

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

April 2, 2024

3:49 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair
Senator Matt Claman, Vice Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Kelly Merrick

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Alaska Police Standards Council

Jeff Brown - Juneau

Ron Dupee - Juneau

Dusty Dumont - Juneau

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

JEFF BROWN, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC).

RON DUPEE, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the police Standards Council (APSC).

DUSTY DUMONT, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the Police Standards Council (APSC).

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:49:51 PM](#)

CHAIR SCOTT KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:49 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Claman, Bjorkman, Wielechowski, Merrick, and Chair Kawasaki.

^CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) : ALASKA POLICE STANDARDS COUNCIL

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :
ALASKA POLICE STANDARDS COUNCIL

[3:50:21 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of the governor's appointee Chief Jeff Brown to the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC).

[3:51:11 PM](#)

JEFF BROWN, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC), Juneau, Alaska, provided a brief work history. He stated that if confirmed, this would be his second term on the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC). He expressed appreciation for the review of his nomination and highlighted his enjoyment in serving on the council. With 24 years of experience in law enforcement, including the last 18 years in Alaska, he said he has held various positions with both the North Slope Borough and the Alaska Department of Public Safety (DPS). In the latter, he served in the professional standards unit as both an investigator and later a supervisor. Since early 2018, he has been serving as Chief of Police for the North Slope Borough.

[3:52:12 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked whether he was part of a recent APSC discussion regarding allowing correctional officers, starting at age 18, to serve in their roles. He inquired whether he was

involved in that discussion and whether it extended beyond correctional officers.

[3:52:37 PM](#)

CHIEF BROWN acknowledged that a representative from the Department of Corrections (DOC) was also involved in the discussion. The proposal to reduce the minimum age for correctional officers from 21 to 18 came at the request of the Department of Corrections to aid in recruitment and retention for hard-to-fill positions. Public testimony was solicited, and comments were received, but no action has been taken as further discussions are needed. He noted concerns regarding maturity levels of younger individuals and suggested exploring alternative approaches. He invited any further questions on the topic or his personal views.

[3:53:57 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN requested his personal perspective on the proposal.

[3:54:04 PM](#)

CHIEF BROWN replied that the North Slope Borough runs a municipal corrections facility where officers can be hired at age 19. He emphasized that the effectiveness of hiring younger individuals depends on the department's hiring standards and screening processes. As long as departments maintain robust screening practices, he believes it can be beneficial to open these positions to younger applicants. He mentioned that dispatch positions are open to 18-year-olds, which initially came with some concerns but dealing with the learning curves has been manageable. As a profession, law enforcement must adapt with the times, and offering younger individuals career opportunities can help them grow and potentially retire from the field.

[3:55:18 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on the confirmation of Chief Brown; hearing none, he closed public testimony.

[3:55:45 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI requested comments on two bills currently in the legislature. One involves creating a use of force registry, and the other pertains to banning the use of chokeholds at the state and municipal levels for law enforcement officers. He noted that as a member of APSC, Mr. Brown plays a role in developing and revising law enforcement training and asked for his insights on these legislative efforts.

[3:56:28 PM](#)

CHIEF BROWN first addressed the proposal to ban chokeholds, explaining that most law enforcement in Alaska already considers chokeholds, including carotid artery restraints, as deadly force. Alaska state statute defines the restriction of blood flow to the brain or airflow as a chokehold, which is classified as deadly force. Therefore, officers must meet the deadly force criteria before using such methods. He clarified that chokeholds cannot be used as restraint holds. Regarding the proposed use of force registry, he mentioned that he was not familiar with the specifics of the bill and was unable to provide further comments on that topic.

[3:57:58 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI expressed appreciation for his service to the North Slope Borough and his willingness to serve another term on APSC. He acknowledged the time commitment involved, including time away from family and other duties.

[3:58:29 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of the governor's appointee Chief Ron Dupee to the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC).

[3:58:49 PM](#)

RON DUPEE, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC), Juneau, Alaska, provided a brief work history. He stated that he has served as Chief of the Fairbanks Police Department for the past three years but has been with the department for 21 years in total. With over 25 years of experience in law enforcement, he noted he has been a member of APSC for about eight months after taking over for the former Juneau Chief upon his retirement. He expressed enthusiasm about the opportunity to continue serving on the council if confirmed.

[3:59:36 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI inquired about a regulation change allowing correctional officers to be hired at age 18 and above, noting that the current law requires candidates to be at least 21. He asked for his thoughts on this proposal, mentioning that the idea originated from APSC. He expressed uncertainty on whether he was a member at the time.

[4:00:05 PM](#)

CHIEF DUPEE clarified that he did participate in the discussion regarding the age requirement for correctional officers, which took place during an emergency meeting outside the regular

schedule. He echoed Chief Brown's sentiments, stating that as long as hiring practices are selective and rigorous, lowering the age limit could be beneficial for DOC and other law enforcement agencies. He noted that many corrections officers transition into law enforcement roles throughout the state, suggesting that there is potential for positive outcomes. However, he acknowledged that further work and discussions are needed on the topic.

[4:01:04 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on the appointment of Chief Dupee; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[4:01:39 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI expressed appreciation for Chief Dupee's openness and availability to his office regarding issues in downtown Fairbanks. He mentioned looking forward to the upcoming weekend event for the demolition of the Polaris Hotel, remarking that it is "about time."

[4:02:11 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of the governor's appointee Dusty Dumont to the Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC).

[4:02:31 PM](#)

DUSTY DUMONT, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC), Juneau, Alaska, provided a brief educational and work history. She introduced herself as the Director of the Division of Pretrial, Probation, and Parole (DP3) with DOC, having over 21 years of experience in the department and over 26 years in corrections overall. She highlighted her background as a probation officer, a role she finds fulfilling. Born and raised in Juneau, she moved to Ohio for college, where he majored in basketball and track while earning a degree in criminal justice. After graduation, she worked at a state penitentiary in Washington for approximately five years before returning to Juneau to raise her two children for five years. She resumed his career in 2002 as a field probation officer and has since held various positions within the system, gaining a statewide perspective on corrections and law enforcement. She supervises offices from Utqiagvik to Ketchikan and expressed that joining APSC is an honor she takes seriously, aligning with the council's mission of accountability, professionalism, service, and character. She stated that she believes her experience and personality will be a good fit for the council.

[4:04:52 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN asked for her perspective on the legislation that proposes to reduce the age requirement for correctional officers from 21 to 18 considering her position in DOC.

[4:05:02 PM](#)

MS. DUMONT acknowledged the insights shared by the previous Chiefs regarding the age requirement for correctional officers. She expressed that maturity varies significantly among individuals, citing examples of very mature 18-year-olds and immature 39-year-olds. She emphasized that age should not be the primary consideration; instead, the focus should be on meeting the basic requirements for the role, as well as providing adequate training and ongoing support to help individuals work effectively with the correctional population and establish appropriate boundaries.

[4:05:48 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on the appointment of Ms. Dumont; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[4:06:04 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked for her comments on two bills currently under consideration by the committee, which relate to a ban on chokeholds and the establishment of a use of force registry. He noted that APSC is involved in compliance with laws and regulations and in revising them, emphasizing the importance of her insights on these matters.

[4:06:45 PM](#)

MS. DUMONT stated that she is unfamiliar with the specifics of the chokehold ban proposal. However, she referenced Chief Brown's earlier comments on the topic, agreeing with his assessment that the use of a chokehold must be considered in the context of deadly force. She affirmed that adherence to existing laws is crucial.

[4:07:50 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited a motion.

[4:07:54 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN moved Jeff Brown, Ron Dupree, Dusty Dumont, appointees to the Alaska Police Standards Council, be forwarded to a Joint Session of the legislature for consideration.

Signing the report(s) regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or

disapproval of the appointees; the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[4:08:16 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection; he stated that [in accordance with AS 39.05.080] the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointments be forwarded to a joint session for consideration:

Alaska Police Standards Council

Jeff Brown - Juneau
Ron Dupee - Juneau
Dusty Dumont - Juneau

[4:09:07 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 4:09 p.m.