

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 28, 2023

3:03 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Laddie Shaw, Chair  
Representative Stanley Wright, Vice Chair  
Representative Ben Carpenter  
Representative Craig Johnson  
Representative Jamie Allard  
Representative Jennie Armstrong  
Representative Andi Story

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE BILL NO. 2

"An Act relating to contracts with public agencies; and relating to the State of Israel."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 23

"An Act establishing the month of October as Filipino American History Month."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

Encouraging Congress to pass the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act or a similar bill.

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 2

SHORT TITLE: CONTRACTS: PROHIBIT ISRAEL DISCRIMINATION

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) VANCE

01/19/23 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23

01/19/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS

01/19/23 (H) STA  
02/28/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 23

SHORT TITLE: FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) MINA

01/19/23 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23  
01/19/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/19/23 (H) STA  
02/28/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE SARAH VANCE

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Introduced HB 2, as the prime sponsor.

JAKE ALMEIDA, Staff

Staff to Representative Sarah Vance

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 2, on behalf of Representative Vance, prime sponsor.

BORIS ZILBERMAN

Christians United for Israel

San Antonio, Texas

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented a PowerPoint presentation during the hearing on HB 2.

DAVID GOTTSTEIN

Christians United for Israel

San Antonio, Texas

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered invited testimony during the hearing on HB 2.

REPRESENTATIVE GENEVIEVE MINA

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented HB 23 and offered a PowerPoint presentation, as the prime sponsor.

ROSE HART, Staff

Representative Genevieve Mina

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 23, on behalf of Representative Mina, prime sponsor.

EDRIC CARRILLO, President

Filipino Community Inc.

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered invited testimony during the hearing on HB 23.

GABRIEL GARCIA, PhD, Professor of Public Health

University of Alaska Anchorage

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered public testimony during the hearing on HB 23.

E.J. DAVID

Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered invited testimony during the hearing on HB 23.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:03:51 PM](#)

**CHAIR LADDIE SHAW** called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:03 p.m. Representatives Wright, Carpenter, Johnson, Allard, Armstrong, Story, and Shaw were present at the call to order.

#### **HB 2-CONTRACTS: PROHIBIT ISRAEL DISCRIMINATION**

[3:04:55 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 2, "An Act relating to contracts with public agencies; and relating to the State of Israel."

[3:05:20 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:05:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SARAH VANCE, Alaska State Legislature, prime sponsor, introduced HB 2. She stated that HB 2 would provide an opportunity to recognize and honor Alaskans that helped shape

the state. She provided a historical summary of prominent Jewish settlers in Alaska.

[3:09:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**HB 2** prohibits a public agency from contracting with anyone who boycotts or discriminates against Israel on the basis of nationality, national origin, or religion. This bill simply ensures Alaskan's taxpayer dollars are not subsidizing any antisemitic efforts to achieve with boycotts what terrorists have failed to achieve with bombs: the destruction of the state of Israel. The goal of this legislation is to ensure the state does not become complicit in the effort to destroy Israel.

To date, 33 states have passed legislation with bipartisan support or advanced executive orders banning the state from investing in and/or engaging in contracts with entities that are boycotting Israel! Alaska may seem far removed from what takes place in the Middle East, but as a state we strive to do the right thing and to protect our interests. Israel and Alaska enjoy an important and mutually beneficial relationship. This includes Israel related investments by the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation along with Alaska's exports to Israel, which since 1996 total nearly \$62 million.

In addition, Alaska is a key site for US-Israel missile defense cooperation. The U.S. and Israel regularly test cooperative missile defense programs such as the Arrow-3 at the Alaska Aerospace Pacific Spaceport Complex on Kodiak.

Standing with Israel and defending the Jewish people's right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland is, therefore, not only righteous, but it is also in our state's interests and our country's national security interests to protect the principle of nondiscrimination.

CHAIR SHAW invited questions from members of the committee.

3:10:48 PM

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether the State of Alaska had any contracts over \$100,000 relevant to HB 2 at present.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE understood that there were existing contracts; however, she was unsure whether any were choosing to boycott Israel.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY requested a follow-up response at a future hearing.

CHAIR SHAW invited Mr. Almeida to present the sectional analysis.

3:11:43 PM

JAKE ALMEIDA, Staff, Representative Sarah Vance, Alaska State Legislature, directed attention to a PowerPoint presentation by Mr. Zilberman.

3:12:24 PM

BORIS ZILBERMAN, Christians United for Israel, offered a PowerPoint presentation, titled "HB 2 Israel Anti-Discrimination Act" [included in the committee packet]. He began on slide 2, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**Thirty-four states** across the country have advanced policies that curb investment in and/or contracting with entities that engage in a boycott of Israel.

With the widespread bipartisan support of leaders from the Christian and Jewish communities of Alaska, we would become the **35th state**.

MR. ZILBERMAN continued to slide 3, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

**Israel is our ally.**

From a legal perspective, this is no different from prioritizing veterans in the hiring process or minority-owned businesses in state contracting.

While this legislation therefore empowers Alaskans and allows them to best decide how their state dollars are

spent, detractors of this legislation are not so inclined. In fact, their leaders have acknowledged openly and repeatedly that their sole aim is to destroy Israel.

MR. ZILBERMAN advanced to slide 4, reiterating that the legislation in question was limited to prohibiting the state from engaging in contracts worth more than \$100,000 with potential contractors - with at least 10 employees - who were boycotting Israel or refused to commit to not doing so for the duration of the contract. He proceeded to slide 5, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

This legislation does not prohibit boycotts of Israel.

In fact, Palestine Legal, a leading voice in opposition to such anti-BDS laws, acknowledges that "none of the antiboycott bills and laws take away your right to boycott for Palestinian rights or to advocate for such boycotts."

This legislation is narrowly targeted at entities who have contracts with the state over a \$100,000 threshold.

MR. ZILBERMAN concluded on slide 6, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Israel and Alaska enjoy an important and mutually beneficial relationship. This includes Israel related investments by the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation along with Alaska's exports to Israel, which since 1996 total nearly \$62 million.

In addition, Alaska is a key site for US-Israel missile defense cooperation. The U.S. and Israel regularly test cooperative missile defense programs such as the Arrow-3 program at the Alaska Aerospace Pacific Spaceport Complex on Kodiak.

Those who bless Israel will be blessed!

[3:15:45 PM](#)

MR. ZILBERMAN provided two real world examples. He explained that as a result of the proposed legislation, future boycotts by multi-nationals with a presence in Alaska, or other companies

that would seek to do business with the state, may be forced to reconsider. In response to the argument that anti-Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) laws were unconstitutional, he explained that the bill had been crafted to avoid restraints on an individual's First Amendment rights. He acknowledged that there had been a handful of nuisance lawsuits aimed at such legislation; however, none were successful. He reported that the only appellate-level decision regarding the constitutionality of anti-BDS laws upheld them. He urged the legislature to put Alaskans "on record" in opposition to the BDS movement and ensure that taxpayer dollars were not subsidizing those who seek to demonize and delegitimize Israel.

[3:17:55 PM](#)

DAVID GOTTSTEIN, Christians United for Israel, read the following prepared remarks [original punctuation provided]:

Dear Governor Dunleavy, Senate President Stevens, Madam Speaker Tilton, and Members of the Legislature

We, the undersigned, can't know the experiences and prejudices that African Americans encounter in the U.S. Even though our empathies and hearts go out to them, we also can't fully understand what Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans suffer in the way of discrimination. But as Jews we know intimately what it is like to be the continuing victims of prejudice, discrimination, forced labor, and murder for thousands of years, just because we are Jewish. We know where it comes from, and what it looks like. It is our history.

And just like Germany in the 1930's, anti-Semitism is rising again at an alarming rate, globally, and becoming more accepted, even in in the U.S. With the voices of "Jews will not replace us." in Charlottesville, mass shootings in Synagogues in Pittsburg, attacks in California and Texas, and even a Swastika painted at our own Alaska Jewish Campus this past year. To say the least, we feel threatened in our own communities. As the more people suffer, the more they blame us Jews.

Let me remind you of the famous quote by a prominent German Lutheran Pastor, Martin Niemoller, who was

first a supporter of Hitler, and then suffered in prison for being an outspoken critic:

"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me."

There are many sources of threats against the Jewish community, with Israel as the epicenter. Just one is the constant attempts by Iran, Hamas, Hizbollah, and other Radical Islamists doing everything in their power to destroy Israel. Both the Palestinian and Israeli peoples deserve a homeland of their own living within safe and secure borders within a two-state solution. Fortunately, through the Abraham Accords, in the last two years, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, and Sudan have all established full and warm diplomatic relations with Israel. In part because, as Sunni nations, they all fear a nuclear Shiite Iran. Those countries are very critical of the Palestinian leadership for not coming to the peace table.

Unfortunately, the Palestinian leadership has refused to come to the negotiating table for more than twenty years. Instead, Israel is attacked with rockets, suicide bombers, and even incendiary balloons from Gaza. More recently, Hamas has launched terror attacks from the West Bank instead of the Gaza Strip, in order to not suffer direct retaliation on itself. It was instrumental, as an unintended consequence, in helping to elect a more right wing and hawkish government again led by Benjamin Netanyahu.

One of the main arsenals of attack against Israel is a global campaign to weaken Israel by turning the world against it. Largely by blaming Israel for the suffering of the Palestinian population instead of the Palestinian leadership who has a history of sacrificing generations of Palestinians in a hopeless quest to destroy Israel.

The primary weapon in that global arsenal is the propaganda campaign to have countries, organizations, and companies boycott, divest from, and sanction Israel. Otherwise known as the BDS Movement. Which is aggressively fostered on American college campuses. The BDS movement helps to amplify resentment towards Jews, and is a direct contributor to the rise of anti-Semitism in the U.S., and certainly around the world. It does so by design. It gives closet anti-Semites permission to openly express their hatred for Jews. This past Saturday was labeled as "A Day of Hate" by many who are openly anti-Semitic. If one tells a lie often enough, people believe it. Like the Jews killed Christ. Instead of the fact that it was the Romans that did.

We the undersigned leaders among the Alaskan Jewish community are asking for your help in having the State of Alaska condemn the BDS movement, and act to not be complicit, knowingly, or unknowingly, in this insidious and anti-Semitic tool of war being waged against the survival of Israel and the Jewish people. We would respectfully ask that this be done either administratively, or through legislation in the form of HB 2. And time is of the essence, as there is a surge in anti-Semitism that needs to be put in check sooner rather than later.

CHAIR SHAW announced that HB 2 would be held over.

[3:24:16 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

**HB 23-FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH**

[3:26:12 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 23, "An Act establishing the month of October as Filipino American History Month."

[3:26:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GENEVIEVE MINA, Alaska State Legislature, prime sponsor, introduced HB 23. She presented a PowerPoint

presentation, titled "HB 23 Filipino American History Month" [included in the committee packet]. She began on slide 2, highlighting Jose Rozal as a national hero of the Philippines for his aide in liberating the country from Spanish colonials. She discussed the substantial impact that Filipinos have had on Alaska, as the largest Asian American Pacific Islander group and the biggest immigrant group in the state. She conveyed that HB 23 would commemorate Filipino American History Month, which had been celebrated since 1992.

[3:29:02 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA advanced to slide 3, which illustrated the following Filipino contributions to the U.S.: Firstly, in WWI, over 250,000 Filipinos served in the U.S. Army in the far East under general Douglas MacArthur; Secondly, Larry Itliong organized a cannery workers' union in Alaska and persuaded Ceasar Chavez to start the Delano Grape Strike of 1965; Thirdly, more than 150,000 Filipino nurses emigrated to America, strengthening labor shortages in the health care sector.

[3:31:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA detailed the history of Filipinos in Alaska on slide 4, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Filipinos are the immigrant group in Alaska, with over 27,000 Filipinos residing in the state.

Since 1788, Filipinos have been in Alaska through all walks of life: whaling crewmembers, cannery workers, community and religious leaders, small business owners, teacher, and more.

[3:33:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA concluded by discussing Filipino American History Month on slide 5, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Recognized in 1992 by the Filipino

American Historical Society to celebrate Filipino history in the United States

Recognized in Congress in 2009 FAHM has been recognized by the California State Legislature and Hawaii State Legislature

[3:35:49 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW invited questions from members of the committee.

[3:35:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked how Filipino American History Month had been historically celebrated in Alaska.

REPRESENTATIVE MINA recounted examples of various celebrations, including the annual Filipino festival in Ketchikan and gatherings at the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA). She emphasized the importance of cultural gatherings to talk specifically about Filipino history and to build connections between different communities.

[3:37:21 PM](#)

ROSE HART, Staff, Representative Genevieve Mina, Alaska State Legislature, provided additional context on the ways in which Filipino Americans were honored, recognized, and celebrated. Specific to the Alaska State Legislature, she cited House Joint Resolution 15, which recognized the contributions of Filipino vets during World War II, and again via Senate Concurrent Resolution 14, which recognized Filipino American History Month in 2010.

[3:38:15 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW, referencing his past military service, mentioned three six-month tours he spent in the Philippines, during which time he worked on behalf of the Philippine Embassy.

[3:38:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether the bill sponsor had a plan to educate students on Filipino American History Month.

REPRESENTATIVE MINA said no concrete outreach plan had been developed at present; nonetheless, she acknowledged that it would be a great opportunity to raise awareness. She welcomed the idea of creating relationships with different community

members who could teach, educate, and share knowledge with children.

[3:40:19 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW proceeded with invited testimony.

[3:40:37 PM](#)

EDRIC CARRILLO, President, Filipino Community Inc., paraphrased the following written remarks [original punctuation provided]:

I strongly urge your support for HB 23, which seeks to establish October as Filipino-American History Month in Alaska state statute. As a Filipino-American and President of the Filipino Community Inc., I have seen the positive impact of recognizing and celebrating culture and community in promoting understanding and success.

The Filipino community in Alaska has made significant contributions to our economy, culture, and society. Filipinos have significantly influenced the Alaskan workforce in education, health care, and information technology to name a few. Filipinos have also contributed greatly to the cultural fabric of Alaska through our culinary traditions, music, dance, language, and literature.

Celebrating Filipino history and culture has many benefits. Learning about other cultures and traditions can help break down barriers and improve communication and understanding between communities. It can also provide an important context for issues and improve government services.

Furthermore, recognizing the history and achievements of Filipino Americans in Alaska can serve as an inspiration for future generations to participate in community services and work towards a better future for all of us. I hope to see this bill passed into law so that Alaskans from all backgrounds can celebrate our common heritage and work together to build a stronger and more vibrant state.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to working with you and other members of the legislature to pass this important legislation.

[3:43:27 PM](#)

GABRIEL GARCIA, PhD, Professor, Public Health, UAA, shared his personal history and contextualized the impact of learning about his history as a Filipino American. He stated that knowing Filipino American history made him want to do better as a person and to pay forward the sacrifices of those who came before him. He encouraged the committee to pass the bill, adding that the cost to the state was zero, but the impact would be priceless.

[3:46:36 PM](#)

E.J. DAVID recounted the history of the first Filipinos' arrival in Alaska. He emphasized the significance of Filipino culture and their long rich history in Alaska, highlighting the large Filipino communities within the state. He noted that Filipinos made deep connection with indigenous peoples of Alaska, adding that Filipinos and Alaska Natives worked together to fight discrimination and other issues. He provided examples of notable Alaska Native Filipino leaders. He concluded by conveying both the hardships and resilience of Filipinos in Alaska and urged passage of the HB 23 to recognize Filipino Alaskans by officially establishing October as Filipino American History Month.

[3:51:13 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW opened public testimony on HB 23; after ascertaining that no one wished to testify online or in person, he closed public testimony and announced that HB 23 would be held over.

[3:52:47 PM](#)

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.