

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

April 21, 2023

1:35 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Kelly Merrick

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 89

"An Act relating to tobacco, tobacco products, electronic smoking products, nicotine, and products containing nicotine; raising the minimum age to purchase, sell, exchange, or possess tobacco, a product containing nicotine, or an electronic smoking product; relating to the taxation of electronic smoking products and vapor products; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 89(L&C) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 123

"An Act relating to commercial motor vehicle drivers' license requirements; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 73

"An Act relating to registered interior designers and interior design; establishing requirements for the practice of registered interior design; renaming the State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors the State Board of Registration for Design Professionals; relating to the State Board of Registration for Design Professionals; relating to liens for labor or materials furnished; relating to the procurement of interior design services; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 89

SHORT TITLE: AGE FOR TOBACCO/NICOTINE/E-CIG; TAX E-CIG

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) STEVENS

03/01/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
03/01/23 (S) L&C, FIN  
03/24/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
03/24/23 (S) Heard & Held  
03/24/23 (S) MINUTE(L&C)  
03/31/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
03/31/23 (S) Heard & Held  
03/31/23 (S) MINUTE(L&C)  
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)  
04/21/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 123

SHORT TITLE: LICENSE REQUIREMENTS: COMM. DRIVERS

SPONSOR(s): TRANSPORTATION

04/05/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
04/05/23 (S) TRA, L&C  
04/11/23 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
04/11/23 (S) Heard & Held  
04/11/23 (S) MINUTE(TRA)  
04/13/23 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
04/13/23 (S) Moved SB 123 Out of Committee  
04/13/23 (S) MINUTE(TRA)  
04/14/23 (S) TRA RPT 3DP  
04/14/23 (S) DP: KAUFMAN, MYERS, WILSON  
04/21/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 73

SHORT TITLE: REGISTER INTERIOR DESIGNERS

SPONSOR(s): CLAMAN

02/17/23 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
02/17/23 (S) L&C, FIN  
04/10/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
04/10/23 (S) <Bill Hearing Canceled>  
04/12/23 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
04/12/23 (S) Heard & Held  
04/12/23 (S) MINUTE(L&C)

04/21/23

(S)

L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

TIM LAMKIN, Staff  
Senator Gary Stevens  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave a recap of and responded to questions on SB 89.

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

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the summary of changes from version B to S for SB 89.

SENATOR JAMES KAUFMAN, District F  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SB 123.

EMMA TORKELSON, Staff  
Senator James Kaufman  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the sectional analysis for SB 123.

JOE MICHEL, Executive Director  
Alaska Trucking Association  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of SB 123.

JOEY CRUM, Chief Executive Officer  
Northern Industrial Training (NIT)  
Palmer, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave invited testimony in support of SB 123.

BREANNA KAKARUK, Staff  
Senator Matt Claman  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the summary of changes from version S to version U for SB 73.

JESSICA CEDERBERG, President-elect

American Institute of Architects (AIA) Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 73.

ELIZABETH JOHNSTON, representing self  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave testimony on SB 73.

DANA NUNN, member  
American Society of Interior Designers  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 73.

MATT BARUSCH, Director  
Government Affairs, Council for Interior Design Qualification  
Washington, D.C.

**POSITION STATEMENT:** testified in support of SB 73.

CATHERINE FRITZ, Chair  
Alaska Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land  
Surveyors (AELS)

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave testimony on SB 73, requesting more  
time to deliberate on the proposed CS.

RAMONA SCHIMSCHEIMER, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Gave testimony on SB 73, requesting more  
time to consider the proposed CS.

PAUL BARIL, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Requested time to review the proposed CS for  
SB 73.

RYAN MORSE, member  
American Institute of Architects (AIA) Alaska  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to SB 73 as it is  
currently written.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:35:22 PM](#)

**CHAIR JESSE BJORKMAN** called the Senate Labor and Commerce  
Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. Present at the

call to order were Senators Dunbar, Gray-Jackson, Bishop, and Chair Bjorkman.

**SB 89-AGE FOR TOBACCO/NICOTINE/E-CIG; TAX E-CIG**

[1:36:28 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 89 "An Act relating to tobacco, tobacco products, electronic smoking products, nicotine, and products containing nicotine; raising the minimum age to purchase, sell, exchange, or possess tobacco, a product containing nicotine, or an electronic smoking product; relating to the taxation of electronic smoking products and vapor products; and providing for an effective date."

He stated that this is the fourth hearing of this bill and Tim Lamkin will provide a recap.

[1:37:05 PM](#)

TIM LAMKIN, Staff, Senator Gary Stevens, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, gave a recap of and responded to question on SB 89. He stated that this bill aligns state law with federal law for sales of tobacco and e-cigarette products to individuals age 21 and older and establishes a 25 percent retail sales tax on e-cigarette products.

CHAIR BJORKMAN noted there was a committee substitute (CS) two amendments for the committee to consider. He solicited a motion to adopt the proposed CS.

[1:37:55 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for SB 89, work order 33-LS0247\S, as the working document.

CHAIR BJORKMAN objected for purposes of discussion.

[1:38:34 PM](#)

KONRAD JACKSON, Staff, Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the following summary of changes from CS version B to S for SB 89:

[Original punctuation provided.]

SUMMARY of CHANGES  
(from version B to version S)

**Reflected version S:**

**Change #1:** Page 3, lines 17-19

The fine for a violation for underage possession was reduced from up to \$300, to up to \$150. A provision was also added for the court to offer a defendant, in lieu of paying a fine, the option of participating in an educational program on the risks of tobacco use;

**Change #2:** Page 9, line 30

Added the tax on E-Cigs is "25% of the retail sales price" of the products;

**Change #3:** Page 10, 19-20

Added the definition of Hemp products, given hemp products are being exempted from the tax program;

**Change #4:** Page 12, after line 2

Deleted from version B was a subsection on tax credits and refunds, as they apply to wholesale tax structure, and this is a retail tax program;

**Change #5:** Page 12, lines 17-19

Added an allowance for tax proceeds to be used for relief for schools in contracting with health advocates conducting smoking cessation seminars and installation of vaping detection devices;

**Change #6:** Page 14, line 23

Increased the limit of nicotine concentration from 20 mg/mL to 60 mg/mL;

**Change #7:** Page 16, line 18

Under the definition of "retailer," added "..in the business of selling [ESPs] at retail;"

**Change #8:** Page 21, line 25

Moved the effective date from July 1, 2023 to January 1, 2024. This change also resulted in deleting Sections 2 and 10 from version B, as they were technical in nature.

[1:41:45 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN removed his objection. Finding no further objection, CSSB 89, version S, was adopted as the working document.

[1:42:08 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR moved to adopt Amendment 1, work order 33-LS0247\B.1, for CSSB 89. He advised that the amendment was

drafted to SB 89, version B, so the committee would need to grant Legislative Legal authority to make conforming changes to CSSB 89, version S if the amendment is adopted.

33-LS0247\B.1  
Nauman  
4/6/23

**AMENDMENT 1**

OFFERED IN THE SENATE  
TO: SB 89

BY SENATOR DUNBAR

Page 1, line 2:

Delete "sell,"

Page 2, line 5:

Delete "21 [19]"

Insert "19"

Page 3, line 10:

Delete "A"

Insert "Except as provided in (e) of this section, a [A]"

Page 4, line 3:

Delete "a new subsection"

Insert "new subsections"

Page 4, following line 5:

Insert a new subsection to read:

"(e) The provisions of (a) of this section do not apply to a person 19 or 20 years of age who is employed by a person with a business license endorsement under AS 43.70.075 and, as part of that employment, is selling a cigarette, a cigar, tobacco, a product containing tobacco, an electronic smoking product, or a product containing nicotine."

Page 5, line 9:

Delete "21 [19]"

Insert "19"

Page 22, line 3:

Delete "(a)"

Page 22, line 8, following "AS 11.76.105(d)":

Insert "and (e)"

Page 22, lines 19 - 22:  
Delete all material.

CHAIR BJORKMAN objected for purposes of discussion.

CHAIR BJORKMAN removed his objection.

[1:45:24 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP asked whether the Anchorage Assembly collected analytical data showing the number of 19-year-olds operating in this space.

SENATOR DUNBAR replied that he was unable to collect that data. Anecdotally, he relayed a story about a 19 or 20-year-old who said he would lose his job without this amendment. Senator Dunbar said that these entry-level positions are the kind of jobs that young people have the most access to and they should not be restricted from such employment.

[1:46:27 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked for the sponsor's position on Amendment 1.

[1:46:45 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN answered that first and foremost Senator Stevens wants to see progress on SB 89. He described the controlled access provision in state law and assured the members that the bill does not preclude someone who is 18 or 19 from the job, they just need a supervisor who is age 21 or older who is present to facilitate the transaction.

[1:48:12 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN found no further objection and Amendment 1 was adopted.

[1:48:26 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON, on behalf of Senator Bjorkman, moved to adopt Amendment 2 to SB 89, [work order 33-LS0247\S.1].

33-LS0247\S.1  
Nauman  
4/18/23

**AMENDMENT 2**

OFFERED IN THE SENATE BY SENATOR BJORKMAN  
TO: CSSB 89(L&C), Draft Version "S"

Page 1, line 2:  
Delete "raising"  
Insert "relating to"

Page 2, line 5:  
Delete "21"  
Insert "18"

Page 2, line 25:  
Delete "A"  
Insert "Except as provided in (e) of this section, a [A] "

Page 3, line 20:  
Delete "a new subsection"  
Insert "new subsections"

Page 3, following line 22:  
Insert a new subsection to read:  
"(e) The provisions of (a) of this section do not apply to a person 18, 19, or 20 years of age who is employed by a person with a business license endorsement under AS 43.70.075 and, as part of that employment, is selling a cigarette, a cigar, tobacco, a product containing tobacco, an electronic smoking product, or a product containing nicotine."

Page 4, line 26:  
Delete "21"  
Insert "18"

Page 21, line 5:  
Delete "(a) "

Page 21, line 10, following "AS 11.76.105(d) ":  
Insert "and (e) "

Page 21, lines 21 - 24:  
Delete all material.

CHAIR BJORKMAN objected for purposes of discussion. He said Amendment 1 permits a person 19 or 20 years of age to sell cigarettes, cigars, tobacco products, electronic smoking products and products containing nicotine as part of their

employment. He argued that the age range should be expanded to include a person 18 years of age. An 18-year-old would be unemployable without an older person onsite and available to supervise. A college-age person who has graduated from high school should be able to work in this area. It would still be illegal with harsh punishments if they were to buy, sell, or possess these products in violation of the law. However, 18-year-olds should not be prevented from working in these establishments to fulfill their economic needs. The age should be 18 instead of 19.

CHAIR BJORKMAN removed his objection and asked if there was further objection.

[1:50:16 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR objected for purposes of further discussion. He asked the bill sponsor whether there is a legal difference between 18- and 19-year-olds under existing law, and if so, whether Amendment 2 would cause SB 89 to roll back existing law on tobacco products.

[1:51:58 PM](#)

MR. LAMKIN replied that this subject matter has a long, sordid history. State law is 19, currently. It has been 19 since the 1980s. The policy decision orbited around the idea that 18-year-olds are still in school. He offered the notion that if the state targets young adults and sub-adults who have social circles that include 15-, 16-, 17- and 18-year-olds, it is easier for those under 18 to access the products. Herein lies the core question. He asked whether the law is written to support adults at 18 or protect children under 18.

[1:52:11 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR commented that this is a challenging area. Young people are in a legal and societal liminal space. Young men are required to register for Selective Service at age 18 could be sent to war, however, many 18-year-olds are still in high school. He clarified that 19-year-olds are in high school too, though far fewer. He said that SB 89 should move in a positive direction of discouraging nicotine addiction and tobacco product use. An amendment to keep that age at 19 and 20 is neutral, whereas an amendment to drop the age to 18 is moving in the opposite direction. He said for that reason he maintains his objection to Amendment 2.

[1:53:45 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON said she cosponsored this legislation last year and she is a cosponsor this year. She thanked Mr. Lamkin for reiterating the importance of SB 89. She opposed the [amendment].

[1:54:19 PM](#)

At ease.

[1:54:58 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting.

[1:55:12 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON corrected her previous statement stating that she supports the bill but not Amendment 2.

[1:55:38 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN said he discourages teens from vaping and e-cigarette use; however, he does not want to discourage an 18-year-old high school graduate from working. This country values economic freedom, opportunity, and the ability to work and earn. He said that with freedom comes responsibility. People have the responsibility to make good choices and follow the law. Passing laws that prevent people who are above the age of adulthood from working is not in keeping with the spirit of liberty and freedom. Employers need employees to serve alcohol or to wait tables, people willing to do the work. As laws continue to restrict people from working, fewer people will be willing to work.

[1:57:26 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR responded to the comment about high school graduates who are 18 years of age. He said he could support the amendment, but not while the 18-year-old is in school.

[1:58:28 PM](#)

SENATOR BISHOP commented he wants the bill to be effective and work. He found that Senator Dunbar made an important distinction. He stated that an 18-year-old who is still in high school has peer pressure from classmates.

[1:59:24 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON commented that these establishments are not the only establishments where 18-year-olds can find work.

[2:00:02 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN moved to withdraw Amendment 2. Finding no objection, Amendment 2 was withdrawn.

[2:00:25 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to report CSSB 89, work order 33-LS0247\S, as amended, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). She further moved that the committee grant Legislative Legal the authorization to make technical and conforming changes.

[2:00:49 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN found no objection and CSSB 89(L&C) was reported from the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

[2:01:03 PM](#)

At ease.

**SB 123-LICENSE REQUIREMENTS: COMM. DRIVERS**

[2:05:58 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 123 "An Act relating to commercial motor vehicle drivers' license requirements; and providing for an effective date."

[2:06:47 PM](#)

SENATOR JAMES KAUFMAN, District F, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 123, introduced the legislation paraphrased the following sponsor statement:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Senate Bill 123 repeals the requirement in AS 28.33.100(a)(2) that requires applicants for a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) to hold a regular Alaska driver's license for at least one year before they can begin the process of obtaining a CDL.

This requirement was enacted in 1985 before state and federal regulators modernized the training and licensing standards for CDLs. Today, an individual seeking a CDL has an extensive training and testing process to go through to ensure they are ready to safely drive commercial vehicles.

On the state level, a prospective commercial driver must pass a written test at the DMV to obtain a CDL Learners Permit and then a driving test to obtain their full license. Beginning in February 2022,

federally mandated Entry Level Driver Training (ELDT) requirements must also be met during the CDL Learner's Permit stage. ELDT requires comprehensive theory testing and a driving evaluation process to ensure that CDL applicants possess the necessary skills and knowledge to operate commercial vehicles safely and efficiently. With these new safety and training standards, the one-year regular driver's license requirement now only serves as a barrier to workforce development.

The Alaska Trucking Association estimates that Alaska is about 500 truck drivers short, presenting a risk both to food security and major new development projects in industries like construction, mining, oil and gas, etc. For young people in urban areas, getting a driver's license at 16 is common. However, for people coming from rural communities, a growing number of urban youth waiting to get their license, and newcomers to the county, the year-long wait to *start* the licensing process often prevents the trucking industry from being a viable career option.

Repealing the one-year regular driver's license requirement aligns Alaska's CDL requirements with modern federal standards and removes a barrier to a workforce that, although relatively small, is ready and willing. With the passage of SB 123, Alaska will better be able to meet our commercial vehicle driver needs and empower Alaskans to pursue meaningful employment critical to our state.

[2:09:33 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR asked if there was invited testimony.

CHAIR BJORKMAN answered yes.

[2:09:51 PM](#)

EMMA TORKELSON, Staff, Senator James Kaufman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the following sectional analysis for SB 123:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Sectional Analysis for SB 123, Version A**

**"An Act relating to commercial motor vehicle drivers' license requirements; and providing for an effective date"**

**Sec 1.** - Amends AS 28.33.100(a) to remove subsection (2) which requires an applicant for a Commercial Driver's License to have held a regular driver's license for at least one year before beginning the CDL certification process.

**Sec 2.** - Sets January 20, 2024, effective date.

[2:11:36 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR asked why the effective date wasn't sooner than January 20, 2024.

[2:12:18 PM](#)

MS. TORKELSON replied that this language was modeled on the companion bill in the House. She agreed that the date should be sooner and noted that the committee could make that change.

[2:13:22 PM](#)

JOE MICHEL, Executive Director, Alaska Trucking Association, Anchorage, Alaska, gave invited testimony in support of SB 123. He said that the Alaska Trucking Association fully supports this bill. It will eliminate one of the many barriers to embarking on a career in the trucking and transportation industry. In February 2022, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration implemented an entry-level driver training program and established the minimum training requirements for entry-level motor vehicle operators. This program came after years of engagement with safety organizations, industry leaders, and stakeholders. There is a checklist of well over a hundred different skills, inspection, and knowledge requirements that applicants must prove themselves proficient in before they are allowed to test for a CDL. The association found the one-year requirement redundant. Insurance companies are one of the biggest regulators of trucking and safety scores, and records dictate whether one can operate on the roads or not.

[2:15:53 PM](#)

JOEY CRUM, Chief Executive Officer, Northern Industrial Training (NIT), Palmer, Alaska, gave invited testimony in support of SB 123. He stated that Northern Industrial Training trains drivers statewide. This bill removes barriers to entry, especially those in rural Alaska allowing more workers to choose this career path. Since the new regulations passed a year ago, the current

statute has been rendered moot. The process to obtain a CDL now requires a person to pass a Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) written exam and a Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF) physical to be issued a commercial learner's permit. After the permit is issued, they must practice written exams proctored by a federally registered training provider, and pass practical exams and a performance test approved by the DMV or an approved third party. He said it is important to note that vehicles such as 16-passenger vans or pick-ups hauling highly hazardous materials require CDLs. He said the bill needs to pass to remove unnecessary barriers to gainful employment.

[2:19:33 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN opened public testimony on SB 123.

[2:20:14 PM](#)

At ease.

[2:20:46 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting. He stated there were technical issues with the phone lines. He invited the public to email written testimony to slac@akleg.gov.

[2:21:37 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN closed public testimony and held SB 123 in committee.

[2:21:58 PM](#)

At ease.

### **SB 73-REGISTER INTERIOR DESIGNERS**

[2:28:08 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 73 "An Act relating to registered interior designers and interior design; establishing requirements for the practice of registered interior design; renaming the State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors the State Board of Registration for Design Professionals; relating to the State Board of Registration for Design Professionals; relating to liens for labor or materials furnished; relating to the procurement of interior design services; and providing for an effective date."

He stated that this is the second hearing of this bill and Breanna Kakaruk will present a recap of the bill.

[2:28:42 PM](#)

BREANNA KAKARUK, Staff, Senator Matt Claman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, stated that the proposed committee substitute (CS) for SB 73, version U, incorporates the changes the American Society of Interior Designers and the American Institute of Architects Working Group requested following collaborative meetings.

[2:29:41 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN requested a motion to adopt the CS for SB 73 as the working document.

[2:29:50 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for SB 73, work order 33-LS0244\U, as the working document.

CHAIR BJORKMAN objected for purposes of discussion. He asked Ms. Kakaruk to continue with the summary of changes.

[2:30:08 PM](#)

MS. KAKARUK presented the following summary of changes from version S to version U for SB 73.

**Senate Bill 73**  
**Summary of Changes**  
**Version S to Version U**

The legislation was amended to include changes requested by the American Society of Interior Designers and the American Institute of Architects Working Group. The Working Group was formed for collaborative work between interior designers and architects on Senate Bill 73. During the last Working Group meeting, the architects and interior designers came to a consensus agreement on amendments for Senate Bill 73. Version U of Senate Bill 73 incorporates these as agreed upon by the Working Group.

All language related to changing the name from the "State Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors" (AELS) to the "State Board of Registration for Design Professionals" were removed. Senate Bill 73 will no longer change the name of the board.

Transitional language was added to include a voting board member seat for an interior designer on the AELS

Board for the period before the legislation's registration requirement is implemented. The interior designer board member must be an Alaska resident for at least 3 years immediately preceding their appointment, and they must be certified by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ).

The word "registered" was included before "interior design" and "interior designer" for specificity throughout the bill, with a few exceptions.

Restrictions that limited the scope of practice of interior designers were removed for services that do not change or affect the structural system or the safety of the building, or that do not affect public health, safety, or welfare.

New definitions of the practice of registered interior design were aligned to existing definitions of other professional design disciplines.

[2:31:46 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN maintained his objection to give members time to review the committee substitute.

[2:32:13 PM](#)

At ease.

[2:33:30 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting and opened public testimony on SB 73.

[2:34:04 PM](#)

JESSICA CEDERBERG, President-elect, American Institute of Architects (AIA) Alaska Chapter, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 73. She stated that the 200 members of AIA Alaska Chapter are joined by AIA National in opposing SB 73 and its companion bill, HB 159. AIA needs more time to review the CS.

[2:35:41 PM](#)

ELIZABETH JOHNSTON, representing self, Fairbanks, Alaska, gave testimony on SB 73. She is a member of the AIA board but is speaking for herself on this bill. She spoke specifically about the change to AS 08.48.011(b) that adds one interior designer to

the board, but no longer separates the electrical and mechanical engineering board seats. She expressed her concern that this would result in an underrepresentation of both mechanical and electrical engineers.

[2:37:36 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR asked if she said that the board member seats would be reduced by one or two.

MS. JOHNSTON replied that the existing statute, AS 08.48.011(b), describes an 11-member board that includes one electrical or mechanical engineer, but it does not have a registered interior designer. SB 73, version S, initially proposed increasing the board from 11 to 13 members to include one electrical engineer, one mechanical engineer, and one registered interior designer. The board, under the proposed CS version U, would be composed of 12 members, including one electrical or mechanical engineer, and one interior designer.

SENATOR DUNBAR thanked her for the explanation.

[2:39:08 PM](#)

DANA NUNN, representing the American Society of Interior Designers, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 73, as amended. She spoke to the legislative process, stating this bill has not been rushed. It began in 2017 and there have been two bills before this with ample opportunity for collaboration. It is only recently that the Society has been able to get a foothold in the collaboration. She expressed excitement about the legislative advancements.

[2:41:22 PM](#)

MATT BARUSCH, Director, Government Affairs, Council for Interior Design Qualification (CIDQ), Washington, D.C., testified in support of SB 73. He said that CIDQ administers the three-part NCIDQ examination which would be the prerequisite exam for registered interior designers in the state of Alaska. The council supports this bill because of the legal recognition of interior designers and design professionals.

[2:42:11 PM](#)

CATHERINE FRITZ, Chair, Alaska Board of Registration for Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyors (AELS), gave testimony on SB 73, requesting more time to deliberate on the proposed CS. She said the board just received the CS and has not had time to review it. She did a personal scan of the committee substitute and of the six issues of concern that AELS brought up to the

legislature, and all still exist. She said if granted more time to allow for public notice as per the Open Meetings Act, she can schedule a special board meeting to discuss the issues.

[2:44:05 PM](#)

RAMONA SCHIMSCHEIMER, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, gave testimony on SB 73 as a working architect. She requested that the committee postpone approving the bill with the new amendment, as the AIA Working Group has not had enough time to go through the entire document and discuss each item.

[2:45:16 PM](#)

PAUL BARIL, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, requested time to review the committee substitute for SB 73. He said he is the principal architect and owner at Nvision Architecture and an AIA Working Group member who has been collaborating with the interior designer's group. He expressed the need for more time to collaborate with the AIA Working Group and discuss necessary amendments.

[2:46:30 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR asked how much time is needed to review the committee substitute.

MR. BARIL replied one to two weeks is needed.

[2:47:55 PM](#)

RYAN MORSE, representing the AIA Alaska component of the Working Group, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 73 as it is currently written. He qualified his testimony by stating that he was the past president of the AIA Alaska Chapter and a current strategic council member of the AIA National Chapter representing Alaska and the Mariana Islands. Both the chapter locally and the organization as a whole represent over 90,000 architects and they oppose this bill as currently written. He pointed out that the introduction and reading of amendments was not accurate. In Section 28, the definition did not change from the prior version as it was not updated to match the board-approved amendment. This was one of many examples of the discrepancies. He warned against rushing the process of passing this legislation. Progress has been made, but more time is needed to craft this bill.

[2:51:43 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked how long interior designers and their group have been in talks with AIA Alaska.

MR. MORSE replied that it has been going on for some years in Alaska, and this is not the first legislative cycle where bills like this were introduced. He has been involved in the process since 2020 to craft a mutually agreeable bill.

[2:53:03 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR asked whether AIA or other affiliates in other states have come to a mutual agreement with interior designers.

MR. MORSE replied absolutely yes. He said that North Carolina, Wisconsin, and Illinois are three examples that the AIA Working Group reviewed that have passed bills that resulted from AIA groups and interior designers working in collaboration. These bills have commonalities that help set a standard, but this bill is not at that point. Once it is there, he wants to go back to his group and get approval. He wants to steer this bill to get those results.

[2:55:02 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN kept public testimony open and held SB 73 in committee.

[2:55:16 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Bjorkman adjourned the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting at 2:55 p.m.