt pointed to page 2, line 4 of the bill that included language "to the maximum extent practicable," with the understanding that smaller districts may not be able to offer the course. He delineated that in the House Education Committee, Representative Himschoot included an amendment requiring a list of open source free curriculum was available to the teacher.

[7:32:50 PM](#)

Representative Galvin favored the language "maximum extent practicable." She referenced the large class sizes and felt that the current policy had left children behind, and some districts were cutting music programs and closing schools. She would be supportive of the bill, but she was concerned that the underlying problem of ensuring there was

predictable and adequate funding for schools was not settled.

Representative Hannan noted that the mandate required an increase in graduation credits. She asked if there was a graduation requirement. She did not find it in the bill. She determined that SB 99 referenced a program, and she was trying to determine if it was a specific requirement to graduate or if merely an equivalent program had to be offered. Mr. Lottsfeldt answered it was an additional half credit requirement for graduation. He pointed to page 1, line 13 of the bill and read: "...A school district may provide the program through one or more courses offered by the school district..." The sponsor wanted to leave it up to the school districts whether to integrate existing course work already offered. He viewed it being taught in other courses as well and not all in one course. Representative Hannan thought that was the reason the bill was confusing. She exemplified teaching an economics course and wondered if it needed to account for all of the requirements. She asked if the requirement was for a new credit, a change in curriculum, or up to the districts to decide if existing courses fulfilled the requirement.

[7:37:32 PM](#)

Mr. Lottsfeldt responded that for a school district such as Haines that had a financial literacy requirement would not require the additional half credit. He understood that existing programs could count, but a junior achievement or other program would need to account for the half credit which equated to 60 to 90 hours of instruction. Representative Hannan relayed that she had graduated from the Anchorage School District and had been required to take personal finance. She asked if Mr. Lottsfeldt knew if it was still a requirement. Mr. Lottsfeldt answered that when he attended West Anchorage High School it had not been a requirement.

Representative Stapp thought it was very important to teach personal finance. He relayed that he would cross sponsor the bill. He thought it was very relevant and strongly favored the concept. He would like to move the bill.

Representative Cronk did not disagree with the bill, but he reported that "they" spent two years arguing over local

control. However, the bill mandated that school districts teach the course.

[7:40:48 PM](#)

Representative Ortiz agreed that financial literacy was a good thing to learn; however, he shared the concerns about local control. He referenced the document specifying that Alaska received an F grade in financial literacy and asked how it was determined. Mr. Lottsfeldt answered that he did not know how the rating had been determined. Representative Ortiz was skeptical that the requirements could be evaluated, and a curriculum could be developed for \$71,000. He asked how it would work. Mr. Lottsfeldt answered that he did not know. He understood that the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) put forward the amount that was necessary to do the work. Representative Ortiz commented that the mandates were "all good stuff," but the reality was it would not all happen through the process outlined in the fiscal note.

[7:43:22 PM](#)

Mr. Lottsfeldt agreed with Representative Ortiz's statements. He noted that there was an interest in creating a more real world experience for students upon graduation but there were legitimate questions regarding funding. He understood the concerns.

Representative Coulombe had similar concerns. She noted that the bill contained "a lot of shalls." She relayed the following from the bill [page 2, lines 2 through 3]: "A school may not issue a secondary school diploma to a student unless the student has completed a financial literacy program..." She agreed that students should be taught financial literacy. However, she was shocked there was not pushback about the types of bills from the same people advocating for local control. She asked if a district already offered a financial curriculum whether it could it be grandfathered in. Mr. Lottsfeldt answered that the intention was for districts to use what already existed if it met the rubric. The sponsor was trying to make the mandate as easy as possible to adopt, realizing the constraints. Representative Coulombe opined that school districts should be teaching reading, civics, and financial literacy courses but the state thought they were not. Hence, there was a READS Act, a Civics bill, a Financial

Literacy bill. She was unsure whether she supported the bill. She supported teaching financial literacy, but they were adding more and more layers of bureaucracy for school districts. She believed that there was an "obvious trend" for the state to keep telling districts what to do and she did not support it.

Mr. Lottsfeldt thanked the committee.

Co-Chair Foster set an amendment deadline of Friday, May 10 at 5:00 p.m.

CSSB 99(EDC) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Foster discussed the likely schedule and agenda for the following day.

Representative Hannan interjected that the committee had heard another education bill earlier in the day. She relayed that she taught social studies for 30 years. She announced that she would not be voting for any of the bills where the legislature was dictating curriculum to students. She argued that school districts taught courses in different ways. She presumed that if a rural school district did not require a course to graduate, they had a specific reason for choosing not to require it. She did not support mandating a district teach something when they may need to focus on applied math or other subjects. She indicated that there were three bills heading to the floor where the legislature was mandating specific curriculum with no extra money. She stated that Junior Achievement as a program was incredibly successful in Juneau. However, when the class that always hosted Junior Achievement as a club was cut Junior Achievement was eliminated. She believed that everyone supported teaching better financial literacy and civics engagement, but she opposed the legislature overreaching into areas of local control.

Co-Chair Foster noted that SB 228 would be removed from the schedule for the following day.

Co-Chair Foster RECESSED the meeting until the following morning [note: the meeting never reconvened].

[7:52:47 PM](#)
RECESSED