

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

May 3, 2024

3:34 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Jesse Sumner, Chair  
Representative Justin Ruffridge, Vice Chair  
Representative Mike Prax  
Representative Stanley Wright  
Representative Ashley Carrick

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Dan Saddler  
Representative Zack Fields

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

Occupational Safety and Health Review Board

Ryan Sharratt - Anchorage

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Alaska Labor Relations Agency

Tammy Schultz - Homer  
Emily Jackson-Hall - Kasilof

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Alaska Workers' Compensation Board

Mark Sayampanathan

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

TAMMY SCHULTZ, Appointee  
Alaska Labor Relations Agency  
Homer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Alaska Labor Relations Agency.

RYAN SHARRAT, Appointee  
Occupational Safety and Health Review Board  
Kodiak, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Occupational Safety and Health Review Board.

EMILY JACKSON-HALL, Appointee  
Kasilof, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Alaska Labor Relations Agency.

DON ETHERIDGE, Lobbyist  
Alaska AFL-CIO  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to Ms. Jackson-Hall's appointment.

MARK SAYAMPANATHAN, Appointee  
Alaska Workers' Compensation Board  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the Alaska Workers' Compensation Board.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:34:14 PM](#)

**CHAIR JESSE SUMNER** called the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:34 p.m. Representatives Ruffridge, Prax, Wright, Carrick, and Sumner were present at the call to order.

**CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :**  
**Occupational Safety and Health Review Board**  
**Alaska Labor Relations Agency**  
**Alaska Workers' Compensation Board**

[3:34:35 PM](#)

CHAIR SUMNER announced that the only order of business would be confirmation hearings of the various boards and commissions.

[3:35:11 PM](#)

TAMMY SCHULTZ, Appointee, Alaska Labor Relations Agency (ALRA), testified as appointee to the ALRA. She spoke to the wonderful opportunities she's had to hear and understand the labor relations issues in Alaska.

[3:36:32 PM](#)

CHAIR SUMNER opened public testimony on the appointment of Ms. Schultz. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[3:37:11 PM](#)

RYAN SHARRAT, Appointee, Occupational Safety and Health Review Board, testified as appointee to the Occupational Safety and Health Review Board. He spoke to his experience working with administrative law judges in reviewing occupational health and safety cases that lay the foundation for protecting the workforce in Alaska by providing regulatory guidance.

[3:38:41 PM](#)

CHAIR SUMNER opened public testimony on the appointment of Mr. Sharrat. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[3:39:21 PM](#)

EMILY JACKSON-HALL, Appointee, testified as appointee to the Alaska Labor Relations Agency (ALRA). She spoke to her experience working as a labor arbitrator and stressed that as a "professional neutral," she's never had her neutrality or fairness questioned. She shared that in a recent Senate confirmation hearing, she was surprised to hear three union representatives characterize her as "anti-union" due to an op-ed she wrote about the cost of healthcare. She added that a follow-up op-ed she wrote in 2023 addressed those concerns. She highlighted her extensive service in the U.S. Marine Corps and opined that the board needs a voice that supports both unions and local government/industry. She said she is eager to fulfill the public seat on the ALRA and committed to acting as a neutral for the benefit of Alaskans.

[3:42:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK thanked Ms. Jackson-Hall for her service. She referenced an op-ed by Ms. Jackson-Hall in the Fairbanks Daily News Minor about collective bargaining and asked whether collective bargaining facilitates harmonious and cooperative relations between government and its employees or whether it's better to negotiate one-on-one.

MS. JACKSON-HALL opined that collective bargaining for large groups of employees can help facilitate effective [negotiations]. She shared her belief that opinions can evolve, and that rigid thinking in the face of new information "doesn't help anyone."

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK relayed that there are 6,000 employees at the University of Alaska (UA) that represent one of the state's smaller collective bargaining entities. She asked whether Ms. Jackson-Hall would consider that a small group of employees.

MS. JACKSON-HALL described "large" as anything over 10 or 20 people, adding that scale matters.

[3:46:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX questioned the legal guidelines Ms. Jackson-Hall would follow as an arbitrator.

MS. JACKSON-HALL said, "read the law, follow the law," and opined that guiding case law should be read, understood, and followed with regard to the board's decisions on collective bargaining.

[3:48:15 PM](#)

CHAIR SUMNER opened public testimony on the appointment of Ms. Jackson-Hall.

[3:48:28 PM](#)

DON ETHERIDGE, Lobbyist, Alaska AFL-CIO, testified in opposition to Ms. Jackson-Hall's appointment. He opined that after reading the op-eds written by Ms. Jackson-Hall, the AFL-CIO does not believe she could be fair.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX asked for a copy of Ms. Jackson-Hall's op-eds.

MR. ETHERIDGE offered to follow up with the requested information.

[3:50:10 PM](#)

CHAIR SUMNER closed public testimony.

[3:50:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK asked whether there are any collective bargaining agreements under the purview of the ALRA that would be better negotiated on an independent basis.

MS. JACKSON-HALL answered no, not at this time. She noted that she had provided the committee with a written statement and her second op-ed that addressed her evolving views. She stated that her original statement was uninformed because she was not an Alaska resident at the time of writing it. She said living in Alaska changed her perspective.

[3:52:41 PM](#)

MARK SAYAMPANATHAN, Appointee, Alaska Workers' Compensation Board, testified as appointee to the Alaska Workers' Compensation Board. He said he's interested in serving because it's important for injured workers to get a fair and honest hearing. He said he was appointed in mid-2023, and the feedback from his colleagues suggests that he's remained impartial.

[3:54:12 PM](#)

CHAIR SUMNER opened public testimony on the appointment of Mr. Sayampanathan. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

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The committee took a brief at-ease at 3:54 p.m.

[3:55:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to advance the confirmations of Ryan Sharrat to the Occupational Safety and Health Review Board; Tammy Schultz and Emily Jackson-Hall to the Alaska Labor Relations Agency; and Mark Sayampanathan to the Alaska Workers' Compensation Board for consideration in the joint session of the House and Senate. He reminded members that signing the reports

regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees, and that the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection. There being no objection, the confirmations were advanced.

[3:55:43 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:55 p.m. to 3:58 p.m.

[3:58:26 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.