

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 13, 2025

8:14 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Rebecca Himschoot, Co-Chair
Representative Donna Mears, Co-Chair
Representative Carolyn Hall
Representative Ky Holland
Representative Mike Prax
Representative Justin Ruffridge

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 35

"An Act relating to the use and possession of electronic devices by prisoners."

- MOVED CSHB 35(CRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 47

"An Act relating to crime and criminal procedure; relating to generated obscene child sexual abuse material; relating to the powers of district judges and magistrates; relating to teaching certificates; and relating to licensing of school bus drivers."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 58

"An Act relating to the office of public advocacy; and relating to the public advocate."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 50

"An Act relating to snow classics."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 35

SHORT TITLE: PRISONERS: ELECTRONIC DEVICE ACCESS/USE

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) HIMSCHOOT

01/22/25	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(H)	CRA, STA
02/20/25	(H)	CRA AT 9:00 AM BARNES 124
02/20/25	(H)	Heard & Held
02/20/25	(H)	MINUTE(CRA)
02/25/25	(H)	CRA AT 9:00 AM BARNES 124
02/25/25	(H)	Heard & Held
02/25/25	(H)	MINUTE(CRA)
02/27/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
02/27/25	(H)	Scheduled but Not Heard
03/13/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 47

SHORT TITLE: GENERATED OBSCENE CHLD SEX ABUSE MATERIAL

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) VANCE

01/22/25	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/17/25
01/22/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(H)	CRA, JUD
03/11/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/11/25	(H)	Heard & Held
03/11/25	(H)	MINUTE(CRA)
03/13/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 58

SHORT TITLE: OPA: PUBLIC ADVOCATE APPOINTMENT

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) FIELDS

01/22/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(H)	CRA, STA
03/11/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/11/25	(H)	Heard & Held
03/11/25	(H)	MINUTE(CRA)
03/13/25	(H)	CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 50

SHORT TITLE: SNOW CLASSICS

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) HANNAN

01/22/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
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01/22/25 (H) CRA, L&C
03/11/25 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/11/25 (H) Heard & Held
03/11/25 (H) MINUTE (CRA)
03/13/25 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

APRIL WILKERSON, Deputy Commissioner
Department of Corrections
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on CSHB 35, Version I.

REPRESENTATIVE SARAH VANCE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, gave an overview of HB 47.

ISAAC SMOLDON, Communications Director
My House
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 47.

ROSE FELICIANO, Executive Director
Northwest Division
TechNet

Seattle, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified during the hearing on HB 47.

CRISI MATTHEWS, representing self
Homer, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 47.

COURTNEY OWEN, Staff
Representative Zack Fields
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave an overview of HB 58 on behalf of Representative Fields, prime sponsor.

HUNTER MEACHUM, Staff
Representative Sara Hannan
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave an overview of HB 50 on behalf of Representative Hannan, prime sponsor.

TRISTAN KNUTSON-LOMBARDO, Executive Director
Juneau Nordic Ski Club
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 50.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:14:16 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT called the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 8:14 a.m. Representatives Prax, Hall, Holland, and Himschoot were present at the call to order. Representatives Ruffridge and Mears arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 35-PRISONERS: ELECTRONIC DEVICE ACCESS/USE

[8:15:46 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 35, "An Act relating to the use and possession of electronic devices by prisoners." [Before the committee, adopted as the working document on 2/25/25, was the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 35, Version 34-LS0355\I, C. Radford, 2/22/25 ("Version I").]

[8:16:02 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT, as prime sponsor, gave a recap of the bill, explaining that it would allow the commissioner [for the Department of Corrections (DOC)] to set up policies and procedures around the use of electronic tablets, which are currently prohibited in Alaska's correctional system.

[8:16:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX moved to adopt Amendment 3 to Version I, labeled 34-LS0355\I.3, C. Radford, 3/3/25, which read:

Page 2, lines 3 - 5:

Delete "other than a level of basic cable television service that is available as a substitute for services that are broadcast to the public in the community in which a correctional facility is located"

Insert "[OTHER THAN A LEVEL OF BASIC CABLE TELEVISION SERVICE THAT IS AVAILABLE AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR SERVICES THAT ARE BROADCAST TO THE PUBLIC IN THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH A CORRECTIONAL FACILITY IS LOCATED]"

REPRESENTATIVE HALL objected.

[8:16:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX explained that Amendment 3 would delete subparagraph (C) on page 2, lines 3-5 of Version I.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT clarified that the proposed amendment would not insert substitute language, despite the language on lines 5-8 of Amendment 3.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX agreed.

[8:18:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND shared his understanding that "cable television service" would remain in subparagraph (C) if Amendment 3 were to pass, which would prohibit the use of cable television (TV) in DOC facilities.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX responded yes, that is the intent. He asked for the department's input on the proposal.

[8:20:07 AM](#)

APRIL WILKERSON, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Corrections (DOC), agreed that Amendment 3 would eliminate all TV services within the correctional facilities.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX opined that TV programs condone antisocial behavior. He asked what else is available for entertainment in the individual cells.

[8:21:57 AM](#)

MS. WILKERSON relayed that basic TV services are provided to the offender population within their cells. In general housing areas, basic cable is also provided with limited channels. The TV services are paid through the Inmate Welfare Fund (IWF), not with state dollars.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX recognized that this would be a big change and asked whether there were alternative entertainment options available that could be more "profitable" to the inmates.

MS. WILKERSON offered to follow up with the requested information.

[8:25:01 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 8:25 a.m.

[8:26:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX moved to table Amendment 3.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT objected.

[8:26:58 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Prax and Ruffridge voted in favor of tabling Amendment 3. Representatives Hall, Holland, and Himschoot voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 3 was not tabled by a vote of 2-3.

[8:28:07 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL maintained her objection to Amendment 3.

[8:28:14 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representative Prax voted in favor of Amendment 3. Representatives Ruffridge, Hall, Holland, and Himschoot voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 3 failed by a vote of 1-4.

[8:29:11 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX moved to adopt Amendment 4 to Version I, labeled 34-LS0355\I.5, C. Radford, 2/28/25, which read:

Page 3, lines 21 - 27:
Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill section accordingly.

Page 3, lines 30 - 31:

Delete ", and AS 33.30.015(f), enacted by sec. 2
of this Act, apply"
Insert "applies"

REPRESENTATIVE HALL objected.

[8:29:19 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX explained that Amendment 4 would delete subsection (f) under Section 2 of Version I and reasoned that the commissioner is more equipped to decide how the tablets are used and what services they provide.

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND said he is inclined towards keeping subsection (f) to encourage more interactions and pathways towards successful transitions post release.

[8:32:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE opined that subsection (f) is concerning due to components regarding existing programs or services provided for the purpose of rehabilitation. He stated that the subsection is restrictive and would limit the commissioner's ability to provide options for incarcerated people. Nonetheless, he expressed uncertainty as to whether deleting the language in its entirety would be the right approach.

REPRESENTATIVE HALL maintained her objection.

[8:33:45 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representative Prax voted in favor of Amendment 4. Representatives Ruffridge, Hall, Holland, Mears, and Himschoot voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 4 failed by a vote of 1-5.

[8:34:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX moved to adopt Amendment 5 to Version I, labeled 34-LS0355\I.6, C. Radford, 3/3/25, which read:

Page 3, lines 23 - 27:

Delete "To the extent practicable, the commissioner may not replace an existing program or service provided to a prisoner for the purpose of rehabilitation with the use of a computer or

electronic tablet authorized under (a)(3)(I) of this section. A computer or electronic tablet may be used only to supplement an existing program or service."

Page 3, lines 30 - 31:

Delete "and AS 33.30.015(f), enacted by sec. 2 of this Act, apply"

Insert "applies"

REPRESENTATIVE HALL objected.

[8:34:38 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX explained that if Amendment 5 were to pass, the commissioner would still be prohibited from replacing in-person visitations with the use of an electronic computers or tablets, but they would be able to eliminate programs they deemed obsolete.

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND considered a conceptual amendment that would remove the last sentence from Amendment 5 to address Representative Ruffridge's concerns.

[8:37:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE pointed out that amending Amendment 5 as such would keep the language in Version I because it would delete language from a deletion.

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND conceded he would not pursue the conceptual amendment further.

[8:38:49 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 3:38 p.m.

[8:39:49 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT considered an example of sex offender group therapy and said she would not want in-person programming to be offered virtually in the future. She questioned the purpose of Amendment 5.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX said the intent is to empower the commissioner to make that decision as opposed to the legislature.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT sought to confirm that if Amendment 5 were to pass, the legislature would make that call.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX clarified that the proposed amendment would allow the commissioner, not the legislature, to make decisions on programming.

[8:43:08 AM](#)

MS. WILKERSON said the department would utilize the tablets to enhance existing practices and identify efficiencies. She said the goal is to utilize technology to provide services across the state.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT shared her understanding that Amendment 5 would take away the commissioner's discretion. She commented that without working in these facilities and having first-hand knowledge of the offender population, the commissioner is in a better position to make decisions. For that reason, she stated her opposition to Amendment 5.

[8:45:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE disagreed with Co-Chair Himschoot's assessment of Amendment 5. He explained that Version I would take away the commissioner's authority to replace an existing program or service provided to a prisoner for the purpose of rehabilitation with the use of a computer or electronic tablet. By deleting that section, Amendment 5, would maintain the commissioner's authority to make these decisions and remove language that would be better left out of statute, he opined.

[8:47:54 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND restated his interest in deleting the last sentence [on line 5 of Amendment 5] from the bill, which would seemingly remove flexibility and block the ability for a computer or tablet to be used for something new in the future. He shared his belief that the language [that Amendment 5 seeks to delete] would create barriers to innovation and new programming that would not serve the legislature's intent.

[8:50:01 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEARS said her intent is to avoid replacing in-person programming with a tablet for lower cost or convenience, for example, which may not be captured by the existing language.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT said it sounds like the committee is in support of Amendment 5. She spoke to the importance of supplementing, not replacing, in-person visitation with electronic tablets.

REPRESENTATIVE HALL removed her objection. There being no further objected, Amendment 5 was adopted.

[8:51:36 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt Amendment 1 to Version I, labeled 34-LS0355\I.1, C. Radford, 2/25/25, which read:

Page 2, lines 8 - 13:

Delete all material and insert:

"(A) possess in the prisoner's cell a cassette tape player or recorder, [A] video cassette recorder (VCR), telephone, or computer or electronic tablet [OR A COMPUTER OR MODEM OF ANY KIND];"

Page 3, lines 10 - 17:

Delete all material and insert:

"[(I) USE A COMPUTER OTHER THAN THOSE APPROVED BY THE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY; THE USE OF A COMPUTER UNDER THIS SUBPARAGRAPH MAY BE APPROVED ONLY AS PART OF THE PRISONER'S EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND MAY NOT BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE;]"

Page 3, lines 25 - 26:

Delete "authorized under (a)(3)(I) of this section"

REPRESENTATIVE HALL objected.

[8:51:45 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE explained that Amendment 1 would prohibit the possession of tape players/recorders, video cassette recorders (VCR), telephones, or computers/tablets inside the prisoner's cell. In addition, it would essentially give the commissioner the ability to govern how tablets are used within DOC facilities, as long as they are not in the prisoner's cell.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT sought to confirm that the goal of Amendment 1 is to give the commissioner greater latitude.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE said the goal is provide greater latitude by deleting subparagraph (I), which is overly prescriptive.

[8:57:14 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked Ms. Wilkerson to explain what a cell is.

MS. WILKERSON said general housing, termed "dorms," is one room with many beds, whereas housing mods are where the individual cells are located. She shared her understanding that the tablets could be utilized in general housing, but not in the housing mods.

CO-CHAIR MEARS sought to confirm that inmates in the dorms have more freedom than those in the mods.

MS. WILKERSON answered yes.

[9:00:46 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked for the practical impact of Amendment 1.

MS. WILKERSON said the ability to use a tablet in a segregated cell, for example, would be beneficial because it could expand program participation.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT shared her understanding that removing subparagraph (I) would leave tablet use to the discretion of the commissioner.

MS. WILKERSON responded yes; however, the commissioner would still be required to follow the regulatory process per line 16, of subparagraph I.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT pointed out that Amendment 1 would delete subparagraph I entirely.

[9:03:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE re-explained the amendment, stating that by removing subparagraph (I), it would repeal current

statute. He added that in his research for the bill, he found that Alaska is the only state that requires a statutory change to allow for the use of electronic devices. He gave further background and opined that by allowing tablet use in cells, it may further isolate inmates who choose to watch movies on their device if that were allowed. By granting the commissioner greater authority, he said Amendment 1 would allow governance on these policies.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked whether the commissioner would have the ability to turn the tablets off and on and further regulate their usage.

MS. WILKERSON answered yes, the commissioner has that ability in the existing pilot program. She explained that the tablets do not work outside the general housing area and the department has the ability to turn them off and on. She welcomed the flexibility offered by Amendment 1, as it would provide greater efficiency without seeking a statutory change.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT sought to clarify whether movies or games are allowed on the tablets.

MS. WILKERSON stated that currently, movies or games are not allowed on the tablets. She explained that corrections vendors sell games and movies so if this policy were to change in the future, this revenue generating aspect could help offset the cost of tablets to the state.

[9:11:33 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND asked whether prohibiting the use of computers in the prisoner's cell would also prohibit the use of gaming consoles.

MS. WILKERSON said the department would seek guidance from the Department of Law (DOL) but assured the committee that these consoles are purchased from corrections vendors and provide no access to the Internet.

[9:13:44 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEARS returned to the first part of Amendment 1, which would prohibit the use of tablets in the prisoner's cell. Because certain inmates are confined to individual cells for various reasons, she said she would not be supporting the amendment.

[9:14:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND sought to clarify the intent of Amendment 1.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE said the intent is not to eliminate the use of tablets in the dorms, but instead, to prohibit their usage in cells because of the reasons already stated. He asked what is currently allowed in segregation.

MS. WILKERSON noted that there are various levels of segregation. A person who is housed in segregation is not participating in programming and is separated from the general population. They are allowed one hour of recreation time per day and may or may not be allowed access to books and a phone.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE asked why the committee would want to insert a tablet into that environment.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked whether books are allowed in segregation.

MS. WILKERSON said books are allowed, but it depends on each person's situation and circumstance.

[9:21:34 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL maintained her objection.

[9:21:39 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Prax and Ruffridge voted in favor of Amendment 1. Representatives Holland, Hall, Mears, and Himschoot voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 1 failed by a vote of 2-4.

[9:22:15 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE moved to adopt Amendment 2 to Version I, labeled 34-LS0355\I.2, C. Radford, 2/25/25, which read:

Page 3, lines 18 - 20:

Delete ";

(4) allow a state correctional facility operated by the state to charge a fee for electronic mail or electronic visitation services"

Page 3, line 30:

Delete "AS 33.30.015(a)(4), enacted by sec. 1 of this Act, and"

Page 3, line 31:

Delete "apply"

Insert "applies"

CO-CHAIR MEARS objected.

[9:22:32 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE explained that Amendment 2 would delete overly prescriptive language relating to fees for electronic mail or electronic visitation and allow the department to regulate this policy as needed.

[9:24:35 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL asked about the fee structure.

MS. WILEKRSON said fees are set by the vendor; however, the federal government implemented a regulatory change that limits the fees associated with video visitation and phone calls effective January 2025.

[9:26:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL shared her understanding that currently, there are no charges imposed on the inmate or their family.

MS. WILEKRSON said currently, video visitation is not provided in DOC institutions. Instant messaging and emails are provided, however, at a cost to the offender or their family. She added that as of January, offenders are provided two agency paid phone calls per month.

[9:28:49 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE reported that video visitation is currently capped at \$0.11 to \$0.13 per minute, which is a significant reduction to previous rates, which were \$15 to \$18 for a twenty-minute phone call.

[9:29:28 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND expressed concern that placing fees on access could create detrimental barriers. For that reason, he stated his opposition to Amendment 2.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE pointed out that the tablet program, its infrastructure, and the vendor services are expensive, and the cost would either be passed on to the state or the prisoner's family. He emphasized that if HB 35 were to pass, tablets would not be handed out for free, so there would already be a barrier to access.

MS. WILKERSON explained that if the bill were to pass, the department would need to evaluate its options and work with the vendor to determine the level of services and the associated cost.

REPRESENTATIVE HOLLAND shared his understanding that paragraph (4) stands independent of the tablet program and is making a statement on charging people for access to electronic mail and electronic visitation services.

[9:35:02 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE asked whether inmates currently have access to email services and if so, whether they are charged a fee.

MS. WILKERSON confirmed that there is a pilot email program at Goose Creek Correctional Center (GCCC) and the fees are paid entirely by the inmate or their family.

[9:36:09 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE commented that although access is important, he characterized the idea of offering these services to prisoners for free as "strange." He said he struggled with the idea of limiting DOC's ability [to charge a fee] because everyone in life must pay for access to nice things. He questioned why incarcerated individuals should be given the right to pay nothing when he, for example, does not receive the same privilege. He said the amendment would give discretion to the commissioner on whether to enact a fee or not.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT pointed out that there is an overrepresentation of incarcerated people who lack means and struggle with mental health issues and may be spending up to 30

days in segregation. She said the purpose is to grant these individuals access to services.

[9:39:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE HALL shared a personal anecdote about a friend who was recently released from federal prison. She said she struggled with the idea of making inmates pay for services if they could help with personal or professional development. She said she would be voting "no" for the reasons described.

CO-CHAIR MEARS maintained her objection.

[9:41:36 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Prax and Ruffridge voted in favor of Amendment 2. Representatives Hall, Holland, Mears, and Himschoot voted against it. Therefore, Amendment 2 failed by a vote of 2-4.

[9:42:15 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR MEARS moved to report CSHB 35, Version 34-LS0355\I, C. Radford, 2/22/25, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE objected.

[9:42:32 AM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Hall, Holland, Mears, and Himschoot voted in favor of reporting CSHB 35, Version I, as amended, out of committee. Representatives Prax and Ruffridge voted against it. Therefore, CSHB 35(CRA) was reported out of the House Judiciary Standing Committee by a vote of 4-2.

HB 47-GENERATED OBSCENE CHLD SEX ABUSE MATERIAL

[9:43:40 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 47, "An Act relating to crime and criminal procedure; relating to generated obscene child sexual abuse material; relating to the powers of district judges and magistrates; relating to teaching certificates; and relating to licensing of school bus drivers."

[9:43:58 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SARAH VANCE, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, gave recap of HB 47. She said the bill targets the creation, possession, and distribution of artificial intelligence (AI) generated sexual abuse material (CSAM).

[9:45:05 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT opened public testimony on HB 47.

[9:45:47 AM](#)

ISAAC SMOLDON, Communications Director, My House, testified in support of HB 47. He pointed out that much of the AI generated CSAM is created using actual images or videos of minors. He said HB 47 would help survivors get some of their dignity and rights back without being retraumatized. He urged the committee to move the legislation forward.

[9:48:00 AM](#)

ROSE FELICIANO, Executive Director, Northwest Division, TechNet, said TechNet is requesting a technical amendment that would include an "employer or contractor" in Section 4 to protect these entities whose job it is to scour the internet for this type of material from criminal prosecution.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT asked the bill sponsor whether this is addressed in the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE called attention to the language in paragraph (2) on page 4 of HB 47, which clarifies that these individuals would not be held liable if they are solely taking action to remove this content. She shared her belief that although the term "contractor" is not specifically mentioned, the bill already addresses Ms. Feliciano's request. She said she would leave it to the co-chair's discretion.

MS. FELICIANO said TechNet recognizes the intention but would like the language to be explicit.

[9:51:09 AM](#)

CRISI MATTHEWS, representing self, testified in support of HB 47. She shared an anecdote about an AI-generated deep fake that

affected her daughter. She spoke to the connection between screen time and the all-time high in teen depression and suicide rate. She said this is one area where Alaska's children could be protected.

[9:53:24 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT closed public testimony on HB 47 and announced that the bill would be held over.

HB 58-OPA: PUBLIC ADVOCATE APPOINTMENT

[9:53:42 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 58, "An Act relating to the office of public advocacy; and relating to the public advocate."

[9:54:18 AM](#)

COURTNEY OWEN, Staff, Representative Zack Fields, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Fields, prime sponsor, gave a recap of HB 58. She said the bill would make the selection process for the director of the Office of Public Advocacy (OPA) analogous with that of the Public Defender Agency (PDA).

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT opened public testimony on HB 58. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, she closed public testimony and announced that the bill would be held over.

HB 50-SNOW CLASSICS

[9:55:40 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 50, "An Act relating to snow classics."

[9:55:57 AM](#)

HUNTER MEACHUM, Staff, Representative Sara Hannan, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Hannan, prime sponsor, gave a recap of HB 50. She said the bill would broaden the definition of a "snow classic" by removing Four Valleys Community School as the only entity allowed to administer the event at Mount Alyeska.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT opened public testimony on HB 50.

[9:56:38 AM](#)

TRISTAN KNUTSON-LOMBARDO, Executive Director, Juneau Nordic Ski Club, testified in support of HB 50. He said the Juneau Nordic Ski Club relies on fundraising to make the program accessible. The idea to open the snow classic event to any organization in Alaska would be a benefit as over half the organization's budget is fundraised.

CO-CHAIR HIMSCHOOT closed public testimony on HB 50 and announced that the bill would be held over.

[9:58:28 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 9:58 a.m.