

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 5, 2023

9:04 a.m.

9:04:55 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Olson called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:04 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

Kelly Goode, Staff, Senator Donnie Olson; Sylvan Robb, Director, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Tammie Perreault, Regional Liaison, Department of Defense; Susan Adams, American Speech and Hearing Association, Maryland; Nancy Lovering, Alaska Speech and Hearing Association, Anchorage.

SUMMARY

SB 58           MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY: POSTPARTUM MOTHERS

SB 58 was REPORTED out of committee with seven "do pass" recommendations and with one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Health.

SB 75 AUD. and SPEECH-LANG INTERSTATE COMPACT

SB 75 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 62 RENEWABLE ENERGY GRANT FUND

SCS HB 62(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with six "do pass" recommendations, one "no recommendation" and with one previously published fiscal note: FN 1(CED).

#hb62

HOUSE BILL NO. 62

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

[9:05:57 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to ADOPT the committee substitute for HB 62, Work Draft 33-LS0358\B (Wallace/Marx, 4/4/23).

Co-Chair Olson OBJECTED for discussion.

[9:06:27 AM](#)

KELLY GOODE, STAFF, SENATOR DONNIE OLSON, explained the committee substitute. She stated that the change removed line 6 in the original bill, which removed the sunset. She stated it was the only change.

Co-Chair Olson REMOVED their OBJECTION. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to REPORT SCS HB 62(FIN) from committee with individual recommendations, and attached fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

SCS HB 62(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with six "do pass" recommendations, one "no recommendation" and with one previously published fiscal note: FN 1(CED).

[9:07:28 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:09:52 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#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."

[9:10:46 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to REPORT SB 58 from committee with individual recommendations, and attached fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

SB 58 was REPORTED out of committee with seven "do pass" recommendations and with one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Health.

[9:11:03 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:13:29 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#sb75

SENATE BILL NO. 75

"An Act relating to an audiology and speech-language interstate compact; relating to the practice of audiology and the practice of speech-language pathology; and providing for an effective date."

[9:14:20 AM](#)

SENATOR DAVID WILSON, SPONSOR, read from the Sponsor Statement (copy on file):

Since the 1950s the number of licensed occupations has risen from five percent of the workforce to twenty-five percent. Navigating the various state licensing requirements, rules, regulations, and fee structure can present significant challenges for workers. To

address these challenges, states and professions have turned to occupational licensure interstate compacts. These compacts create reciprocal professional licensing practices between states, while ensuring the quality and safety of services and safeguarding state sovereignty.

An interstate compact is a contract between two or more states. It carries the force of statutory law and allows states to perform a certain action, observe a certain standard, or cooperate in a critical policy area.

Alaska is currently a member of twenty-eight interstate compacts. SB 75 enacts the Audiologist and Speech Language Pathologists Interstate Compact (ASLP-IC). The ASLP-IC utilizes a mutual recognition approach: eligible audiologist and speech language pathologists in compact member states currently issuing and accepting compact privileges have the option of obtaining a compact privilege in other member states. A licensee providing services in a remote state, such as Alaska, under the compact privilege must function within the laws and regulations of the remote state, thus improving healthcare availability for Alaskan residents, while ensuring those services are provided at the highest standard. The ASLP-IC became official in 2019 and has been adopted by twenty-three states.

Compacts represent the only mechanism in the U.S. Constitution by which the states themselves can alter the fundamental dynamics of their relationship without the intervention of federal government. Unlike other means of interstate cooperation, compacts both create a state-based solution to regional or national problems and effectively retain policy control over certain interstate matters for the future. The only way for states to preserve their authority over interstate problems may be to share their sovereignty and work together cooperatively through interstate compacts. Without compacts, federal involvement in traditional state policy areas is a serious threat. Senate Bill 74 is necessary to encourage the interstate practice of physical therapy and to protect state sovereignty.

[9:15:19 AM](#)

TAMMIE PERREAULT, REGIONAL LIAISON, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. She stated that the occupational licensure compacts ensure that the military spouse professionals could continue to work seamlessly without cumbersome processes of the licensee when they move to Alaska. The compacts promote reciprocity and reduce barriers.

[9:17:46 AM](#)

SUSAN ADAMS, AMERICAN SPEECH AND HEARING ASSOCIATION, MARYLAND (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. She stated that the legislation was a contract and a compact between states to ensure seamless practice, with passage in 25 other states and introduction in 15 states.

Senator Kiehl wondered why there would be a liability shield in law for ordinary negligence.

Ms. Adams replied that there was not a shield for ordinary negligence, and she believed the compact specifically referred to non-intentional issues as being covered. She stated that the current immunity coverage by the state was the same immunity provided by the delegates to the commission.

Senator Kiehl felt that the language was very clear to shield from liability.

Ms. Martin replied that she could work with the committee on the issue.

[9:24:26 AM](#)

NANCY LOVERING, ALASKA SPEECH AND HEARING ASSOCIATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation. She stated that it would make it easier to hire practitioners and would improve access to necessary care across the state.

Co-Chair Olson wondered who would hear the complaints and concerns of patients.

Ms. Lovering replied that those complaints would be forwarded to the people that process the applications through the state.

Co-Chair Olson felt that it seemed like an added burden to the department.

[9:27:26 AM](#)

SYLVAN ROBB, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, explained the fiscal note.

Co-Chair Olson wondered whether the division had an investigator on staff.

Ms. Robb replied that the division had 25 of their staff in the investigator's unit

Senator Wilson wondered how the mentioned proposed amendment would affect the fiscal note.

Ms. Robb replied that it would decrease the number of months to implement.

Senator Bishop asked how many new licenses would come into the state.

Ms. Robb replied that the compact enabled people to obtain the privilege to practice in the state, so they would already be licensed in their home state.

Senator Bishop assumed that there would be fingerprint processing.

Ms. Robb replied in the affirmative.

[9:30:08 AM](#)

Senator Bishop queried the number of forecasted fingerprint cards.

Ms. Robb replied that in FY 22 there were 122 new applications. She stated that she anticipated approximately 123 new applications.

Co-Chair Olson wondered how it compared to the previous five years.

Ms. Robb replied that there was an increase of 64 percent in required professional license applications.

Senator Kiehl wondered what would occur if Alaska revoked the license but their home state did not act.

Ms. Martin replied that the home state was the only state that could take action on a home state license, but a remote state could take action against the privilege to practice across the compact states.

Senator Kiehl assumed that if the remote state declared that one could practice for five years, it was not two years in Alaska, but five.

Ms. Martin agreed.

Co-Chair Olson surmised that a privilege to practice would be revoked in the compact states.

[9:34:26 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:36:01 AM](#)

RECONVENED

[9:36:06 AM](#)

Ms. Martin replied in the affirmative to the question from Co-Chair Olson.

Co-Chair Olson wondered what would happen with a suspension.

Ms. Martin replied that it would be the same for a suspension.

Co-Chair Olson OPENED and CLOSED public testimony.

Co-Chair Olson stated that the next meeting would be the following Wednesday.

SB 75 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#

ADJOURNMENT

9:37:43 AM

The meeting was adjourned at 9:37 a.m.