

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

March 14, 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 (via teleconference)
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."

- MOVED CSHB 2(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 23

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

- MOVED HB 23 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3

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

- MOVED CSHJR 3(JUD) OUT OF COMMITTEE

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
02/28/23 (H) Heard & Held
02/28/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
03/07/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/07/23 (H) Heard & Held
03/07/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
03/14/23 (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
02/28/23 (H) Heard & Held
02/28/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
03/14/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HJR 3

SHORT TITLE: CONCEALED HANDGUN RECIPROCITY B/W STATES

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) RAUSCHER

02/01/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/01/23 (H) JUD, STA
02/10/23 (H) JUD AT 1:30 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/10/23 (H) Heard & Held
02/10/23 (H) MINUTE(JUD)
02/17/23 (H) JUD AT 1:30 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/17/23 (H) Moved CSHJR 3(JUD) Out of Committee
02/17/23 (H) MINUTE(JUD)
02/20/23 (H) JUD RPT CS(JUD) 3DP 4NR
02/20/23 (H) DP: C.JOHNSON, GROH, VANCE
02/20/23 (H) NR: CARPENTER, EASTMAN, GRAY, ALLARD
02/28/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
02/28/23 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard
03/02/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
03/02/23 (H) Heard & Held
03/02/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)
03/14/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

BOB KAUFMAN

Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

GARY MORTON
Christians United for Israel
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

ALICE MORTON
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

PAULA COLESCOTT
Christians United for Israel
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

BRAD LOWERY, Executive Pastor
Anchorage First Assembly
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

QUEEN PARKER
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

IVAN HODES
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 2.

ALEX KOPLIN
Representing Self
Homer, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 2.

CHAVA SCHAPIRA
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 2.

JOHN MILLER
Representing Self
Matsu, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

LORAN BAXTER
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

STEVE ZELENER
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

SARAH BELLER
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 2.

GERALDINE PRYME
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

CANDY MILLER
Representing Self
Matsu, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 2.

ALEX PETKANAS
Representing Self
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 2.

PHILLIP MOSER
Representing Self
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 2.

REPRESENTATIVE SARAH VANCE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Offered closing remarks on HB 2, as the prime sponsor.

JAKE ALMEIDA, Staff
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.

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on CSHJR 3(JUD), as the prime sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:03:50 PM](#)

CHAIR LADDIE SHAW called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at [3:03] p.m. Representatives C. Johnson, Armstrong (via teleconference), Story, Wright, and Shaw were present at the call to order. Representatives Carpenter and Allard arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 2-CONTRACTS: PROHIBIT ISRAEL DISCRIMINATION

[3:04:29 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." [Before the committee, adopted as the work draft on 3/7/23, was the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 2, Version 33-LS0084\B, Dunmire, 3/1/23, ("Version B").]

[3:05:01 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW opened public testimony on HB 2.

[3:05:44 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:06:04 PM](#)

BOB KAUFMAN expressed his support for HB 2. He shared a personal anecdote, opining that the boycott, divestment, sanctions (BDS) movement was designed to villainize Israel. He stated that anti-BDS legislation was in the interest of both Alaska and the U.S., as trade with Israel created billions in investment and tens-of-thousands of jobs. BDS aimed to end this mutually beneficial relationship by severing cooperation between

the U.S. and Israel, he said, in addition to weakening Israel as the homeland of the Jewish people. He shared his belief that the bill was well designed. He urged the legislature to enact anti-BDS legislation to remove from the table the Palestinian leadership's desire to liquidate Israel.

[3:08:49 PM](#)

GARY MORTON, Christians United for Israel, stated his support for the bill, citing it as vital to Israel and to the Alaska Jewish and Christian communities. He urged unanimous and bipartisan support for HB 2, characterizing the campaign to boycott Israel as immoral. He discussed the BDS movement's strategy to systematically spread hate, as well as the parallel rise in anti-Semitic crime across the country. He urged the state to "do the right thing" for Israel.

[3:11:16 PM](#)

ALICE MORTON, Representing Self, stated her support for HB 2, characterizing Israel as a good trade partner with Alaska. She discussed the BDS movement that sought to socially alienate and economically isolate Israel. She urged the committee to support the bill.

[3:12:37 PM](#)

PAULA COLESCOTT, Christians United for Israel, discussed the mutual beneficial relationship between Israel and Alaska. She indicated that the political gain for BDS was to bring down the state of Israel. She described choosing to stand with Israel and defending the Jewish people's right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland as "American." She encouraged support for the bill.

[3:14:31 PM](#)

BRAD LOWERY, Executive Pastor, Anchorage First Assembly, agreed with the statements made by previous testifiers. He emphasized his support for the proposed legislation, as the bill would ensure that Alaskan taxpayer dollars were not spent subsidizing an anti-Semitic effort designed with terroristic intent to destroy Israel. He further noted that HB 2 would not constrain an individual's right to boycott. He requested support for the HB 2.

[3:16:00 PM](#)

QUEEN PARKER, Representing Self, expressed support for HB 2 and voiced her agreeance with the previous testifiers.

[3:16:41 PM](#)

IVAN HODES, Representing Self, noted that he was a member of the Jewish congregation in Anchorage, Beth Sholom. He stated his opposition to HB 2. He opined that it was a business's right to choose which entities to do business with, adding that the state should not be determining whether those choices were acceptable. He acknowledged that some - but not all - BDS was rooted in anti-Semitism. Nonetheless, he pointed out that many of the policies carried out by the state of Israel were in conflict with his interpretation of Judaism; therefore, he rejected the idea that any criticism of Israel was anti-Semitic. He continued by noting that most of the testifiers were Christian not Jewish, characterizing their support for the measure as hypocritical. He argued that if people were truly committed to anti-Semitism, domestic anti-Semitism should be included in the bill as well.

[3:19:50 PM](#)

ALEX KOPLIN, Representing Self, characterized the bill's reference to state taxpayer dollars as misleading, as there was no statewide sales or income tax in Alaska. He discussed his opposition to the bill moving forward and elaborated on his Jewish heritage. He pointed out that his opposition to many of government issues in Israel did not make him anti-Semitic. He opined that the bill would give too much power to Israel.

[3:23:20 PM](#)

CHAVA SCHAPIRA, Representing Self, shared her strong opposition to HB 2. She explained that in practice, the BDS movement allowed people to boycott products made in Israel. She described BDS as a method of political speech that allowed people to object to Israeli policies without violence. She characterized the bill as "anti-free speech," insisting that it violated First Amendment rights and would likely be struck down by the Alaska Supreme Court. She opined that the legislation had nothing to do with protecting Jews in Alaska from anti-Semitism, and more to do with targeting other leftist movements and allowing the government to monitor political speech.

[3:26:22 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:27:44 PM](#)

JOHN MILLER, Representing Self, voiced his support for HB 2. He believed that it was in the best interest of the U.S. and Alaska to support Israel and to discourage countries or corporations that would attempt to harm an ally.

[3:28:55 PM](#)

LORAN BAXTER, Representing Self, affiliated himself with the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews and Christians United for Israel. He stated his support for HB 2. He emphasized Israel's right to a biblical homeland. He remarked that Israel was the only democratic country in its area and a strong ally to the U.S. in an "unforgiving" region of the world. He shared his personal reverence for Israel's development of effective missile defense technology. He relayed a personal anecdote. He questioned the message that would be sent by failing to pass the legislation.

[3:32:38 PM](#)

STEVE ZELENER, Representing Self, expressed his support for HB 2. He informed the committee of his personal background and summarized his experience moving from his birthplace of Kyiv, Ukraine to Israel at a young age. He referenced the rise in anti-Semitic attacks against students. He opined that any creation of more anti-Semitism would continue to destroy culture and friendship on campus. He urged the legislative body to "do the right thing."

[3:34:49 PM](#)

SARAH BELLER, Representing Self, shared that she was an attorney in Anchorage and a member of Congregation Beth Sholom. She stated her strong opposition to the bill, which she characterized as dangerous. She contended that the bill would not make Jews safer in Alaska and would not help Israel. Instead, she said, HB 2 would allow the government to dictate what Alaskans think and how they spend their money. Further, she believed that the bill likely violated the First Amendment rights, as it attempted to coerce businesses into certain political views and actions. She pointed out that the bill was written by the far-right organization ALEC [American Legislative

Exchange Council], which was pushing the same law in dozens of states around the country. She stressed that out-of-state money should not be allowed to dictate Alaskans' beliefs or where they shop and spend their money. She urged a "no" vote on HB 2.

[3:35:59 PM](#)

GERALDINE PRYME, Representing Self, stated her support for HB 2. She characterized the proposed legislation as vital to Israel and the local Jewish community. She referenced the rise in anti-Semitism across [Anchorage].

[3:36:44 PM](#)

CANDY MILLER, Representing Self, stated her support for HB 2. She said she was in favor of policies and legislation that supported sound positions aimed at creating a strong relationship between U.S. and Israel.

[3:37:51 PM](#)

ALEX PETKANAS, Representing Self, emphasized his strong opposition to the bill, noting that he attended Congregation Beth Sholom regularly for services and adult learning classes. He characterized the legislation as an affront to free speech, adding that it would do nothing to protect Jewish people. He contended that anti-Semitism was not the same as being anti-Israel. He noted that as Israel was not his homeland, he had the right to oppose the harm done to Palestinian people by a violent government. He added that as an American, he also had the right to free speech and to protest his own government. He characterized any attempt to take away that right as disturbing. He employed the committee to oppose the bill.

[3:39:02 PM](#)

PHILLIP MOSER, Representing Self, stated his opposition to HB 2, describing it as incredible and harmful. He said he found it incredulous that the bill was being brought forward by legislators who didn't speak out against a colleague that was linked to a Holocaust denial website. He remarked, "I find it incredulous that this action is coming from the same law body that decried the situation in Russia, yet still has the vast majority of their funds invested in the same things they said they were going to divest from." He stated that he found it incredulous that the bill was coming from the same legislative body that forwarded anti-trans bills. He elaborated on the BDS

movement, describing it as legitimate and not anti-Semitic. He reiterated his opposition to the bill.

[3:42:18 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW closed public testimony on HB 2.

[3:42:44 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SARAH VANCE, Alaska State Legislature, prime sponsor of HB 2, clarified that the bill was focused on state contracts related to Israel, adding that it would reinforce Alaska's support for Israel as an ally. She said the bill clearly stated that it would not infringe upon an individual's right to free speech. She discussed legal challenges to the legislation across the country, noting that HB 2 had been tailored to avoid such occurrences with the inclusion of one word that was absent from the bills that were litigated in other states. She emphasized that HB 2 was crafted after a "lesson learned" from the legal challenges in those states. She described the legislation as vetted, sound policy that sought the authority to justify Alaskan dollars in support of Israel.

CHAIR SHAW invited questions from members of the committee.

[3:45:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY sought to verify that the legislation aimed to limit state contracts with public agencies that were participating in boycotts of Israel.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE explained that the bill pertained to businesses with contracts over \$100,000 and at least 10 employees that were choosing to boycott Israel. She emphasized that smaller businesses would not be impacted.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked why the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation (APFC) was exempted.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE indicated that APFC was excluded to maintain its distance from social - or "lightning rod" - issues.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether the state had any existing contracts that would be impacted by the bill.

[3:46:59 PM](#)

JAKE ALMEIDA, Staff, Representative Sarah Vance, Alaska State Legislature, offered to follow up with the requested information.

[3:48:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT moved to report CSHB 2, Version 33-LS0084\B, Dunmire, 3/1/23, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 2(STA) was reported out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

[3:48:40 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:48 p.m. to 3:52 p.m.

HB 23-FILIPINO AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

[3:52:01 PM](#)

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

[3:52:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT moved to report HB 23 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 23 was reported out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

[3:53:11 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:53:25 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that HB 23 was reported out of committee.

[3:53:37 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:53 p.m. to 3:56 p.m.

[3:56:17 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:56:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SHAW invited closing remarks on HB 23.

[3:56:29 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY highlighted the excitement in the Filipino community surrounding the legislation. She thanked the sponsor for bringing it forward.

HJR 3-CONCEALED HANDGUN RECIPROCITY B/W STATES

[3:57:03 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3, "Encouraging Congress to pass the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act or a similar bill." [Before the committee was CSHJR 3(JUD).]

CHAIR SHAW invited questions from members of the committee.

[3:57:40 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY said she was comforted that the laws of the home state would remain intact should the bill pass. However, she expressed concern about the lack of an educational component and asked whether the bill sponsor had considered including one in the resolution.

[3:59:13 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER, Alaska State Legislature, prime sponsor of CSHJR 3(JUD), shared that he had not considered an educational component. He recommended that people conduct their own research into state laws when traveling with a weapon. He added that he was unsure of the feasibility of implementing classes in each state and unclear on the fiscal implications.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY suggested the inclusion of a statewide public service announcement or public notice.

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER said he would take it into consideration.

[4:02:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT moved to report CSHJR 3(JUD) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHJR 3(JUD) was reported out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

[4:02:36 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at [4:02] p.m.