

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

April 18, 2023

3:04 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**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

State Board of Parole

- Sarah Possenti - Fairbanks
- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Department of Corrections, Commissioner

- Jennifer Winkelman - Juneau
- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

HOUSE BILL NO. 61

"An Act relating to restrictions on firearms and other weapons."

- MOVED CSHB 61(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 116

"An Act relating to appropriations from the restorative justice account."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 61

SHORT TITLE: LIMITATIONS ON FIREARMS RESTRICTIONS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) TILTON

02/06/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
02/06/23 (H) CRA, STA  
03/16/23 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124  
03/16/23 (H) Heard & Held  
03/16/23 (H) MINUTE(CRA)  
03/21/23 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124  
03/21/23 (H) Moved HB 61 Out of Committee  
03/21/23 (H) MINUTE(CRA)  
03/22/23 (H) CRA RPT 4DP 1DNP 1AM  
03/22/23 (H) DP: MCKAY, RUFFRIDGE, MCCABE, MCCORMICK  
03/22/23 (H) DNP: MEARS  
03/22/23 (H) AM: HIMSCHOOT  
04/11/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120  
04/11/23 (H) Heard & Held  
04/11/23 (H) MINUTE(STA)  
04/18/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 116

SHORT TITLE: RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ACCT APPROPRIATIONS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) COULOMBE

03/17/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/17/23 (H) STA, FIN  
04/18/23 (H) STA AT 3:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SARA POSSENTI, Appointee  
State Board of Parole  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as appointee to the State Board of Parole.

JENNIFER WINKELMAN, Commissioner Designee, Appointee  
Department of Corrections  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as commissioner designee appointee to the Department of Corrections.

DON HABEGER, Community Coordinator  
Juneau Reentry Coalition  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of Commissioner Winkelman's appointment.

REPRESENTATIVE CATHY TILTON  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 61, as prime sponsor.

STEVE ST. CLAIR, Staff  
Representative Cathy Tilton  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 61, on behalf of Representative Tilton, prime sponsor.

REPRESENTATIVE JULIE COULOMBE  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented HB 116, as prime sponsor.

EDRA MORLEDGE, Staff  
Representative Julie Coulombe  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided a PowerPoint presentation on HB 116, on behalf of Representative Coulombe, prime sponsor.

DIANE CASTO, Executive Director  
Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions during the hearing on HB 116.

BRENDA STANFILL, Executive Director  
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Offered invited testimony during the hearing on HB 116.

ERICK CORDERO, representing self  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 116.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:04:20 PM](#)

**CHAIR LADDIE SHAW** called the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:04 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.

**CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):**  
**State Board of Parole**  
**Department of Corrections, Commissioner**

[3:05:06 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the first order of business would be the confirmation hearings for the governor's appointees to various boards and commissions.

[3:05:31 PM](#)

SARA POSSENTI, Appointee, State Board of Parole, provided an overview of her background and qualifications, citing her 12 years of experience on the State Board of Parole. As this would be her fourth appointment to the board, she expressed support for the current membership. She highlighted her background in criminal justice and social work, as well as her experience as a probation officer specializing in the supervision of sex offenders and substance abuse treatment.

[3:07:24 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY reported that the number of Alaskans released on discretionary parole has decreased from a high of 66 percent in 2015 to 25 percent in 2022. She questioned the reason for the reduction.

MS. POSSENTI shared her understanding that in prior years the system offered more programs. She noted that programming completion has been a significant factor for those released on discretionary parole. She expressed the understanding that due to Senate Bill 91 [passed during the Thirty-Second Alaska State Legislature], numbers were skewed; additionally, she referenced the pandemic as a reason for varied rates, as programming decreased during this time. She expounded, predicting that numbers would increase in the future.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked for a description of Ms. Possenti's decision-making process in regard to granting discretionary parole.

MS. POSSENTI said that for discretionary parole, the following would be considered: whether early parole would diminish the seriousness of the offense; whether rehabilitation could be furthered by release; the likelihood of the individual committing further crimes or violating the conditions of release; whether the individual was a threat to the public; and the individual's history under supervision. Her goal, she said, would be to make the best decision for both the community and the inmate's rehabilitation.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether it was common practice for an inmate who had been denied discretionary parole to wait 10 years before reapplying.

MS. POSSENTI indicated that the 10-year "set off" has been a longstanding practice for serious crimes.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY inquired about the timespan for nonserious crimes.

MS. POSSENTI said the level of programming determined the "set off" time, and reconsideration would be contingent on whether the inmate completed certain criteria.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY pointed out that 2022 data from the State Board of Parole shows white inmates are twice as likely to be granted discretionary parole compared to Alaska Native inmates. She questioned the statistic.

MS. POSSENTI said she would have to follow up after reviewing the data. She speculated that access to programming could be a contributing factor.

[3:20:04 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT highlighted Ms. Possenti's 12 years of service and inquired about her continued desire to serve on the board.

MS. POSSENTI said she possesses a special quality for working with troubled individuals while respecting them and meeting their needs. She expressed the belief that she works well with criminals, helping them recognize their strengths and

encouraging them to make better decisions. She added that serving on the board allows her to continue this work.

[3:22:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD asked whether race would be a determining factor when considering an individual for parole.

MS. POSSENTI answered, "Absolutely not."

[3:22:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ARMSTRONG asked whether the board would make decisions that would put a greater emphasis on punishment rather than rehabilitation.

MS. POSSENTI acknowledged that in some cases, granting parole would diminish the severity of the crime when victims were involved. In response to a follow-up question, she expressed the belief that people could change. She stated that she has witnessed this in her work in the criminal justice system. She expressed her hope that all parolees would become productive citizens.

[3:25:45 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER asked how the board would determine that a person is likely to recidivate; therefore, endangering the community.

MS. POSSENTI observed that most people who come before the parole board are not first-time offenders. She explained that her questions often revolve around treatment and community support, as most inmates struggle with addiction.

[3:29:42 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW thanked Ms. Possenti and welcomed Commissioner Designee Winkelman.

[3:30:15 PM](#)

JENNIFER WINKELMAN, Commissioner Designee, Appointee, Department of Corrections (DOC), shared her biographical background, including her work as a probation and parole officer with both unsentenced and sentenced inmates throughout the state, which began 22 years ago; her role as chief probation officer, in

2016; her selection to be director of Pretrial, Probation and Parole, in 2018; and her current appointment by Governor Mike Dunleavy as commissioner of DOC.

COMMISSIONER WINKELMAN talked about how the strengths and struggles within corrections differ from one area to the next throughout Alaska. She emphasized the value of the following: building relationships; working collaboratively with available resources; remaining fair and impartial in decision-making based on facts and "the big picture"; having a long-range vision for the department through everchanging administrations; and acknowledging reentry to be just as much a part of public safety as incarceration. She concluded by stating three goals: the health and well-being of staff; that those who enter the DOC system leave better than they arrived; and a different use of resources, technology, and best practices in the hope that doing so will "drive down recidivism."

[3:40:37 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ARMSTRONG requested concrete examples of how the department is helping inmates leave the facilities better than they entered.

COMMISSIONER WINKELMAN explained that for short-term stays, it would mean allowing inmates to shower, for example. For inmates with longer sentences, the goal is to provide programming inside and housing upon release.

[3:41:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY discussed the importance of treatment and rehabilitation. She asked how she would work to ensure that department funds would be used in this capacity.

COMMISSIONER WINKELMAN detailed the benefits of offering telehealth options in rural Alaska and providing computers to those in custody. She highlighted the importance of program availability and listening to feedback from staff regarding which programs yield successful outcomes.

[3:43:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY inquired about Commissioner Designee Winkelman's vision for educational programming inside DOC facilities.

COMMISSIONER WINKELMAN indicated that the educational component goes hand-in-hand with the treatment component. She said collaborating with the university to offer educational programming is a long-term goal.

[3:45:20 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY asked whether progress has been made on retention and recruitment issues, as well as staff shortages.

COMMISSIONER WINKELMAN indicated that the needle is "slightly" moving in a positive direction. She explained that temporary housing has been extended from 15 days to 120 days in Juneau to allow new hires to find permanent housing. In areas that are not experiencing staff shortages, a temporary duty (TDY) program is being utilized to spread out staff and fill some of the voids.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY inquired about the policies and procedures for inmates going through withdrawal.

COMMISSIONER WINKELMAN opined that current screening practices are working, as nothing of this nature has been raised as a concern.

[3:48:59 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW opened public testimony on Commissioner Winkelman's appointment.

[3:49:34 PM](#)

DON HABEGER, Community Coordinator, Juneau Reentry Coalition, expressed his support for the appointment of Commissioner Winkelman. He recounted positive experiences working with Commissioner Winkelman, adding that he would like to continue this work. He opined that confirming her appointment would be doing communities a favor.

CHAIR SHAW, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony.

[3:51:49 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW moved to advance the confirmation of Sara Possenti, State Board of Parole; and Jennifer Winkelman, Commissioner Designee for the Department of Corrections to the joint session

for consideration. He reminded the committee that signing the reports regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointee, and the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[3:52:47 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:52 p.m. to 3:59 p.m.

**HB 61-LIMITATIONS ON FIREARMS RESTRICTIONS**

[3:59:31 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 61, "An Act relating to restrictions on firearms and other weapons."

[4:00:38 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[4:01:03 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HB 61, labeled 33-LS0333\A.4, Radford, 4/17/23, which read:

Page 2, line 9, following "to":  
Insert "(1)"

Page 2, line 12, following "law":  
Insert "  
(2) an order, proclamation, regulation, ordinance, or policy  
(A) forbidding the possession of a firearm, a firearm accessory, ammunition, or other weapon for personal use at an emergency shelter; or  
(B) ordering the seizure or confiscation of a firearm, a firearm accessory, ammunition, or other weapon for personal use that a person possesses or attempts to possess at an emergency shelter"

CHAIR SHAW objected for the purpose of discussion.

[4:01:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY explained that Amendment 1 would allow authorities to restrict the possession of firearms in emergency shelters during a disaster declaration, thus providing authorities with the flexibility to assess situations and retain order and safety in communal living spaces.

[4:02:49 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER objected to the motion to adopt Amendment 1.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Armstrong and Story voted in favor of Amendment 1. Representatives Carpenter, C. Johnson, Allard, Wright, and Shaw voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 1 failed by a vote of 2-5.

[4:03:45 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 4:03 p.m.

[4:04:25 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY moved to adopt Amendment 2 to HB 61, labeled 33-LS0333\A.3, Radford, 4/17/23, which read:

Page 2, lines 13 - 25:  
Delete all material.

REPRESENTATIVE C. JOHNSON objected.

REPRESENTATIVE ALLARD objected.

[4:04:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY explained that Amendment 2 would delete the language on page 2, lines 13-25, as this language would allow people to bring civil action against a government agency or law enforcement. She opined that this would encourage people to sue the state government without resulting in injunctive relief.

[4:05:52 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE C. JOHNSON asked the bill sponsor to discuss Amendment 2.

[4:05:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CATHY TILTON, Alaska State Legislature, prime sponsor of HB 61, referenced a memorandum "memo" from Legislative Legal Services [included in the committee packet], which addressed the concern about injunctive relief versus treble damages. She deferred to her staff.

[4:06:24 PM](#)

STEVE ST. CLAIR, Staff, Representative Cathy Tilton, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Tilton, prime sponsor of HB 61, stated that this is an existing practice in state and federal law.

[4:06:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY, referencing the legal memo, shared her understanding that treble damages are authorized in 14 different statutes, whereas injunctive relief appears in the Alaska Statutes 46 times. She requested a representative from Legislative Legal Services to answer the question of whether injunctive relief would be more appropriate.

CHAIR SHAW said no one from Legislative Legal Services was online.

[4:07:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE C. JOHNSON maintained his objection to Amendment 2.

[4:07:36 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Armstrong and Story voted in favor of Amendment 2. Representatives Wright, Carpenter, C. Johnson, Allard, and Shaw voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 2 failed by a vote of 2-5.

[4:08:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT moved to adopt Amendment 3 to HB 61, labeled 33-LS0333\A.1, Radford, 4/13/23, which read:

Page 1, line 8, following "firearm,":  
Insert "a firearm part,"

Page 1, line 10, following "firearm,":  
Insert "a firearm part,"

Page 1, line 13, following "firearms,":  
Insert "firearm parts,"

Page 2, line 2, following "firearms,":  
Insert "firearm parts,"

Page 2, line 9, following "firearm,":  
Insert "a firearm part,"

Page 2, line 11, following "firearm,":  
Insert "a firearm part,"

Page 2, line 15, following "firearm,":  
Insert "a firearm part,"

Page 3, line 1, following "illumination":  
Insert ";

(3) "firearm part" means a component of a firearm that is essential to the basic function of a firearm, including a component of an action or lock, the stock, and the barrel"

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER objected.

[4:08:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT explained that Amendment 3 would insert "firearm part" in the associated definition in the proposed legislation. He explained that firearm parts would be required for the proper function of a firearm.

REPRESENTATIVE C. JOHNSON asked whether the bill sponsor was supportive of Amendment 3.

REPRESENTATIVE TILTON expressed support for the proposed amendment, as firearm parts would be necessary for subsistence hunting, as well as for self-protection.

REPRESENTATIVE C. JOHNSON removed his objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 3 was adopted.

[4:09:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE WRIGHT moved to report HB 61, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

REPRESENTATIVE STORY objected.

[4:10:20 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[4:10:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY spoke to her objection, opining that law enforcement needs to be able to restrict firearm possession in certain situations, such as emergency shelters.

[4:11:01 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[4:11:37 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Wright, Carpenter, C. Johnson, Allard, and Shaw voted in favor of reporting HB 61, as amended, out of committee. Representatives Story and Armstrong voted against it. Therefore, CSHB 61(STA) was reported out of the House State Affairs Standing Committee by a vote of 5-2.

[4:12:24 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[4:12:47 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW authorized Legislative Legal Services to make any necessary technical and conforming changes to CSHB 61(STA).

[4:13:19 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 4:13 p.m. to 4:18 p.m.

**HB 116-RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ACCT APPROPRIATIONS**

[4:18:21 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 116, "An Act relating to appropriations from the restorative justice account."

[4:18:51 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JULIE COULOMBE, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 116. She paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee packet], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Bill 116 reorganizes the percentages of the funds that pass through the Restorative Justice Account that fund nonprofit organizations through the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) for services for victims and domestic violence and sexual assault programs. This legislation changes the share of the funds that are currently set out in AS 43.22.048(b), reversing the share for CDVSA and the Department of Corrections.

In 1988, the Legislature passed a law making certain convicted criminals ineligible for a Permanent Fund Dividend. The intent was that those funds should be used for the primary purpose of helping restore victims of crime to a pre-offense condition. There is no better way to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in getting their lives back together after this type of assault and victimization, than to put our state resources into caring for those victims, as well as into prevention and intervention programs to reduce the number of these crimes from occurring in the first place. Since the fund was established, it transitioned from mainly assisting crime victims to paying for inmate healthcare. More recently, it has been used by the Department to pay for institutions, which was not the intention of the fund.

HB 116 will ensure that the intent is upheld, specifically for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, one of the worst types of victimization possible. It will reverse the percentages allowed under current statute for CDVSA (from 1-3% to 79-88%) and for the Department of Corrections (from 79-88% to 1-3%), to reinforce Alaska's commitment to reducing our abysmal rate of these crimes through prevention and intervention programs, as well as stabilize the funding source for shelters throughout the state. I respectfully request the support of my colleagues on HB 116.

4:22:50 PM

EDRA MORLEDGE, Staff, Representative Julie Coulombe, Alaska State Legislature, directed attention to a PowerPoint presentation on HB 116 [included in the committee packet], on behalf of Representative Coulombe, prime sponsor. She highlighted the legislative intent on slide 2, which is to increase prevention and intervention programs and aid to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault through the Restorative Justice Account. She detailed the Restorative Justice Account on slide 3, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

∪ In 1988, the Legislature passed a law making certain convicted criminals ineligible for a Permanent Fund Dividend. The intent was that those funds should be used for the primary purpose of helping restore victims of crime to a pre-offense condition.

∪ Since the fund was established, it transitioned from mainly assisting crime victims to paying for inmate healthcare. More recently, it has been used by the Department to pay for institutions, which was not the intention of the fund.

∪ There is no better way to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual assault in getting their lives back together after this type of assault and victimization, than to put our state resources into caring for those victims, as well as into prevention and intervention programs to reduce the number of these crimes from occurring in the first place.

4:24:50 PM

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE noted that [the Restorative Justice Account] is composed of permanent fund dividends (PFDs) revoked from felons, and this is why the fund fluctuates each year.

MS. MORLEDGE expounded, pointing out that the fund's balance had increased this year because [the 2022] dividend was large. She resumed the presentation on slide 4, reporting that per the Alaska Victimization Survey, 57.7 percent of adult women in Alaska have experienced domestic violence or sexual violence throughout their lifetime.

[4:26:13 PM](#)

MS. MORLEDGE outlined the current Restorative Justice Account funding prioritization on slide 5, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

The legislature may appropriate amounts from the account to the following recipients in the priority order and percentages listed:

10-13% to the crime victim compensation fund for payments to crime victims and for operating the Violent Crimes Compensation Board.

2-6% to the Office of Victims' Rights for payments to crime victims and for the operation of the OVR.

1-3% to nonprofit organizations to provide grants for services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

1-3% to nonprofit organizations to provide grants for mental health and substance abuse treatment for offenders.

79-88% to the Department of Corrections for costs related to incarceration or probation.

[4:27:33 PM](#)

MS. MORLEDGE proceeded to slide 6, which listed the allocation proposal under HB 116, as follows [original punctuation provided]:

10-13% to the crime victim compensation fund for payments to crime victims and for operating the Violent Crimes Compensation Board.

2-6% to the Office of Victims' Rights for payments to crime victims and for the operation of the OVR.

79-88% to nonprofit organizations to provide grants for services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.

1-3% to nonprofit organizations to provide grants for mental health and substance abuse treatment for offenders.

1-3% to the Department of Corrections for costs related to incarceration or probation.

[4:27:55 PM](#)

MS. MORLEDGE advanced to slide 7, which provided a five-year look back of the Restorative Justice Account. She pointed out that slide 8 offered a fiscal lookback from fiscal year 2012 (FY 12) to FY 24. She recalled that House Bill 216 [passed during the Thirtieth Alaska State Legislature] had created the current prioritization and percentage levels.

[4:29:12 PM](#)

MS. MORLEDGE concluded on slide 9, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

HB 116 will ensure that the intent of the restorative justice account is upheld, specifically for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, one of the worst types of victimization possible.

It will reverse the percentages allowed under current statute for CDVSA (from 1-3% to 79-88%) and for the Department of Corrections (from 79-88% to 1-3%).

This will reinforce Alaska's commitment to reducing our abysmal rate of these crimes through prevention and intervention programs, as well as stabilize the funding source for shelters throughout the state.

[4:29:54 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ARMSTRONG thanked Representative Coulombe for bringing forward such a creative and compassionate piece of legislation that would have an immediate impact on many lives.

[4:30:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY expressed her excitement about the bill. Nonetheless, she asked why mental health and substance abuse treatment for offenders was not prioritized in the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE explained that she had considered moving percentages around, eventually deciding on "keeping it simple" by swapping only the percentages of fund allocation belonging to Department of Corrections (DOC) costs "related to incarceration or probation" [at 79-88 percent currently] and "nonprofit organizations to provide grants for services for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault" [at 1-3 percent currently]. She expressed the desire to keep the focus on victims, and she described it as a victim's restoration fund. She noted that DOC offered a perpetrator rehabilitation service executed by the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA).

[4:32:07 PM](#)

DIANE CASTO, Executive Director, Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA), said she was available to answer any questions on the bill's impact and the [CDVSA's] current budget.

[4:33:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER requested a high-level picture of how the money would be spent.

MS. CASTO acknowledged that rates [of domestic violence] were not decreasing in Alaska. She opined that without a good distribution of money across a comprehensive approach to an issue, results would be less than optimal. She described the council's current funding structure, which is a combination of state and federal funding, with a small amount of inter-agency receipts from DOC for the perpetrator rehabilitation program. She stated that 90 percent of the council's budget goes to victims' services, such as emergency shelter programs for individuals in immediate danger; 8 percent of funding goes towards prevention programs; and 2 percent of funding goes towards perpetrator rehabilitation. She suggested using the proposed funding to increase victims' service programs and expand programming to help victims and survivors move forward. Additionally, she suggested allocating "significant" money towards prevention and early intervention. She concluded by discussing her vision for an 18-month perpetrator rehabilitation work group. She opined that program funding and implementation needs a better balance, adding that the council is currently "treading water" due to existing appropriation structures.

[4:38:18 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER shared his belief that the word "programming" is meaningless without results. He suggested that this conversation be continued one year from now using results-driven data.

[4:39:06 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE C. JOHNSON shared his understanding that [domestic violence] has been a generational problem. He asked whether there is anything in the system to address or break the cycle of generational trauma.

MS. CASTO expressed agreement, highlighting the high Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) scores among perpetrators. She emphasized the importance of providing services to children who have witnessed abuse.

REPRESENTATIVE C. JOHNSON, from Ms. Casto's answer, discerned that there is no program in place to address generational trauma in children.

MS. CASTO clarified that programs are available, such as mental health services to treat and counsel children and youth who had experienced violence. She explained that the council collaborates with the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA), the Department of Health (DOH), and other agencies to develop and create programming for young people. Nonetheless, she highlighted that the "tracking" of young people as a difficulty.

[4:46:05 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY reflected on existing family support programs, such as teaching the cycle of violence in parenting groups. She asked Ms. Casto to list the programs that are currently available.

MS. CASTO clarified the services are offered by community-based agencies, which in turn, are funded by CDVSA. She added that the Office of Children's Services (OCS) offers many of the family-focused programs. She opined that more support is needed to change the behaviors of families struggling with violence.

[4:49:37 PM](#)

BRENDA STANFILL, Executive Director, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, explained that the ANDVSA

represents the 24 member programs funded by CDVSA. She noted that without the one-time incremental federal COVID-19 dollars and the appropriation from U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski's office, ANDVSA would be looking at a \$7.5 million shortfall next year. She emphasized the importance of shelters and rape crisis centers for emergency services. She reported that a lack of capacity within these programs is creating limitations in terms of access to services. The most requested services, she said, according to CDVSA, are emergency shelters and individual advocacy. Furthermore, Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) have provided 472 children under the age of 18 who are victims of sexual or physical abuse a safe place to undergo the interview process. She concluded by highlighting the critical nature of the services funded by the council. She requested the ability to serve victims on the same level as the rest of the criminal justice system.

[4:53:39 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW opened public testimony on HB 116.

[4:54:06 PM](#)

ERICK CORDERO, representing self, recalled that the original intent of the [Restorative Justice Account] was to restore crime victims to a pre-offense status. He noted that Alaska has continued to be the state with the highest number of domestic violence and sexual assault cases, and this is in addition to child abuse and neglect. He reported that at its height, 98 percent of the fund was going towards inmate healthcare instead of fulfilling the original intent of helping victims. He expressed support for the bill, emphasizing the importance of CDVSA and ANDVSA.

[4:56:31 PM](#)

CHAIR SHAW, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 116. He invited additional comments from the bill sponsor.

[4:56:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE reported that Commissioner Winkelman, DOC, is aware and supportive of the proposed legislation. Additionally, she expressed the intent to implement performance goals and metrics to ensure that the money would go towards things that "were moving the needle." She expressed the

intention to follow up with Commissioner James Cockrell, Department of Public Safety, to ensure the fund had been making a difference.

[4:59:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY pointed out that [April] is the National Child Abuse Prevention Month and expressed her appreciation for the bill.

CHAIR SHAW announced that HB 116 was held over.

[4:59:51 PM](#)

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House State Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at [4:59] p.m.