

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 17, 2023

1:33 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair  
Senator Click Bishop, Vice Chair  
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson  
Senator Kelly Merrick  
Senator Forrest Dunbar

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 83

"An Act relating to professional licensing; relating to temporary licenses for some professions; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 83(L&C) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 56

"An Act exempting controlled substances prescribed or dispensed by a veterinarian to treat an animal from the requirements of the controlled substance prescription database."

- MOVED SCS HB 56(L&C) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 94

"An Act relating to the Board of Pharmacy; relating to the practice of pharmacy; relating to pharmacies; relating to prescription drug manufacturers; relating to prescriptions for epinephrine; relating to the administration of epinephrine; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 83

SHORT TITLE: PROFESSIONAL LICENSING; TEMP PERMITS

SPONSOR(s) : RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

02/24/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
02/24/23 (S) L&C, FIN  
03/06/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
03/06/23 (S) Heard & Held  
03/06/23 (S) MINUTE(L&C)  
03/29/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
03/29/23 (S) Heard & Held  
03/29/23 (S) MINUTE(L&C)  
03/31/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
03/31/23 (S) <Bill Hearing Canceled>  
04/05/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
04/05/23 (S) Heard & Held  
04/05/23 (S) MINUTE(L&C)  
04/12/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
04/12/23 (S) <Bill Hearing Canceled>  
04/17/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: HB 56

SHORT TITLE: CONTROLLED SUB. DATA: EXEMPT ANIMAL RX

SPONSOR(s) : RUFFRIDGE

02/03/23 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
02/03/23 (H) HSS, L&C  
02/18/23 (H) HSS AT 3:00 PM DAVIS 106  
02/18/23 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --  
03/02/23 (H) HSS AT 3:00 PM DAVIS 106  
03/02/23 (H) Heard & Held  
03/02/23 (H) MINUTE(HSS)  
03/11/23 (H) HSS AT 3:00 PM DAVIS 106  
03/11/23 (H) Moved HB 56 Out of Committee  
03/11/23 (H) MINUTE(HSS)  
03/15/23 (H) HSS RPT 6DP  
03/15/23 (H) DP: SUMNER, RUFFRIDGE, MCCORMICK,  
SADDLER, MINA, PRAX  
03/20/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124  
03/20/23 (H) Heard & Held  
03/20/23 (H) MINUTE(L&C)  
03/24/23 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124  
03/24/23 (H) Moved HB 56 Out of Committee  
03/24/23 (H) MINUTE(L&C)  
03/27/23 (H) L&C RPT 4DP  
03/27/23 (H) DP: PRAX, CARRICK, SADDLER, RUFFRIDGE  
03/29/23 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)  
03/29/23 (H) VERSION: HB 56  
03/31/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS

03/31/23 (S) L&C  
04/10/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
04/10/23 (S) Heard & Held  
04/10/23 (S) MINUTE(L&C)  
04/17/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 94

SHORT TITLE: PROFESSION OF PHARMACY

SPONSOR(s): GIESSEL BY REQUEST

03/08/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/08/23 (S) L&C, FIN  
04/03/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
04/03/23 (S) Heard & Held  
04/03/23 (S) MINUTE(L&C)  
04/12/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
04/12/23 (S) Scheduled but Not Heard  
04/17/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SYLVAN ROBB, Director  
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing  
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a recap of SB 83.

KONRAD JACKSON, Staff  
Senator Jesse Bjorkman  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Explained the changes Amendment 1 makes to SB 83, version S.

HEATHER WILLIS, DMD, Governmental Affairs Chair  
Alaska Dental Society  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of SB 83.

JAMES SEXTON, Staff  
Representative Justin Ruffridge  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a recap of HB 56.

LAURA ACHEE, Staff  
Senator Jesse Bjorkman

Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the explanation of changes to the Senate committee substitute for HB 56.

JANE CONWAY, Staff  
Senator Cathy Giessel  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented a recap of SB 94.

EMILY KNOWLES, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 94.

MARGARET SODEN, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 94.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:33:22 PM](#)

**CHAIR JESSE BJORKMAN** called the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:33 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Dunbar, Gray-Jackson, and Chair Bjorkman. Senators Bishop and Merrick arrived during the meeting.

#### **SB 83-PROFESSIONAL LICENSING; TEMP PERMITS**

[1:34:40 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 83 "An Act relating to professional licensing; relating to temporary licenses for some professions; and providing for an effective date."

[CSSB 83 was adopted April 5 and is before the committee.] He asked Sylvan Robb to provide a recap of the bill.

[1:35:18 PM](#)

SYLVAN ROBB, Director, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, Juneau, Alaska, gave a recap of SB 83. She reminded the committee that the universal temporary licensure bill allows the department to issue temporary licenses for 180 days for members of 40 of the 43 professional areas it

supervises; those excluded require Alaska-specific information. To obtain a temporary license, an individual needs to have a license in good standing in another jurisdiction of the United States or Canada, they cannot have any discipline on their license, and they cannot have committed an act in the last ten years that would disqualify them from obtaining a license in Alaska. Their existing license must have substantially similar requirements as an Alaskan license. If the profession requires a criminal background check in Alaska, then it must be completed first.

[1:36:54 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN said the committee previously adopted a committee substitute to ensure the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing had the ability to provide military courtesy licenses that would comply with new federal regulations. Members have a draft proposed amendment to address this issue. He noted that there was an amendment that further clarified certain temporary licenses.

[1:37:16 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to adopt Amendment 1, work order 33-GS1614\S.2, for CSSB 83.

33-GS1614\S.2  
Bergerud  
4/6/23

**AMENDMENT 1**

OFFERED IN THE SENATE

TO: CSSB 83(L&C), Draft Version "S"

Page 2, line 3:

Delete "or"

Page 2, line 8, following "AS 08.01.064(a)(2);":

Insert "or"

Page 2, following line 8:

Insert a new subparagraph to read:

"(C) is applying for a temporary license to practice

(i) dentistry, has graduated from an accredited dental program in the United States, and has passed written and clinical examinations approved by the Board of Dental Examiners; or

(ii) dental hygiene, has graduated from an accredited dental hygiene program in the United States, and has passed written and clinical examinations approved by the Board of Dental Examiners;"

SENATOR BJORKMAN objected for purposes of an explanation.

[1:37:34 PM](#)

KONRAD JACKSON, Staff, Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, explained that Amendment 1 adds dentists and dental hygienists who have completed schooling and passed their written and clinical exams to the language listing occupations that would be eligible for a universal temporary license.

[1:38:40 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN removed his objection to Amendment 1. Finding no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

[1:39:12 PM](#)

HEATHER WILLIS, DMD, Governmental Affairs Chair, Alaska Dental Society, Fairbanks, Alaska, gave invited testimony in support of SB 83, specifically in regard to providing temporary licenses to dentists and dental hygienists. She stated that the Alaska Dental Society is attempting to speed up the licensing process overall and this would provide an avenue for dentists and dental hygienists to join the workforce promptly upon becoming qualified.

[1:40:46 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked about the roadblocks that prevent dental students from entering the workforce after they complete their schooling.

[1:41:00 PM](#)

DR. WILLIS answered that dentists have difficulty finding dental hygienists nationwide. It takes six to eight months to process an already licensed hygienist license. Newly graduated hygienists should not experience these licensing delays.

[1:42:30 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reiterated that Amendment 1 ensures that dental hygienists who have completed their schooling and passed all examinations would be able to receive a temporary license for up to 180 days.

[1:43:36 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to report CSSB 83, work order 33-GS1614\S, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

CHAIR BJORKMAN found no objection and CSSB 83(L&C) was reported from the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

[1:44:06 PM](#)

At ease.

**HB 56-CONTROLLED SUB. DATA: EXEMPT ANIMAL RX**

[1:48:49 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of HOUSE BILL NO. 56 "An Act exempting controlled substances prescribed or dispensed by a veterinarian to treat an animal from the requirements of the controlled substance prescription database."

He stated that this is the second hearing of this bill. The committee heard the Senate companion bill on March 24 and adopted a committee substitute. He noted that James Sexton would provide a brief recap of HB 56.

[1:49:36 PM](#)

JAMES SEXTON, Staff, Representative Justin Ruffridge, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, stated that HB 56 exempts veterinarians from the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). Currently, when pets are admitted as patients, veterinarians are required to review the human owner's personal medical history of pharmaceutical drug prescriptions and other information. Veterinarians are not trained in human medical information, medications, or correlating dosages. Veterinarians are not listed under privacy for HIPPA purposes. This bill would remove this burdensome requirement and address the corresponding privacy concerns.

[1:50:53 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN opened public testimony on HB 56; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[1:51:31 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to adopt the Senate committee substitute (SCS) for HB 56, work order 33-LS0394\B, as the working document.

CHAIR BJORKMAN objected for purposes of discussion.

[1:52:08 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP joined the meeting.

[1:52:16 PM](#)

LAURA ACHEE, Staff, Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the explanation of changes to the Senate committee substitute. She said the Senate committee substitute (SCS) is identical to the committee substitute adopted for the companion of this bill [CSSB 51 was adopted March 24, 2023]. This bill would expand statutory allowances for certification to allow veterinarians that haven't been qualified in the United States, but who are well-qualified and have alternative certifications to be certified to work in the state of Alaska.

[1:53:21 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN removed his objection and SCS for HB 56 was adopted as the working document.

[1:53:30 PM](#)

At ease.

[1:56:52 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting.

SENATOR MERRICK joined the meeting.

[1:57:12 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN solicited the will of the committee.

[1:57:15 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to report SCS HB 56, work order 33-LS0394\B, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[1:57:45 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN found no objection and SCS HB 56(L&C) was reported from the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

[1:57:41 PM](#)

At ease.

**SB 94-PROFESSION OF PHARMACY**

[1:59:52 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 94 "An Act relating to the Board of Pharmacy; relating to the practice of pharmacy; relating to pharmacies; relating to prescription drug manufacturers; relating to prescriptions for epinephrine; relating to the administration of epinephrine; and providing for an effective date."

He noted that this was the second hearing of the bill in this committee and requested a brief recap.

[2:00:57 PM](#)

JANE CONWAY, Staff, Senator Cathy Giessel, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, stated that SB 94 updates statutes relating to the profession of pharmacy. This is a multi-year collaboration over multiple boards and chairs. The Board of Pharmacy worked alongside the Pharmacist's Association to draft this piece of legislation that will modernize statutes regulating pharmacy, an evolving field that experienced changes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[2:03:19 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN opened public testimony on SB 94.

[2:03:49 PM](#)

EMILY KNOWLES, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 94. She said this bill will significantly impact her practice by providing greater clarity regarding the role of pharmacists in epinephrine accessibility, allowing them to prescribe epinephrine auto-injectors, and making the lifesaving medication more readily available across the state. In addition to relieving redundancy and updates regarding regulatory concerns, SB 94 would reallocate one of two seats on the Board of Pharmacy currently reserved for members of the public to a pharmacy technician, which would otherwise be unfulfilled. Allowing pharmacy technicians, who are integral in day-to-day pharmacy practice, to have a voice on the board is imperative and will serve to further advance the profession.

[2:06:14 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked how pharmacy technicians' point of view would differ from that of pharmacists seated on the board.

[2:06:36 PM](#)

MS. KNOWLES answered that the tasks performed by pharmacy technicians and pharmacists are quite different. Additionally,

many pharmacy technicians are seeking growth and are dedicated to gaining experience in the field.

[2:07:27 PM](#)

MARGARET SODEN, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in support of SB 94. She is a retired pharmacist who previously served on the Alaska Board of Pharmacy. She said that there are two items in this bill that she is particularly interested in updating. The first is replacing one of the two public member seats with a pharmacy technician seat. Those seats have been difficult to fill and have remained vacant. Pharmacy technicians have become an integral part of the profession and their input is vital. The second item is adoption of regulations for retired pharmacist status, which would bring Alaska into alignment with other states. She obtained her Alaska pharmacy license in 1970 and would like to retire that license. Her license is active, but she is not actively practicing in the pharmaceutical field.

[2:09:56 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN closed public testimony on SB 94. He said the public may email written testimony to [slac@akleg.gov](mailto:slac@akleg.gov) for this bill or any bill.

CHAIR BJORKMAN held SB 94 in committee.

[2:10:54 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Bjorkman adjourned the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting at 2:10 p.m.