

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

March 28, 2023

3:01 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

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 135

"An Act disapproving recommendations of the State Officers Compensation Commission; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED HB 135 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 1

"An Act relating to elections."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 37

"An Act relating to elections; relating to voters; relating to the crime of unlawful interference with voting; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 140

"An Act relating to the State Officers Compensation Commission; and relating to policies of the Alaska Legislative Council regarding allowances and reimbursement for moving expenses."

- BILL HEARING RESCHEDULED TO 03/30/23

HOUSE BILL NO. 129

"An Act relating to voter registration; and providing for an effective date."

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 135

SHORT TITLE: REJECT COMPENSATION COMM RECOMMENDATIONS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) C.JOHNSON

03/27/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/27/23 (H) STA
03/28/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 1

SHORT TITLE: REPEAL BALLOT MEASURE 2 VOTING CHGS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) RAUSCHER

01/19/23 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23
01/19/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/19/23 (H) STA, JUD
03/28/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 37

SHORT TITLE: ELECTIONS, VOTING, BALLOTS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) SCHRAGE

01/19/23 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/13/23
01/19/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/19/23 (H) STA, JUD
03/28/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE CRAIG JOHNSON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 135, as the prime sponsor.

TOM WRIGHT, Staff
Representative Craig Johnson
Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced HB 135, on behalf of Representative C. Johnson, prime sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 1, as the prime sponsor.

RYAN MCKEE, Staff

Representative George Rauscher

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the sectional analysis for HB 1, on behalf of Representative Rauscher, prime sponsor.

JULI LUCKY, Executive Director

Alaskans for Better Elections

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in opposition to HB 1 via PowerPoint presentation.

KELLY TSHIBAKA

Preserve Democracy

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of HB 1 via PowerPoint presentation.

PHILLIP IZON

Alaskans for Honest Elections

Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of HB 1.

JOAN WILKERSON, Staff

Representative Calvin Schrage

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 37 and presented the sectional analysis on behalf of Representative Schrage, prime sponsor.

CAROL BEETCHER, Director

Division of Elections

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 37.

DANIEL GRIFFITH, Senior Director of Policy
Secure Democracy USA
Reston, Virginia

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided invited testimony in support of HB 37.

PAT RACE
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 37.

BARBARA TYNDALL
North Pole, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 37.

SUE SHERIF, Co-president
League of Women Voters of Alaska
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 37.

MICHAEL GARVEY
American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 37.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:01:41 PM](#)

CHAIR LADDIE SHAW called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:01 p.m. Representatives Carpenter, C. Johnson, Armstrong, Story, Wright, and Shaw were present at the call to order. Representative Allard arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 135-REJECT COMPENSATION COMM RECOMMENDATIONS

[3:03:25 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 135, "An Act disapproving recommendations of the State Officers Compensation Commission; and providing for an effective date."

[3:03:56 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CRAIG JOHNSON, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 135, as the prime sponsor. He explained that the bill would disapprove the recommendation of the State Officers Compensation Commission and provide an effective date.

[3:04:44 PM](#)

TOM WRIGHT, Staff, Representative Johnson, presented HB 135 on behalf of Representative C. Johnson, prime sponsor. He paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The purpose of House Bill 135 is to disapprove the State Officers' Compensation Commission's recommendations for salary increases for the Governor, Lt. Governor, department heads and the legislature. These recommendations, made on March 15, 2023, amended the original recommendations made by the commission in their report dated January 24, 2023.

The process undertaken by the state officers' compensation commission was flawed in adopting an amendment to the original report. Because of this and with the spring revenue forecasts predicting a deficit of over \$900 million for this and the next fiscal year, pay raises are not justified nor warranted at this time.

[3:07:08 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW opened public testimony on HB 135. After ascertaining that no one online or in person wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[3:07:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT moved to report HB 135 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, HB 135 was reported out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee.

[3:08:26 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:08 p.m. to 3:12 p.m.

HB 1-REPEAL BALLOT MEASURE 2 VOTING CHGS

3:12:02 PM

CHAIR SHAW announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 1, "An Act relating to elections."

3:13:26 PM

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER, Alaska State Legislature, prime sponsor, introduced HB 1. He paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

HB1 repeals Rank Choice Voting and returns to how the State previously ran elections. Rank Choice Voting, which was first used in the 2022 elections, was narrowly approved by voters in the 2020 election. That Ballot Measure was sponsored almost entirely by money from special interest groups outside of Alaska. Petitions for ballot measures are only required to gather signatures from 10% of the previous election's total voter turnout.

The timing of the petition was such that it was first used in the 2022 elections. Following the 2022 election cycle, there has been an enormous outcry to repeal it. Many of the complaints were centered around confusion, not understanding the process, not knowing how to support their candidate in a rank choice environment, scared to vote incorrectly and risk hurting their candidates' chances to win, and open primaries, also referred to as jungle primaries.

While there are other aspects to the full ballot measure two, there are some items that should stay in effect, and that the courts have ruled unconstitutional if they were to be changed back. Also, there are other portions that attempt to keep dark money out of our election process which were intentionally left out of this legislation, this legislation only effects the rank choice and open primaries part of the new law.

3:16:41 PM

RYAN MCKEE, Staff, Representative George Rauscher, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Rauscher, prime sponsor, presented a sectional analysis of HB 1 [included in the

committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1 - Deletes language related to Ranked choice voting and amends the language relating to the appointment of election supervisors. Under amended language a supervisor will be appointed based on the top to votes statewide in the most recent gubernatorial election, or they may be appointed by the election supervisor if a member of either party is not available.

Section 2 - Amends language relating to the appointment of election watchers. Clarifying the process for precinct party committees when appointing watchers.

Section 3 - Modifies the appointment of members of the Alaska Public Offices Commission, to be from the top two vote gaining parties from the most recent gubernatorial election. Deleting reference to political groups.

Section 4 - Deletes reference to "Political Groups" as it relates to the APOC.

Section 5 - Amends this section by deleting references to Ranked choice voting elections.

Section 6 - Amends language relating to the filing of campaign reports, adding a new section to include individuals who filed a nominating petition to become a candidate. Renumbers the following sections.

Section 7 - Amends the statute reference to reelect changes made in bill.

Section 8 - Modifies the definition of "contributions" to not include mailings describing the political party's slate of candidates.

Section 9 - Deletes language relating to Ranked choice voting and amends the section requiring ballots to include the political party of candidates.

Section 10 - Deletes language relating to Ranked choice voting. Adds a new section relating to the

counting of votes and renumbers the following sections.

Section 11 - Deletes reference to ranked choice voting in the certification of ballot counts.

Section 12 - Amends language to reflect context of bill.

Section 13 - Amends language for Absentee voting. Clarifying that only the voter of the voter's designee may mark the absentee ballot application.

Section 14 - Amends language to include special runoff elections.

Section 15 - Deletes language related to ranked choice voting and amends the language relating to the appointment of the District Counting Board. Under amended language a board member will be appointed based on the top to votes statewide in the most recent gubernatorial election.

Sections 16 - 21 - Amends language to include special runoff elections.

Section 22 - Amends language to include the traditional primary election and deletes references to "Ranked choice voting."

Section 23 - Inserts a new section relating to the Participation in primary election selection of a political party's candidates.

Section 24 - Deletes reference to ranked choice voting and requires the inclusion of the name of the political party affiliation of each candidate.

Section 25 - Adds a new section addressing how a party may nominate a new candidate should an incumbent become disqualified, incapacitated, or dies.

Section 26 - This section is repealed and reenacted to establish the preparation and distribution of ballots minus language for ranked choice voting.

Section 27 - This section is repealed and reenacted to establish how nominees are placed on the general election ballot.

Section 28 - Amends the section requiring the director of elections to include the full name and political party of a candidate on the general election ballot.

Section 29 - Amended to require that both a write-in candidate for Governor and Lt. Governor to be of the same political party or group.

Section 30 - Adds new sections establishing the process for filling vacancies by party petition if a candidate dies, withdraws, resigns, or becomes disqualified from holding office.

Section 31 - Adds new sections to Article 2, establishing the process for nominating no-party candidates for political office. Including the requirements for filing petitions, form of the petition, and the required number of signatures for both statewide and district-wide offices.

Section 32 - Deletes reference to ranked choice voting from the sections.

Section 33 - Deletes language relating to ranked choice voting and makes conforming amendments to the bill.

Section 34 - Adds a new section establishing the procedures for calling a special election or a special runoff election.

Section 35 - Adds a new section establishing the procedures for calling a special with primary.

Section 36 - Amends the requirements for the governor issuing a proclamation for a special runoff election.

Section 37 and 38 - Makes conforming changes to allow for special runoff elections for US Senator the US Representative.

Section 39 - Amends the section by adding the required percentage of qualified voters for a no-party candidates to appear on general election ballot.

Section 40 - Adds new sections establishing requirements for party petition and selections of party nominees.

Section 41 - Makes conforming Amendments to the provisions for conduction of special elections and special runoff elections.

Section 42 - Makes conforming amendments to the conditions and time of callings special elections and special runoff elections.

Section 43 - Makes conforming amendments to the conditions holding special elections and special runoff elections.

Section 44 - Makes conforming amendments to the Proclamation of a special elections by the governor.

Section 45 - Makes conforming amendments to the petition requirements of a no-party candidate for a special election.

Section 46 - Adds a new section establishing the requirements of party petition and selections of party nominations for a special election.

Section 47 - Makes conforming amendments to the general provisions for conductions special elections.

Section 48 - Makes conforming amendments to the qualifications and confirmations of an appointee to the state legislature following an appointment to office.

Section 49 - Deletes language relating to ranked choice voting as it relates to filling a vacancy or a part-term Senate appointee or special election.

Section 50 and 51 - Makes conforming amendments relating to the date and proclamation of special elections to fill a vacant state Senate seat.

Section 52 - Makes conforming amendments to the petition requirements of a no-party candidate for a special election to fill a vacant state Senate seat.

Section 53 - Adds a new section establishing the requirements of party petition and selections of party nominations for a special election to fill a vacant state senate seat.

Section 54 - Makes conforming amendments to the general provisions for conduction special elections to fill a vacant state senate seat.

Sections 55 and 56 - Make conforming amendments to sections relating to placing propositions on the ballot.

Sections 57, 58 and 59 - Make conforming amendments to sections relating to the publication of official election pamphlets.

Section 60 - Makes conforming amendments to the definition of a federal election and deletes language relating to ranked choice voting.

Section 61 - Makes conforming amendment to the public office financial disclosure report.

Section 62 - Repeals statutes relating to ranked choice voting.

[3:24:11 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW invited questions from members of the committee.

[3:24:27 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked whether the bill would return Alaska Statutes to their existence prior to the passage of Ballot Measure 2 [2020].

MR. MCKEE answered yes.

[3:25:35 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:27:04 PM](#)

JULI LUCKY, Executive Director, Alaskans for Better Elections, clarified that although she was providing invited testimony, Alaskans for Better Elections was opposed to HB 1. She directed attention to a PowerPoint presentation [included in the committee packet] and proceeded to outline the benefits of ranked choice voting (RCV) on slides 2-3, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Fewer barriers to entry for citizen legislature.
- Increases competition in the general election, where more voters participate.
- Gives all voters a voice in selecting candidates.
- A candidate needs broad support to win.
 - ü Encourages candidates to talk to a larger percentage of their constituency.
 - ü Elects representatives that are more accountable to their constituents.

- Allows candidates with similar ideologies to compete in the same election without splitting the vote and letting a less popular candidate win with a plurality.
 - ü Allows Alaskans to vote their heart without fear of contributing to their least favorite candidate getting elected.
 - ü More choice for voters at the higher turnout general election.
 - ü Government reflects the electorate.

[3:31:33 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY discussed what changed in 2022 on slides 4, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

All statewide elections now follow the same, two-step process:

STEP 1: Nonpartisan/Open Primary.

- All candidates appear on the same ballot; all voters get to choose among all candidates; top four vote-getters move to General.
- Unaffiliated voters don't have to choose a ballot and limit their choices - 58% of Alaskans are not affiliated with a party.
- The most competitive candidates advance.

[3:32:01 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:32:49 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY resumed the presentation on slide 4 and continued to discuss the changes in 2022 on slide 5, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

STEP 2: Ranked Choice Voting General Election.

- Voters rank candidates in order of preference.
- If a candidate receives a majority (50%+1 vote) of first-choice votes, they win.
 - If not, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and voters who ranked that candidate as their 1st choice have their vote counted for their next choice.
- This process continues until two candidates are left and the one with the most votes wins.

[3:34:09 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY proceeded to slide 6, titled "Alaskans Understand RCV," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

In the first RCV election in August:

- 99.83% of ballots were correctly filled out.
- 73% of voters ranked at least two candidates.

In the November election:

- Statewide average, 99.94% of ballots were correctly filled out.
- Voters were more likely to rank:
 - ü In competitive races;
 - ü In races with multiple candidates; and
 - ü When their first choice wasn't favored to win.

[3:35:18 PM](#)

MS. LUCKY advanced to slide 7, titled "2022 Alaska Elections - Successes," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- RCV didn't favor one party over another: in the three statewide races, incumbents were favored but the winners represented different points on the political spectrum.

- More choice for voters: larger, more diverse candidate pool
- Vote-splitting was prevented and candidates had majority support: The three "come from behind" victories show that the system works.
- Alaskan voters are complex and independent. The system allows them to express that.

[3:37:14 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW invited questions from members of the committee.

[3:37:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER inquired about the suggestion that "ballots were easy to understand" and asked whether there was data to support that statement.

MS. LUCKY reported that over 99 percent of the ballots in one election and 98 percent of the ballots in the other election were filled out correctly. Furthermore, a majority of Alaskans reported that RCV was "simple" in the exit polling conducted after both the August and November elections. She offered to follow up with the requested data.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked how Alaskans for Better Elections defined "filled out correctly."

MS. LUCKY said a ballot that had been filled out with no error was considered "filled out correctly."

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER shared that RCV was a complex subject to communicate to his constituents. He asked how many races were impacted by the voters who decided against ranking the candidates, meaning they only cast a vote for the first round.

MS. LUCKY offered to follow up with the requested data. She explained that in every race, some voters chose to express their preference for one candidate only.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER shared his understanding that in the RCV system, a ballot was "exhausted" when the voter selects only one candidate. He asked how many races were impacted by exhausted ballots.

MS. LUCKY offered to follow up with the requested information.

[3:43:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD asked how many people selected the same candidate for each round.

MS. LUCKY said that would be considered a "spoiled" ballot - also termed an "over vote." She reported that there were 342 "over votes" in the August election.

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD inquired about the source of Ms. Lucky's data.

MS. LUCKY said the data came directly from the Division of Elections (DOE).

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD asked how many ballots were filled out incorrectly in both the August and November elections.

MS. LUCKY offered to follow up with the requested information. She estimated that roughly 7,000 unwitnessed ballots were thrown out.

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD asked what election Ms. Lucky was referring to.

MS. LUCKY said she was referencing the 2022 election cycle when RCV was in effect. She offered to follow up with the requested information.

[3:46:21 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[3:47:01 PM](#)

KELLY TSHIBAKA, Preserve Democracy, directed attention to a PowerPoint presentation [included in the committee packet], outlining the threat of RCV on page 2, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Ranked-Choice Voting is an emerging threat to our election system. It causes:

VOTER SUPPRESSION
INCREASED NEGATIVITY AND COSTS IN CAMPAIGNS
DISTRUST IN THE ELECTION SYSTEM

RISK TO THE DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY OF ELECTION OUTCOMES
INCREASED VULNERABILITY TO DARK MONEY
FEWER CANDIDATE CHOICES
MORE EXTREME CANDIDATES BEING ELECTED

[3:47:43 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA continued to slide 3, titled Alaska's Record Low Voter Turnout," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Lowest voter turnout in state history occurred the year Alaska introduced RankedChoice Voting (RCV).

Turnout was 44.4%, down from 49.8% in 2018 and 56.08% in 2014. That is 18,000 less voters than in 2018 and 2014.

Even fewer voters participated in the US Senate and House races. Only 40% voted in the federal races—a 10% drop from 2018.

[3:48:09 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA discussed a graph on slide 4, showing Alaska voter turnout by year. She shared her understanding that in 2022, Alaska had record low voter turnout at 44.4 percent. She noted that Alaska was the anomaly in comparison to the rest of the U.S., which saw some of the highest voter turnout in history in 2022.

[3:49:51 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA proceeded to slide 5, titled "ACLU Testimony - Ranked Choice Voting," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

"Ranked choice ballots have suppressed voter turnout... (RCV) has resulted in decreased turnouts up to 8% in non-presidential elections. RCV exacerbates economic and racial disparities in voting. Voting errors and spoiled ballots occur far more often. In Minneapolis, for example, nearly 10% of ranked choice ballots were not counted, most of these in low-income communities of color."

--Testimony of Vignesh Ganapathy Kansas Policy Director

[3:50:26 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA shared quotes from the New York Post and The Amsterdam News on slide 6. She referenced Maine's U.S. Senate race on slide 7, stating that RCV created increased negativity and costs. She discussed a case study on Alameda County on slide 8, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- The certified 3rd place candidate was declared the actual winner
- After the election was certified, the Registrar of Voters learned its RCV system was not configured properly by FairVote, a special-interest funded organization that has advocated for the spread of RCV for decades
- FairVote came into Alameda County, reprogrammed the RCV system, and the election results were re-run, producing a different outcome
- Led to a recount of every RCV race in the county
- "It really feeds into the distrust so many people have in our election system when this sort of thing happens." -Jim Ross, SF Chronicle, 12/28/22

[3:51:14 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA directed attention to slide 9, titled "Ranked-Choice Voting: Ballots Tossed & Winners Get Less Than 50%," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

MYTH Lower ranked candidates are redistributed until a candidate with 50% or more of the vote wins.

FACT In 4 jurisdictions using Ranked-Choice Voting, none of the final winners received 46% of the total vote share because over 27% of the ballots originally cast were thrown out as the RCV rounds progressed.
Nov. 18, 2014

THE STUDY CONCLUDED: RCV increases the difficulty of the task facing voters. A substantial number of voters either cannot or choose not to rank multiple candidates. Even individuals who mark three distinct choices often face the prospect of exhaustion, so education alone will not fix the problem. The possibility that exhaustion might tip the balance in

the final round poses a serious risk to the democratic legitimacy of the method and the outcomes it produces.

[3:55:03 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA proceeded to slide 10, titled "Ranked Choice Voting Caters to Dark Money," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

In 2022, 75 candidates ran for 3 state-wide offices in Alaska.

With Alaska's RCV-related open primary system, the burden was on each voter to research every candidate's background and platform to make an informed decision... an impossible task.

So, the candidates (incumbents) with the most money (and dark money) had the greatest advantage... and won in all 3 races.

[3:56:00 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA continued to slide 11, titled "Ranked-Choice Voting Limits Choices," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

In 2020, 6 third-party candidates were on the general election ballot for federal offices in Alaska (not including Al Gross, candidate for US Senate, who ran as an Independent but was on the ballot as a Democrat).

In 2022, only 1 third-party candidate was able to make it through Alaska's new RCV-related open primary system to the general election for a federal office.

RCV significantly limited the ability of Independents, Libertarians, Alaska Independent Party, and other 3rd party candidates from making it to the general election.

[3:57:18 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA directed attention to slide 12, titled "Ranked-Choice Voting Eliminates Moderates," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

In Alaska's 2022 U.S. House race, Democrats forced out a moderate Independent candidate, Al Gross, who previously ran as the Democrat candidate for U.S. Senate in 2000. This left only one remaining Democrat in the final 4 general election, Mary Peltola, who held far more extreme political views than Al Gross.

Similarly, a moderate Alaska Native Republican dropped out of the final 4 in the U.S. House race after determining she had no path to victory to win the election. A less moderate candidate took the fourth spot on the ballot.

[3:58:10 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA highlighted bi-partisan opposition to RCV on slide 13. On slide 14, she listed three states that were banning RCV: Tennessee, Florida, and South Dakota. She proceeded to slide 15, titled "Alaskans Want to Repeal RCV," which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

53% OF ALASKANS WANT RCV REPEALED
Alaska Survey Research Poll by Ivan Moore January 2023

- Poll of 1,397 registered Alaskan voters shortly after 2022 election
- "Everyone who follows me here on [Twitter] knows that I am a huge supporter of RCV, but these numbers show the reality. The original passage of RCV was by a very narrow margin and any idea that 'once we have an RCV election, everyone will love it' is NOT the case."
- Ivan Moore

[4:00:08 PM](#)

MS. TSHIBAKA concluded on slide 16, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Passing H.B.1 Will Prevent

VOTER SUPPRESSION
INCREASED NEGATIVITY AND COSTS IN CAMPAIGNS
DISTRUST IN THE ELECTION SYSTEM
RISK TO THE DEMOCRATIC LEGITIMACY OF ELECTION OUTCOMES
INCREASED VULNERABILITY TO DARK MONEY
FEWER CANDIDATE CHOICES

MORE EXTREME CANDIDATES FROM BEING ELECTED

CHAIR SHAW invited questions from members of the committee.

[4:00:32 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ARMSTRONG referred to slide 10, which suggested that RCV catered to dark money, indicating that candidates with the most money had a greater advantage. She pointed out that U.S. Representative Mary Peltola was outspent 10:1 in the general election with zero independent support. She reported that Sarah Palin and Nick Begich had significantly more outside support from the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) and Rand Paul's Super PAC. She asked where Ms. Tshibaka sourced her data from. Additionally, she asked Ms. Tshibaka to enumerate how U.S. Representative Peltola was a far more extreme candidate than Al Gross.

MS. TSHIBAKA shared her understanding that in the general election, U.S. Senator Peltola spent approximately \$6 million with up to \$10 million in personal expenditures, whereas both Sarah Palin and Nick Begich had approximately \$1 million in their campaigns. Further, she reported that the NRCC did not endorse either Nick Begich and Sarah Palin in the general election, nor support them in a big financial way. In regard to extreme policy views, she stated "Some of those are in things like the votes we're seeing now, where Mary Peltola voted ... for abortion of a child who's on a patient table separate from their mother after birth."

[4:02:14 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER expressed concern about the argument that the two-party system was the problem and that RCV was needed to level the playing field. He asked which organizations supported candidates who weren't affiliated with a legal political party within the state of Alaska.

MS. TSHIBAKA said she was aware of activist groups, environmentalist groups, and special interest groups that were unaffiliated and supporting candidates in 2022.

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked which organizations were supporting Ballot Measure 2.

MS. TSHIBAKA shared her understanding that the organizations were listed on the Ballot Measure 2 website. She added that the

three major groups were from the Lower 48 and tended to lean to the left politically.

[4:04:46 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked which states were utilizing RCV.

MS. TSHIBAKA responded that 31 states had used RCV in some form or another. She offered to provide that list to the committee.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY inquired about the data on voter turnout. She referenced an article by the Pew Research Center that found voting turnout to be down nationwide. She asked how Alaska's voter turnout compared to national rates.

MS. TSHIBAKA cited a study out of Harvard [University] that showed a collective increase in nationwide voting except in states with tossup seats or contentious races.

[4:07:29 PM](#)

PHILLIP IZON, Alaskans for Honest Elections, discussed RCV, opining that it was not better, faster, cheaper, nor did it increase voter turnout. He acknowledged the low voter turnout in Alaska, reporting that 2022 was the lowest turnout by percentage in the state's history. He shared his understanding that \$6.1 million came from outside Alaska to fund Alaskans for Better Elections, adding that organization only raised \$20,000 in state funds. He discussed RCV in the Lower 48, citing various races. He argued that third parties lacked representation in the RCV system. He opined that Democrats "gamed" the RCV system to block Ms. Tshibaka from winning the election. He characterized RCV as a failed system, adding that Alaskans for Better Elections changed its entire marketing campaign to target the open primary, as opposed to RCV, due to its unpopularity in Alaska.

[4:17:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ARMSTRONG pointed out that every single quote and instance referenced by Mr. Izon was from the Lower 48. She inquired about the relevancy of outsiders commenting on RCV; further, she requested examples of such occurrences in Alaska. Citing data from the Division of Elections (DOE), she reported that if every single exhausted ballot had been completed, it would not have changed the outcome of the race, noting that Ms. Tshibaka would have still lost by a significant margin.

MR. ISON said he used the examples to avoid "rehashing" the points presented by Ms. Tshibaka, adding that Alaskans were not alone in their experience. He shared a personal anecdote and discussed the difficulties and complexities of the RCV system. He relayed that many individuals across the country had been harmed by the system.

[4:22:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ARMSTRONG addressed the argument that the 5.4 percent drop in voter turnout from 2018 to 2022 was due to RCV; however, from 2014 to 2018, voter turnout dropped by 6.24 percent. She remarked, "It's very convenient to make causation and play with data." She urged people to carefully consider the numbers, adding that she was attempting to correct the misinformation that had been provided on the record.

[4:23:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD stated that RCV had failed many people, adding that many people had complained about the system. She urged members not to make accusations against fellow legislators.

CHAIR SHAW invited closing comments from the bill sponsor.

[4:24:01 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RAUSCHER acknowledged that there was a low decline in voting turnout; however, he recalled that RCV was promoted as a tool to increase voter turnout, which it failed to do.

[4:24:46 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that HB 1 bill would be held over.

HB 37-ELECTIONS, VOTING, BALLOTS

[4:25:14 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 37, "An Act relating to elections; relating to voters; relating to the crime of unlawful interference with voting; and providing for an effective date."

4:26:00 PM

JOAN WILKERSON, Staff, Representative Calvin Schrage, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 37, on behalf of Representative Schrage, prime sponsor. She provided the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Bill 37 seeks to ensure that every eligible Alaskan voter has the opportunity to participate in Alaska's elections in a safe, secure, and accessible manner while ensuring valid votes are not rejected due to minor, correctable errors. HB 37 accomplishes this by modernizing Alaska's elections, eliminating the witness signature requirement, establishing a signature verification system, creating a ballot curing process, and implementing same-day voter registration, among other changes.

The purpose of HB 37 is to remove barriers to the ballot box at every stage of Alaska's election process while promoting transparency and bolstering the integrity of Alaska's elections.

4:28:16 PM

MS. WILKERSON presented a sectional analysis of HB 37 [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1 - Removes language from AS 15.05.010 requiring a qualified voter to register before an election as stipulated in AS 15.07.

Section 2 - Amends AS 15.07.060(a) to allow a person registering or re-registering as a voter to apply using an electronic signature. The section also amends AS 15.07.060 to require those who are registered in another jurisdiction to acknowledge an understanding that the director will notify the chief elections officer of the other jurisdiction that the applicant has registered to vote in this state and request the applicant's voter registration in the other jurisdiction be canceled. Also requires the applicant to acknowledge understanding that false statements on the application are subject to prosecution for perjury.

Section 3 - Amends AS 15.07.060 to add a new subsection allowing an applicant to designate in which language the applicant prefers to receive the ballots and other election materials printed for the election, based upon the written languages in which the division is required by 52 U.S.C. 10503 to print election materials. Amends AS 15.07.060 to require an applicant seeking registration within 30 days of election day to provide an affidavit attesting whether the applicant established residency at least 30 days before the election in the state and the house district in which the applicant seeks to vote, and to provide proof through government identification or bills displaying applicant's name and Alaska residence address.

Section 4 - Amends AS 15.07.070(c) to stipulate that an applicant whose registration does not meet the requirements for placement on the master register for the next election may vote an absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot in that election.

Section 5 - Amends AS 15.07.070(d) to stipulate that a qualified voter who registers within 30 days of an election may vote only an absentee in-person, special needs or questioned ballot at that election. It removes the language making the person ineligible to vote at that election, and restricts the division from rejecting the absentee in-person, special needs or questioned ballot of a qualified voter who registered within 30 days of election on the grounds the voter is not on an official registration list.

Section 6 - Amends AS 15.07.070(h) requiring the voter's certificate used for voting an absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot to include instructions that a person registering to vote using the voter's certificate and wishing to declare the person's affiliation should complete the affiliation section on the certificate.

Section 7 - Amends AS 15.07.090(b) to stipulate that a person who has reregistered under this subsection may vote only an absentee in-person, special needs or questioned ballot until the next election occurs, at least 30 days after re-registration. The division may not reject the absentee inperson, special needs or

questioned ballot of a qualified voter who reregisters within 30 days before election day because the voter's name is not on official registration list.

Section 8 - Amends AS 15.07.090(c) to require a person who, within 30 days before election day, has moved to a new precinct to vote only an absentee in-person, special needs or questioned ballot. The division may not reject the ballot of a qualified voter who transferred registration within 30 days before election on the grounds the voter is not on the official registration list for the election. A voter must reside in the new house district for at least 30 days to vote a ballot for that district.

Section 9 - Amends AS 15.07.090(d) to stipulate that a qualified voter who registers within 30 days of election and for whom no evidence of registration in the precinct can be found may only vote an absentee in-person, special needs, or questioned ballot, and that the division may not reject said ballot on the grounds the voter is not on the official registration list for the election.

Section 10 - Amends AS 15.07.130(e) to rename absentee voting stations "early voting stations."

Section 11 - Amends AS 15.10.090 to require the division, whenever possible, to send two written notices of a change of precinct boundary or polling place designation.

Section 12 - Amends AS 15.10.170(a) to allow an organization sponsoring or opposing a ballot proposition to have watchers at polls and counting centers once authorized by the director of Elections, and signed acknowledgment of the watcher's appointment by the chairperson of the organization.

Section 13 - Adds a new subsection to AS 13.15.060 stipulating each polling place will provide language assistance as required by 52 U.S.C. 10503.

Section 14 - Adds a new subsection to AS 15.15.170 prohibiting the display of photo or video images of a person's marked ballot near an election polling place

if the display is an attempt to persuade a person to vote for against a candidate or proposition.

Section 15 - Amends AS 15.15.280 to prohibit a voter from exhibiting the voter's marked ballot to an election official to enable the person to ascertain how the voter marked the ballot.

Section 16 - Adds a new subsection to AS 15.15.280 requiring that the prohibition against showing a marked ballot at a polling place does not apply to a voter who requests assistance voting (under AS 15.15.240) or, subject to the prohibition on political persuasion within 200 feet of an entrance, shares a photo of the voter's marked ballot. This section would allow the use of "ballot selfies."

Section 17 - Amends AS 15.15.370 to add a stipulation requiring that, when the director of Elections publishes unofficial ballot total results, they will include the subsequent rankings selected by the voters who ranked that candidate as the voters' first choice.

Section 18 - Adds a new subsection to AS 15.15.430(a) to include in the director's review of ballot counting voter's rankings for each candidate on the ballot.

Section 19 - Amends AS 15.20.020 to require the director make available instructions on how to use the online system for tracking absentee ballots established in AS 15.20.221.

Section 20 - Amends AS 15.20.030 to include a postage-paid return envelope with the mail-in ballot and materials. It also adds a space for recording the date of the voter's signature declaring the person is a qualified voter. This section prohibits identification of a voter's party affiliation on the ballot envelope, and also removes reference to the requirement of witness signatures.

Section 21 - Amends AS 15.20.045 to stipulate that a location designated as an early voting station will remain an early voting station for subsequent elections unless the location is no longer available for use or the director of the Division of Elections determines that the location is no longer appropriate.

The section requires the director to provide public notice when a location is no longer appropriate for use as an early voting station.

Section 22 - Amends AS 15.20.045(c) to replace the term "absentee voting station" with the term "early voting station".

Section 23 - Adds a new subsection to AS 15.20.045 requiring the director to appoint one or more registration officials to serve in each early voting station in all elections during the hours the station is open.

Section 24 - Amends AS 15.20.050 to require the director of Elections to notify the public of the location of early voting stations. Renames absentee voting stations as early voting stations.

Section 25 -Conforming language to rename "absentee voting stations" as "early voting stations".

Section 26 - Amends AS 15.20.064(b) specifying that verification of a voter's residence address appearing on the official registration list must be current for that election.

Section 27 - Adds new subsection (e) to AS 15.20.064 that requires a voter to cast an absentee ballot if a voter's eligibility to vote cannot be verified by an election official.

Section 28 - Amends AS 15.20.072(b) to allow a voter, through a representative, to request a special needs ballot from an absentee voting official at an early voting station. This aligns AS 15.20.072(b) with renaming "absentee voting station" as "early voting station" for uniformity.

Section 29 - Amends AS 15.20.081 (b) to require absentee ballot applications to permit the person to declare a political affiliation, if any.

Section 30 - Amends AS 15.20.081(d) to eliminate the witness requirement for absentee ballots.

Section 31 - Amends AS 15.20.081 to add a new subsection (m) that requires an absentee ballot application to include an option for a voter to choose to receive absentee ballots by mail for future regularly scheduled state elections. The new subsection stipulates that the director may require a voter to reapply to receive an absentee ballot by mail if the voter has not voted an absentee ballot for four years or the voter's previous absentee ballot was returned as undeliverable. Also adds new subsection (n) that requires the director to provide a ballot and election materials in a language other than English if a voter so requests at least 45 days before an election and if the requested language is one listed in 52 U.S.C. 10503.

Section 32 - Amends AS 15.20.201(a) to require the election supervisor to begin reviewing voter certificates and envelopes for absentee ballots ten days before election day, which is three days earlier than current law. Also, this section adds the requirement that an absentee ballot may not be counted until the voter certificate has been reviewed.

Section 33 - Amends AS 15.20.203(b) to require the election board to reject an absentee ballot if the voter has not signed the certificate, if the ballot envelope and certificate is delivered, postmarked, or has a tracking barcode showing it was mailed after election day, or if the signature on the certificate does not match the voter's registration records. This section implements signature verification and removes the requirement of a witness signature on the certificate.

Section 34 - Adds a new subsection (k) to AS 15.20.203 requiring district absentee boards to verify the voter's signature on the certificate is consistent with the voter's signature in voter registration records. An exception is made for voters who vote absentee in-person. Also, requires the director to provide training in signature verification and signature comparison software for election officials reviewing signatures.

Section 35 - Amends AS 15.20.220(b) to add absentee ballots properly cured to the list of ballots to be reviewed by the state review board.

Section 36 - Adds new subsection AS 15.20.221 which establishes an online ballot tracking system designed to allow a voter to easily use the system through a mobile electronic device to confirm receipt and progression, by date, of the voter's ballot through the election system. The tracking system also indicates the process by which a voter can cure issues with the ballot such as lack of a signature, a signature that does not match the signature on record, or identity verification questions. The system will also provide the reason a ballot was not counted. Section 15.20.222 creates a procedure for curing uncounted ballots by allowing a voter to cure an absentee ballot rejected because a voter does not have a signature stored in voter registration records, failed to sign the certificate, the signature on the certificate does not match the signature in the voter registration records, or the voter provided insufficient proof of identity as required by AS 15.20.081(f). If a voter's absentee ballot was rejected on or before election day, the voter may attest in a sworn affidavit that the voter's absentee ballot was rejected and mark a questioned ballot.

Section 37 - Amends AS 15.20.800 (a) to allow the director of Elections to conduct an election by mail in small communities with a population of 750 or less where the Division of Elections is unable to hire election workers or in areas threatened by natural disasters, disease outbreak or imminent terrorist attack. Also specifies that the provisions on disaster/disaster declarations apply to all communities, not just 750 or less.

Section 38 - Amends AS 15.56.030(d) to specify that the postage-paid return envelopes provided pursuant to AS 15.20.030 for purposes of returning ballots do not constitute the crime of unlawful interference with voting, as they are not considered an "other valuable thing" pursuant to AS 15.56.030(a).

Section 39 - Amends AS 15.56.199(1) to adjust the definition of "election" to include local elections as

defined in AS 15.80.010 conducted by the Division of Elections, not just state elections.

Section 40 - Adds new section AS 15.80.009 to establish a minimum compensation for election workers.

Section 41 - Amends AS 29.20.380(c) to authorize a municipal clerk to act as an absentee voting official for an early voting station under AS 15.20.045(b). Conforming language changing "absentee voting station" to "early voting station."

Section 42 - Adds new subsection (d) to AS 29.26.050 which stipulates that a person living within a municipality for at least 30 days, but who has not registered to vote in state elections at a residence address within the municipality for at least 30 days before a municipal election, may vote only an absentee, special needs or questioned ballot. The municipality may not reject the ballot of a qualified voter who registers within 30 days before election day because the voter is not on the official registration list.

Section 43 - Repeals AS 29.26.050(a)(3), requiring a voter to be registered at least 30 days before the municipal election at which the person seeks to vote. Also repeals AS 15.10.170 (b), AS 15.20.203(j) and AS 29.26.050(a)(3).

Section 44 - Adds a new section to uncodified law stipulating the division of elections shall provide a report to the Legislature by November 1, 2025, recommending options for expanding early voting in rural communities and low-income neighborhoods.

Section 45 - Adds a new section to uncodified law on the applicability of AS 15.56.030(d), stipulating that sec. 38 of this Act applies to offenses committed on or after the effective date of this bill. Section 46 - Adds a new section to uncodified law stipulating the division of elections may adopt regulations necessary to implement the changes made by this bill in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. Section 47 - Stipulates Section 46 takes effect immediately. Section 48 - Provides an effective date

of January 1, 2024, for the bill's provisions except for section 47.

[4:43:35 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW invited Ms. Wilkerson to speak to the fiscal note.

MS. WILKERSON acknowledged the fiscal note from DOE, deferring any questions to the division's staff.

[4:44:46 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[4:45:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD asked who would benefit from changing the current voting laws.

MS. WILKERSON deferred to the bill sponsor.

[4:46:08 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW asked Ms. Beetcher to speak to the fiscal note.

[4:46:18 PM](#)

CAROL BEETCHER, Director, Division of Elections (DOE), Office of the Lieutenant Governor, noted that the division's fiscal note reflected the capital cost for the new systems required to implement the proposed legislation, including a signature verification system in each region.

CHAIR SHAW commenced invited testimony.

[4:47:30 PM](#)

DANIEL GRIFFITH, Senior Director of Policy, Secure Democracy USA, paraphrased his written testimony [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Dear Chairman Shaw and esteemed members of the House State Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of House Bill 37. Building on

bipartisan proposals introduced last session, HB 37 would:

- Strengthen election security by verifying absentee voters' identity through signature matching;
- Enhance election transparency by improving Alaska's ballot tracking system;
- Help ensure that every eligible Alaskan will have their ballot counted by creating a cure process for absentee ballots; and
- Allow eligible Alaskans to more conveniently exercise their freedom to vote through important modernizations.

My name is Peter Skopec, and I am the Director of Advocacy for Secure Democracy USA. We are a national, nonpartisan nonprofit that works across the aisle with state leaders, election administrators, and policy experts to build greater confidence in our elections and improve voter access across the United States.

We believe that strengthening election security and guaranteeing that every eligible citizen has the freedom to exercise their right to vote are not mutually exclusive. In fact, the best way to build confidence and trust in our elections is by advancing the policies contained in HB 37 that achieve both of these objectives at the same time. We applaud Representative Schrage and members of the committee for working across the aisle to consider this well-balanced bill.

First, HB 37 will build confidence in our elections by strengthening election security. Under HB 37, the Division of Elections would verify absentee ballots by matching a voter's signature to the signature in their voter registration file - the most common and trusted way to verify absentee ballots nationwide.

Current law requires an absentee voter's ballot certificate to be notarized or witnessed. This process is unnecessarily burdensome - particularly for rural and senior voters - compared to other, equally effective forms of ballot verification. Most states - including many western, rural states with high absentee participation rates, such as Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming - allow voters to return their absentee ballot

by providing identifying information such as a voter's signature, address, and/or date of birth.

Alaska is one of only 11 states that require voters to obtain a witness or notary signature before returning their ballot envelope. This requirement has become even more challenging in the wake of the United States Postal Service's decision, in 2020, to no longer allow Postal employees to serve as witnesses. Replacing this burdensome witness/notary requirement with more effective signature matching is an excellent improvement that would make voting more accessible to Alaskans, without sacrificing election security.

Second, HB 37 enhances election transparency through improvements to Alaska's absentee ballot tracking system. While Alaska already offers some level of ballot tracking, the existing system could offer voters more detailed information throughout the absentee voting process - particularly by letting them know whether their ballot was counted.

The comprehensive, free, online, mobile-friendly ballot tracking system created by HB 37 would allow voters to confirm that their absentee ballot was mailed by the Division of Elections, track its delivery to the voter, and confirm that the completed ballot was returned and counted. Fourteen states, including Utah, Texas, and Florida, require that voters be able to track their mail ballots in this way, and many other states also provide this critical level of detail to voters administratively.

As discussed below, ballot tracking would also support Alaska's cure process, as proposed by HB 37, by helping absentee voters recognize and fix errors on their ballot envelopes.

Third, HB 37 would help ensure that every eligible voter will have their ballot counted by creating a uniform, statewide cure process. Cure processes allow elections officials to contact voters to correct common, honest mistakes on their absentee ballots, such as a missing signature. Not only does this measure assure Alaska voters that their ballot will be counted, but it also gives elections officials another

security check to identify and address any cases of actual fraud or illegal voting.

In just the past few years, 16 states - including Texas, Louisiana, Indiana, and Kentucky - have adopted permanent or temporary cure processes. In total, 31 states across the political spectrum, including large western and rural states like Montana, Utah, and North Dakota, notify and give voters the opportunity to cure ballots with minor mistakes.

The absence of a uniform, statewide cure process contributed to unacceptably high absentee ballot rejection rates in Alaska's elections in 2022, and has left the state vulnerable to Due Process and Equal Protection challenges under the U.S. Constitution. Combining signature verification with a cure process, as HB 37 does, is widely regarded as a best practice in election administration, and would greatly benefit election security and voter access.

Finally, HB 37 proposes important modernizations that will allow Alaskans to more conveniently access their freedom to vote. Among other updates, the bill expands Alaska's existing same-day voter registration system; creates an absentee voter list that allows voters who prefer to vote by mail or are unable to vote in person to apply once and then continue to receive absentee ballots for future elections without the need to re-apply; and provides postage-paid return envelopes to absentee voters.

Every eligible voter should have the freedom to cast their ballot securely and conveniently, the confidence to know their vote was counted, and the certainty that reported election results are accurate and trustworthy. HB 37 will bring Alaska's election system in line with best practices for security, transparency, access, and accountability. In doing so, we strongly believe this legislation will strengthen the public's confidence in Alaska's elections.

We thank Representative Schrage for his leadership introducing this important legislation, and Chairman Shaw and the esteemed members of the committee for the opportunity to submit written testimony. We would be happy to provide the committee with any additional

information, including the implementation and effect of similar provisions in other states.

We respectfully urge you to support HB 37.

[4:51:38 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[4:51:53 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW opened public testimony on HB 37.

[4:52:14 PM](#)

PAT RACE stated his support for HB 37, specifically highlighting the elimination of the witness signature requirement and the signature verification system as positive elements of the bill. He opined that the bill would improve access to voting, voter registration, and help with the curing process. Additionally, he expressed support for the ballot tracking provision.

[4:54:24 PM](#)

BARBARA TYNDALL stated her opposition to HB 37, expressing a lack of confidence in the election system. She opined that eliminating the witness requirement would add "a link in the chain" of election fraud. Further, she reported that same-day registration had been identified by the Heritage Foundation as a huge flaw in elections, as more time was needed to verify the accuracy of the registration information and confirm the individual's eligibility.

[4:55:58 PM](#)

SUE SHERIF, Co-president, League of Women Voters of Alaska, expressed her support for HB 37. She emphasized the importance of ensuring safety and security in the election system; however, equally important was the assurance that election procedures were not providing barriers to qualified voters. She highlighted three favorable provisions in the proposed legislation: pre-paid postage for absentee and mail ballots; establishment of the signature verification process and elimination of the witness signature; and the curing process. She opined that if HB 37 were to pass, more Alaskans' votes would count.

[4:59:09 PM](#)

MICHAEL GARVEY, American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska, expressed support for HB 37. He referenced the ACLU's written testimony [included in the committee packet], highlighting specific support for the ballot curing provision in HB 37. He urged the committee to move forward with sensible policy changes included in the bill, such as paid postage and registration for permanent absentee voting.

[5:01:14 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW closed public testimony on HB 37. He announced that the bill would be held over.

[5:02:07 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.