

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 3, 2023

9:05 a.m.

9:05:36 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Olson called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senator Donny Olson, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Kelly Merrick
Senator David Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Ken Alper, Staff, Senator Donny Olson; Kris Curtis, Legislative Auditor, Alaska Division of Legislative Audit; Kali Spencer, Staff, Senator Wielechowski; Ella Adkison, Staff, Senator Jesse Kiehl; Laib Allensworth, Staff, Senator Wielechowski; Heather Carpenter, Health Care Policy Advisor, Department of Health;

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

SUMMARY

SB 12 ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

CSSB 12(JUD) was REPORTED out of committee with three "do pass" recommendations and with 3 "no recommendations and with one "amend" recommendation, and one previously published fiscal impact note: FN 1(ADM).

SB 55 EXTEND STATE MEDICAL BOARD

CSSB 55(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with three "do pass" recommendations and four "no recommendation" recommendations and with a forthcoming fiscal impact note from the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

SB 58 MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY: POSTPARTUM MOTHERS

SB 58 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 62 RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANT FUND

HB 62 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Olson discussed housekeeping.

#sb55

SENATE BILL NO. 55

"An Act extending the termination date of the State Medical Board; and providing for an effective date."

[9:06:46 AM](#)

Co-Chair Olson relayed that the committee had heard SB 55 on March 7th. Public testimony had been taken.

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to ADOPT proposed committee substitute for SB 55, Work Draft 33-LS0347\B (Bergerud, 3/25/33).

Co-Chair Stedman OBJECTED for discussion.

[9:07:22 AM](#)

KEN ALPER, STAFF, SENATOR DONNY OLSON, discussed the proposed changes to the bill. He highlighted that the original bill had proposed an 8-year extension of the State Medical Board, and the current bill version added a 4-year extension for the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives.

9:08:22 AM

KRIS CURTIS, LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR, ALASKA DIVISION OF LEGISLATIVE AUDIT, referenced the sunset review of the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives (board) within the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (copy on file):

Report Conclusions

Overall, the audit concludes that the board operated in the public's interest by conducting its meetings in an effective manner, by supporting statutory changes when deemed necessary, and by actively amending regulations. The audit also concludes that the board and Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing (DCBPL) staff did not consistently certify midwives in accordance with statutes and regulations. Further, an investigation that concerned a threat to public safety was not addressed by DCBPL investigators in an efficient manner.

We recommend the legislature extend the board's termination date four years, to June 30, 2027, which is half of the eight-year maximum allowed in statute. The reduced extension reflects the need for more timely oversight in recognition of the audit findings and in recognition that the board's draft regulations may significantly change its licensing function.

Ms. Curtis addressed licensing statistics shown on page 5 of the audit. She relayed that as of June 2022, the board had 47 certified midwives. She referenced page 7 and noted the schedule of revenues and expenditures. She listed four recommendations beginning on page 9:

Recommendation 1:

DCCED's commissioner should work with policymakers to improve the recruitment and retention of investigators.

Recommendation 2:

DCCED's commissioner should work with policymakers to improve the recruitment and retention of licensing staff, and board members should adequately review applications prior to approval.

Recommendation 3:

DCBPL's director should work with the board to ensure the online licensing application is sufficient to monitor compliance with continuing education hours and that accurate regulatory references are included in the application.

Recommendation 4:

The Office of the Governor, Boards and Commissions director should work with the board to identify potential applicants to fill board vacancies in a timely manner.

[9:12:00 AM](#)

Co-Chair Olson asked how Ms. Curtis resolved the recommendation for a 4-year extension over an 8-year extension.

Ms. Curtis reiterated that the audit recommendation was in light of the findings recorded in the audit. It was her opinion that the board needed more routine oversight. She explained that the audit was the legislative oversight mechanism for boards and commissions.

Co-Chair Olson agreed with the audit's recommendations. He asked whether there was an explanation as to why there was difficulty filling the board seats.

Ms. Curtis replied that, due to high turnover in the governor's office, she had not received any communication regarding filling the board positions.

Co-Chair Stedman WITHDREW his objection.

[9:13:42 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:14:56 AM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Olson noted that the CS would be before the committee as a working document.

[9:15:28 AM](#)

KALI SPENCER, STAFF, SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI, testified that that sponsor agreed with the changes in the CS. She agreed to answer any questions from the committee.

Senator Olson asked whether the sponsor had seen the change from the 8-year to the 4-year extension.

Ms. Spencer responded in the affirmative. She stated that the sponsor had no objection to the change.

[9:16:26 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to report CSSB 55(FIN) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSSB 55(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with three "do pass" recommendations and four "no recommendation" recommendations and with a forthcoming fiscal impact note from the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

[9:16:47 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:19:21 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#sb12

SENATE BILL NO. 12

"An Act relating to confidentiality of information; relating to the duties of the Department of Administration; creating an address confidentiality program; and providing for an effective date."

[9:19:32 AM](#)

Co-Chair Olson relayed that the committee heard the bill on March 28, 2023, at which time public testimony had been taken.

Senator Kiehl requested that his staff offer clarification regarding the CS.

[9:19:56 AM](#)

ELLA ADKISON, STAFF, SENATOR JESSE KIEHL, corrected an inaccuracy from the previous hearing. She offered that rather than participants being able to renew their enrollment in the program, after the 5 years and the expiration of the protective order or if a person ended their career as a Peace or Correctional Officer they would be removed from the program.

[9:20:22 AM](#)

Senator Wilson understood that Ms. Adkinson was referring to long-term protective orders. He wondered about short-term, 30-day, protective orders.

Senator Kiehl explained that it was unlikely that a person with a short-term protective order would enroll in the program. He said that if they did, they would be eligible to be on the program for 5 years and 30 days.

Co-Chair Olson solicited further discussion.

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to report CSSB 12(JUD) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

CSSB 12(JUD) was REPORTED out of committee with three "do pass" recommendations and with 3 "no recommendations" and with one "amend" recommendation, and one previously published fiscal impact note: FN 1(ADM).

[9:21:54 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:25:50 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#hb62

HOUSE BILL NO. 62

"An Act relating to the renewable energy grant fund and recommendation program; and providing for an effective date."

[9:25:53 AM](#)

Co-Chair Olson relayed that HB 62 had been heard in committee on March 28, 2023, at which time public testimony had been taken.

[9:26:25 AM](#)

LAIB ALLENSWORTH, STAFF, SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI, shared that he was available for committee questions.

Co-Chair Olson set the bill aside.

HB 62 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#sb58

SENATE BILL NO. 58

"An Act relating to Medicaid eligibility; expanding eligibility for postpartum mothers; conditioning the expansion of eligibility on approval by the United States Department of Health and Human Services; and providing for an effective date."

[9:27:09 AM](#)

Co-Chair Olson shared that the bill had been heard on March 7, 2023. He announced that there was an updated fiscal note.

[9:27:43 AM](#)

Mr. Alper explained that there was a new fiscal note from the Department of Health. He recalled that the initial cost of the legislation was \$2.6 million, which was still the case, but the department had acknowledged that the process to implement the program would take one year, which would push the expense to the FY25 budget. He said that the program would ultimately cost \$9 million of which 70 percent would be federally funded and 30 percent funded by the general fund.

Co-Chair Olson asked when the funding for the program would be expected.

Mr. Alper assumed July 1, 2024. He thought the actual date for funding the program would rely on the federal timeline.

Co-Chair Olson asked for the immediate request for the FY24 budget.

Mr. Alper relayed that the department did not appear to contemplate any additional expense in FY24.

[9:29:41 AM](#)

Senator Bishop wanted to clarify that Mr. Alper was referencing the new fiscal note with OMB Component 3234.

Mr. Alper replied in the affirmative.

[9:30:23 AM](#)

HEATHER CARPENTER, HEALTH CARE POLICY ADVISOR, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, testified to the accuracy of the fiscal note.

Co-Chair Olson asked whether Ms. Carpenter had any comments on the revised fiscal note.

Ms. Carpenter believed that the program would go live July 1, 2024.

Co-Chair Olson asked whether the governor supported the bill.

Ms. Carpenter replied in the affirmative.

SB 58 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

[9:31:57 AM](#)

Co-Chair Olson discussed the agenda for the following day.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[9:32:54 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 9:32 a.m.