

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 5, 2023

2:57 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Justin Ruffridge, Vice Chair
Representative Mike Prax
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Ashley Carrick
Representative Zack Fields

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Stanley Wright
Representative Jesse Sumner, Chair

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Will Stapp

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 166

"An Act relating to firefighting substances; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HB 166 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 137

"An Act relating to an interstate physical therapy licensure compact; relating to the licensure of physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, occupational therapists, and occupational therapy assistants; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 138

"An Act relating to an audiology and speech-language interstate compact; relating to the practice of audiology and the practice of speech-language pathology; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 145

"An Act relating to loans in an amount of \$25,000 or less; relating to deferred deposit advances; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 123

"An Act relating to commercial motor vehicle drivers' license requirements; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING RESCHEDULED to 5/8/23

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 166

SHORT TITLE: PFAS: USE FOR FIREFIGHTING, DISPOSAL

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) STAPP

04/19/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/19/23	(H)	L&C, FIN
04/28/23	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/28/23	(H)	Heard & Held
04/28/23	(H)	MINUTE(L&C)
05/05/23	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 137

SHORT TITLE: PHYSICAL THERAPY LICENSURE COMPACT

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) WRIGHT

03/27/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/27/23	(H)	L&C, FIN
04/21/23	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/21/23	(H)	<Bill Hearing Canceled>
04/24/23	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/24/23	(H)	Heard & Held
04/24/23	(H)	MINUTE(L&C)
05/05/23	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 138

SHORT TITLE: AUD. & SPEECH-LANG INTERSTATE COMPACT

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) WRIGHT

03/27/23	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/27/23	(H)	L&C, FIN
04/21/23	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/21/23	(H)	<Bill Hearing Canceled>

04/24/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/24/23 (H) Heard & Held
04/24/23 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
05/05/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 145

SHORT TITLE: LOANS UNDER \$25,000; PAYDAY LOANS
SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) WRIGHT

03/29/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/29/23 (H) L&C
04/14/23 (H) FIN REFERRAL ADDED AFTER L&C
04/14/23 (H) BILL REPRINTED
04/14/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/14/23 (H) Heard & Held
04/14/23 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
04/19/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/19/23 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/21/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/21/23 (H) Heard & Held
04/21/23 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
05/03/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
05/03/23 (H) <Bill Hearing Rescheduled to 05/05/23>
05/05/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

CLIFTON COGHILL, Staff
Representative Will Stapp
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of the prime sponsor,
Representative Stapp, gave a brief overview of HB 166.

DAVID PRUHS, Mayor
City of Fairbanks
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 166.

PATRICE LEE, representing self
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 166.

SCOTT RAYGOR, Chief
Fairbanks Fire Department
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 166.

RACHAEL GUNN, Staff
Representative Stanley Wright
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of the prime sponsor, Representative Wright, gave a brief recap of HB 137 and HB 138.

ERICK CORDERO GIORGANA, Vice President
Operations
Alaska Policy Forum
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 137.

ALEC KAY, President
Alaska Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 137.

MARGE STONEKING, Lobbyist
AARP Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 137.

DAVID JAMISON, representing self
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 138.

ANDREA TOTH, President
Alaska Speech and Hearing Association
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 138.

PI RIORDAN-RANDALL, Staff
Representative Stanley Wright
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of the prime sponsor, Representative Wright, gave a summary of changes for the proposed committee substitute for HB 145.

ROBERT SCHMIDT, Director
Alaska Division of Banking and Securities
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 145.

TRACY RENO, Chief of Examinations
Alaska Division of Banking and Securities
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 145.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:15:21 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR JUSTIN RUFFRIDGE called the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:15 p.m. Representatives Saddler, Prax, Carrick, Fields, and Ruffridge were present at the call to order.

HB 166-PFAS: USE FOR FIREFIGHTING, DISPOSAL

[3:16:20 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 166, "An Act relating to firefighting substances; and providing for an effective date."

[3:16:38 PM](#)

CLIFTON COGHILL, Staff, Representative Will Stapp, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of the prime sponsor, Representative Stapp, gave a brief overview of HB 166. He said that perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been found to be hazardous materials, and HB 166 would restrict the usage of PFAS, except to the oil and gas industry. The proposed bill would also require the state to retrieve some PFAS containing foam for disposal.

[3:17:41 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on HB 166.

[3:18:06 PM](#)

DAVID PRUHS, Mayor, City of Fairbanks, stated that he supports the bill, as it would provide a stopgap measure for fighting certain types of fires while moving away from harmful PFAS containing foams. He said that the stopgap would prevent

Fairbanks from having to spend more on new firefighting equipment amidst a tight budget.

[3:19:41 PM](#)

PATRICE LEE, representing self, expressed support for the bill because it would address future contamination from PFAS.

[3:21:00 PM](#)

SCOTT RAYGOR, Chief, Fairbanks Fire Department, expressed support for HB 166. He said that Fairbanks has spent millions of dollars connecting residences to city water because of PFAS contamination. He suggested that this would be a good first step in eliminating "forever chemicals." He expressed some concern in the section of the bill which addresses forest firefighting materials.

[3:23:14 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE, after ascertaining there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 166.

[3:23:27 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to report HB 166 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 166 was reported out of the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

[3:23:51 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:23 p.m. to 3:25 p.m.

HB 137-PHYSICAL THERAPY LICENSURE COMPACT
HB 138-AUD. & SPEECH-LANG INTERSTATE COMPACT

[3:25:40 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 137, "An Act relating to an interstate physical therapy licensure compact; relating to the licensure of physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, occupational therapists, and occupational therapy assistants; and providing for an effective date." and "An Act relating to an audiology and speech-language interstate compact; relating to the practice of

audiology and the practice of speech-language pathology; and providing for an effective date."

[3:26:00 PM](#)

RACHAEL GUNN, Staff, Representative Stanley Wright, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Wright, prime sponsor, stated that HB 137 would bring Alaska in the Physical Therapist Licensure Compact. She addressed HB 138 [which was heard during the meeting at 3:35 p.m.], on behalf of the prime sponsor, Representative Wright. She stated that HB 138 would bring the state into the Audiologist and Speech Language Therapist Compact.

[3:26:37 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE opened public testimony on HB 137 [and HB 138].

[3:26:56 PM](#)

ERICK CORDERO GIORGANA, Vice President, Operations, Alaska Policy Forum (APF), stated that APF supports both HB 137 and HB 138 because these proposed bills would increase the opportunities for professionals in these fields. He explained that licensure compacts reduce barriers caused by the differences in requirements from state to state. He argued that these compacts would ultimately attract more professionals to Alaska.

[3:29:22 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE FIELDS expressed concern about APF's support for the proposed legislation; however, he stated that he would continue his support.

[3:29:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether APF has a blanket position on licensure compacting.

MR. GIORGANA answered that it supports licensure compacts regardless of the [medical profession] addressed in a bill.

[3:30:43 PM](#)

ALEC KAY, President, Alaska Chapter of the American Physical Therapy Association, stated that the American Physical Therapy Association supports HB 137, as it will improve safety and access to care. He said that Alaska faces delays in gaining licensure, leading professionals to choose other states, which has a negative economic and healthcare impact on the state.

[3:33:44 PM](#)

MARGE STONEKING, Lobbyist, AARP Alaska, stated that AARP Alaska supports HB 137 and HB 138, as these bills would increase access to care for Alaska's aging population. She expressed the opinion that the compacts would reduce the barriers when recruiting professionals from other states.

[3:35:26 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 137.

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that HB 137 was held over.

HB 138-AUD. & SPEECH-LANG INTERSTATE COMPACT

[3:35:39 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR announced that the next order of business would be [the continuation of] HOUSE BILL NO. 138, "An Act relating to an audiology and speech-language interstate compact; relating to the practice of audiology and the practice of speech-language pathology; and providing for an effective date."

[3:35:52 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE [continued] public testimony on HB 138.

[3:36:18 PM](#)

DAVID JAMISON, representing self, stated that he is a speech therapist and offered support for HB 138. He said that there is a severe shortage of speech therapists in Alaska and expressed the opinion that joining the compact would reduce barriers in recruitment.

[3:37:45 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER questioned the current length of time before licensure would be granted.

MR. JAMISON answered that, before licensure is granted, there are other required certifications. He said that the entire process can take up to six months. In response to a follow-up question, he said that the bill would reduce the time frame by at least six weeks. He answered that the proposed bill would not reduce the amount of time required to gain certification for the various insurance companies.

[3:42:58 PM](#)

ANDREA TOTH, President, Alaska Speech and Hearing Association (ASHA), shared that she has worked as a speech therapist since 1993 and expressed support for HB 138. She argued that joining the compact would improve care for military families and allow military spouses to begin work more quickly in their associated medical fields. She stated that ASHA supports the bill, and, because Alaska does not have an audiology and speech language therapist board, ASHA could provide oversight.

[3:44:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER questioned the licensure certification process for audiologists and speech language therapists.

MS. TOTH answered that national certification is required to receive a license in Alaska and offered that ASHA is already involved in this process.

[3:45:48 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 138.

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that HB 138 was held over.

HB 145-LOANS UNDER \$25,000; PAYDAY LOANS

[3:46:01 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 145, "An Act relating to loans in an amount of \$25,000 or less; relating to deferred deposit advances; and providing for an effective date."

[3:46:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 145, Version 33-LS0508\U, Dunmire, 3/28/23, as a working document. There being no objection, Version U was before the committee.

[3:47:17 PM](#)

PI RIORDAN-RANDALL, Staff, Representative Stanley Wright, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Wright, prime sponsor, gave the summary of changes under Version U [copy included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The committee substitute for HB145 version U would make the following changes:

- **Amend Section 3**, adding new subsection (d) to AS 06.20.025 to clarify that lenders who issue loans to Alaskan residents where the borrower completes the in-person or electronic transaction while being physically present must register as a small loan licensee.

- o This change would protect Alaskan consumers by regulating lenders who say they do not have to register in Alaska because their server or other infrastructure is located out of state.

- o It would also provide clarity to businesses who may be unclear if they need to register.

Add the following new sections:

- **Section 4**, adding new section AS 06.20.025 "National Registry" allowing the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development to participate in the Nationwide Multistate Licensing System and Registry (NMLS) and utilize the registry to register licensees and have licensees apply, renew an application, submit reports, pay fees, submit reports, upload surety bonds, challenge information input by the department into the registry, and input other information and forms into the registry.

- o This change should reduce the administrative burden on licensees. Currently, licensees must complete a pdf application, email it to the division, and mail a check or fax a credit card authorization to pay application fees. These processes should be

streamlined if licensees apply through NMLS, which is used in over 50 U.S. states and territories.

- Renewal applications would simply note any changes (versus having to fill out a full application each year), surety bonds could be uploaded by the insurance company, fees could be paid by ACH or credit card directly, and no more emails or PDFs to submit the application.

- o Additionally, this change will reduce the work required by the division to process applications.

- **Section 5**, amending AS 06.20.030(a) allowing the department to collect application investigation fees through the NMLS registry.

- **Section 6**, amending AS 06.20.030(b) allowing the department to collect application fees through the NMLS registry as well as bringing the licensing structure for small loan licenses to the modern era.

- o The proposed licensing structure is similar to the licensing structure currently found in deferred deposit advance (DDA or "payday") licensing.

- o This change is not expected to increase application fees on current small loan licensees and will keep fees constant for any DDA licensee who migrates to a small loan license.

- **Section 7**, repealing and reenacting AS 06.20.090 "Places of Business" to update the licensing structure of small loan licenses.

- **Section 8**, amending AS 06.20.170 "Periodic Examinations" to change the requirement that the department examine small loan licensees at least once every 18 months to "as often as necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter."

- o This change would reduce the regulatory burden and costs on licensees by allowing the division to examine based on risk rather than being calendar driven.

- o This "as needed" examination structure is found in mortgage (AS 06.60), money services (AS 06.55), and DDA lending (AS 06.50); this change would create consistency and fairness among programs.

- **Section 11**, adding new section AS 06.20.325 "Criminal Threats" to prohibit small loan licensees from threatening a borrower with criminal prosecution as a result of the borrower's default.

- o This change would increase consumer protections by implementing language similar to what is currently found in AS 06.50 (DDA or "payday" lending).

- **Section 12**, adding new paragraph to AS 06.20.900 "Definitions" defining "registry" as the Nationwide Multistate Licensing System (NMLS) and registry.

[3:52:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER questioned what Section 4 would cover.

[3:53:36 PM](#)

ROBERT SCHMIDT, Director, Alaska Division of Banking and Securities, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, answered that the division would use the Nationwide Multistate Licensing System and Registry (NMLS), and it is used for many types of financial and lending regulations, including mortgages.

[3:55:22 PM](#)

TRACY RENO, Chief of Examinations, Alaska Division of Banking and Securities, Department of Commerce, and Economic Development, stated that NMLS is already used in Alaska for mortgage lending, and for small, short-term loans in 33 other states.

[3:56:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER expressed concern about using NMLS for the purposes outlined in the proposed legislation.

[3:56:43 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:56 p.m. to 3:58 p.m.

[3:58:11 PM](#)

VICE CHAIR RUFFRIDGE announced that HB 145, Version U, was held over.

[3:58:43 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:58 p.m.