

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 25, 2025

3:32 p.m.

3:32:03 PM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Foster called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 3:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Representative Andy Josephson, Co-Chair
Representative Calvin Schrage, Co-Chair
Representative Jeremy Bynum
Representative Alyse Galvin
Representative Sara Hannan
Representative Nellie Unangiq Jimmie
Representative DeLena Johnson
Representative Will Stapp

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Jamie Allard
Representative Frank Tomaszewski

ALSO PRESENT

Representative Andrew Gray, Sponsor; Lori Pickett, Self, Juneau; Rachael Gunn, Staff, Representative Nellie Jimmie; Kaci Schroeder, Senior Assistant Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Law; Katie Giorgio, Staff, Representative Genevieve Mina, Sponsor.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Gerry Balluta, Self, Ketchikan; Rob Arnold, Self, Ketchikan; Sharyl Yeisley, Self, Ketchikan; Brian Webb, Self, Anchorage; Timothy Peterson, Physician, Juneau; Jamie Morgan, Government Relations Regional Lead, American Heart Association, Sacramento, California.

SUMMARY

HB 27 MEDICAL MAJOR EMERGENCIES

HB 27 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

HB 101 CRIMES AGAINST MINORS

CSHB 101(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with four "do pass" recommendations, three "no recommendation" recommendations, and two "amend" recommendations and with two new zero notes from the Department of Administration, one new zero note from the Department of Law, two new zero notes from the Department of Public Safety, one new zero note from Judiciary, and two previously published zero notes: FN1 (DFC) and FN5 (COR).

HB 123 TAXATION: VEHICLE RENTALS, SUBPOENAS

HB 123 was SCHEDULED but not HEARD.

Co-Chair Foster reviewed the meeting agenda.

#hb101

HOUSE BILL NO. 101

"An Act relating to civil claims by victims of sexual abuse to a minor; relating to homicide; relating to assault in the third degree; relating to stalking; relating to sexual abuse of a minor; relating to enticement of a minor; relating to endangering the welfare of a child; relating to indecent exposure; relating to sending an explicit image of a minor; relating to solicitation or production of an indecent picture of a minor; relating to distribution of indecent material to minors; relating to the testimony of children in criminal proceedings; relating to sentencing; and providing for an effective date."

[3:33:14 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster relayed the meeting agenda. He noted that HB 101 was heard in a prior meeting [April 8, 2025]. He asked the bill sponsor for a brief recap before moving to public comments and amendments.

REPRESENTATIVE ANDREW GRAY, SPONSOR, relayed that the bill would raise the age of consent from 16 years of age to 18, increasing protection to those 16 and 17 years of age. The

bill's inception had been formed by various sexual assault and domestic violence organizations having identified the low age of 16 as vulnerable to sexual predators because it was difficult to charge predators. The legislation helped prevent assault on 16 and 17 year old youths.

[3:34:25 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster OPENED public testimony.

LORI PICKETT, SELF, JUNEAU, testified in support for the bill with prepared remarks:

My name is Lori Pickett, I'm a community member with more than 35 years' experience working and volunteering in the nonprofit and public sectors, and I'm here today to show my strong support for House Bill 101, a crucial step toward better protecting Alaska's youth from sexual exploitation.

Critically, to protect our children still young enough to be in high school, HB 101 proposes raising the age of consent in Alaska from 16 to 18-putting us in line with states like Arizona, Florida, Utah, Idaho, and Tennessee. This isn't an extreme idea-it's a necessary one. Many Alaskans are unaware that the current age of consent is only 16. But predators know. And they exploit that. They target 16- and 17-year-olds, knowing the law is on their side and that it's incredibly difficult to prove lack of consent in a "he said, she said" case.

Importantly, HB 101 includes a close-in-age exemption. That means normal, consensual relationships between teenagers aren't criminalized-this bill is about stopping exploitation, not policing healthy peer relationships.

We are all painfully aware that Alaska has some of the highest rates of sexual violence in the nation-and much of the world. Our young people deserve more from us. HB 101 is an essential and overdue step toward protecting our children through their vulnerable teen years and making it harder for adults to legally prey on them.

If we're serious about tackling the crisis of sexual violence in our state, we must act boldly. HB 101 is

common-sense, protective, and fair. Please, stand with survivors. Stand with Alaska's youth. And support this bill.

[3:37:08 PM](#)

GERRY BALLUTA, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), called in support of the bill. She was personally aware of a case where a 16 year old was sexually exploited by a 23 year old but the case was unable to be prosecuted due to current statute. She believed that the current provisions in the bill would have made the assault a "cut and dry" case. She implored the committee to support the bill on behalf of other youth who were unable to make informed consent.

[3:39:12 PM](#)

ROB ARNOLD, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of the legislation. He shared that his daughter was 15 and would soon be 16 and believed that she was still incapable of informed consent under the situation. He thought that there were many predators targeting youth. He supported increasing the age to 18.

[3:40:05 PM](#)

SHARYL YEISLEY, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of increasing the age of consent to 18. She believed there were numerous predators in communities. She highlighted that a 16 year old could not vote, drink, etc. She commented that they did not understand how they could be preyed upon and groomed nor understand the repercussions. She believed that increasing the age to 18 would enable more prosecution of predators. She shared that she had been victimized when under the age of 18 and favored the legislation.

[3:42:00 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster CLOSED public testimony.

[3:42:23 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster stated that two amendments had been received. He asked to hear the amendments.

Representative Jimmie MOVED to ADOPT Amendment 1, 34-LS0451\N.1 (C. Radford, 4/11/25) (copy on file):

Page 6, lines 11 - 17:

Delete all material and insert:

"(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree if,
(1) being 17 years of age or older,
(A) the offender engages in sexual penetration with a person who is
(i) 13, 14, or 15 years of age and at least four years younger than the offender; or
(ii) 16 or 17 years of age and at least six years younger than the offender; [,] or
(B) aids, induces, causes, or encourages a person who is 13, 14, or 15 years of age and at least four years younger than the offender to engage in sexual penetration with another person;"

Page 7, lines 10- 14:

Delete all material and insert:

"* Sec. 9. AS 1 1.41.438(a) is amended to read:
(a) An offender commits the crime of sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree if being 17 years of age or older, the offender engages in sexual contact with a person who is
(1) 13, 14, or 15 years of age and at least four years younger than the offender; or
(2) 16 or 17 years of age and at least six years younger than the offender."

Co-Chair Foster OBJECTED for discussion.

Representative Jimmie explained the amendment. She communicated that under current law a 16 or 17 year old could have a sexual relationship with someone much older; even at 50 or 60 years of age. The amendment offered that if one was 16 or 17, the oldest sexual partner could be 6 years older; a 17 year old could date someone up to 23 year old, which allowed a close in age relationship yet set a limit to protect teens from being taken advantage of by older adults. She characterized it as a commonsense fix.

[3:43:51 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster asked for comments from the sponsor.

Representative Gray reminded the committee that Brenda Stanfill [Executive Director, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (ANDVSA)] had previously testified to the committee and requested an expansion to 6 years, only for 16 and 17 year olds, to guarantee support from all its member organizations. Ms. Stanfill relayed that counselors and others subject to mandatory reporting had to report consensual non-problematic relationships under a 4 year "close in age" exemption and suggested the extension. He viewed it as a friendly amendment.

[3:45:06 PM](#)

Representative Stapp stressed that he did not support the amendment. He related that he had two daughters and did not want his daughter when turned 16, having sex with a 22 year old.

Co-Chair Foster asked for clarification whether the amendment decreased the years from 6 to 4. Representative Gray replied that it was the opposite. He added that the age difference was less than 6 years, 5 years and 364 days and the age was determined by the birth day. He pointed out that the amendment was narrowed to only 16 and 17 year olds.

Representative Bynum shared that he was in strong opposition to the amendment. He was trying to understand the rationale for the change. He asked if the maker of the amendment had considered adding a sunset date to the amendment. He thought it would protect someone in a current relationship with the age difference. He also suggested the amendment be reduced from 6 to 5 years difference.

Representative Jimmie requested an at ease.

[3:48:32 PM](#)

AT EASE

[3:50:22 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Representative Jimmie asked to hear from her staff.

RACHAEL GUNN, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE NELLIE JIMMIE, replied that they had looked into the idea and the director of ANDVSA had told them it was the recommendation due to the consensual non-problematic relationships. She provided an example of a 17 year old in a relationship with a 22 year old and both families were aware, yet it was still required to be reported. The older partner could be at risk of prosecution even with parental consent. The amendment freed mandatory reporters from having to report healthy consensual relationships.

Representative Galvin asked about the expansion of the age. She provided an example of a 16 year old or 17 year old who may be in a university and understood the situation. She asked for context from what other states had done. Representative Gray answered that Utah had a 10 year close in age exemption and Florida had a 7 year extension. He indicated that he negotiated the age to 6 from other options being proposed. He noted that there were other states with 4 but he felt 6 years was a good compromise.

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Representative Johnson did not support the amendment due to the difference between a 16 year old and a 22 year old. She felt that a 22 year old was more mature and sophisticated.

[3:54:40 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

Representative Stapp OBJECTED.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Hannan, Jimmie, Galvin, Schrage, Josephson, Foster

OPPOSED: Stapp, Bynum, Johnson

The MOTION PASSED (6/3). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment 1 was ADOPTED.

[3:55:48 PM](#)

Co-Chair Josephson MOVED to ADOPT Amendment 2, 34-LS0451 (C. Radford, 4/24/25) (copy on file):

Page 6, line 5, following "age":
Insert "and at least two years younger than the offender"

Page 6, line 29, following "age":
Insert "and at least two years younger than the offender"

Co-Chair Foster OBJECTED for discussion.

Co-Chair Josephson explained the amendment. He pointed to page 6, lines 5 and 29 of the bill where the first reference involved "penetration" and the latter "contact." He reported that an existing law had a two year separation between the 19 year old and someone under 16 under the charges of Sexual Abuse of a Minor 1 [penetration] and Sexual Abuse of a Minor 2 [contact] that applied to someone in a position of authority over the victim and the offender resided in the same household. He cited subsection (B) on line 8 and read:

(B) the offender occupies a position of authority in relation to the victim...

Co-Chair Josephson wanted to retain the two year separation in that situation. He provided an example of a 19 year old who is a boss of a 17 year old at a fast food restaurant that were intimate and merely had contact like "petting over clothing." He related that the boss could be indicted and subject to prosecution. The amendment only applied to a two year difference and not 6, because he did not want to criminalize a 19 year old that cared for or desired a 17 year old. He emphasized that it was very difficult to establish cutoffs, but the law demanded it. The amendment retained the two year difference in the current law and the bill bumped up the age to 18. However, the defendant could be aged 20.

[3:59:25 PM](#)

Representative Gray indicated that he was neutral on the amendment. He expanded that he thought that a 19 year old could use their position of authority and threaten a younger worker if she did not comply with sexual engagement. He deduced that someone in authority with only two years difference was extraordinarily rare and the case

would almost never happen. He reiterated that he was neutral on the amendment.

Representative Stapp thought the second part of the amendment made sense. He was concerned about the first part and cited page 6, line 6 and read:

(A) the victim at the time of the offense is residing in the same household as the offender and the offender has authority over the victim;...

Representative Stapp asked if the amendment could be interpreted as not being a crime if the child was 16 and an uncle (perpetrator) lived in the house rather than someone age 18. Co-Chair Josephson replied that currently the law included the two year rule, which the amendment maintained. He thought that it begged the question if the two year rule was good, but it was a status quo amendment. He offered that he was comfortable with the amendment because the relationship was consensual. He expounded that much case law existed around what "authority" meant. He believed the amendment was important and provided an example of a lead camp counselor who was 18.5 years old, and his assistant was 17.5 years of age, which met the elements of the crime. He added that if there was penetration it became an unclassified felony and was an indictable offense, which concerned him.

[4:03:05 PM](#)

Representative Galvin appreciated the conversation. She had four children and could not help but to lean on the conservative side of the topic. She recalled from testimony that predators were acutely aware of the laws. She discerned that predators knew who could consent and who could not. She thought that someone at age 16, if there was any adult acting in an authoritarian capacity, the 16 year old "behaved differently" and was vulnerable. She wanted to send the "right message" to any predators tracking the law. Co-Chair Josephson argued that the reason he wanted members to be "comfortable" with the amendment was it mostly conformed with current law. He reiterated that existing statute spoke to someone in authority in the workplace or household. He was merely retaining the 2 year provision. He recounted that the committee voted for a relationship difference of 6 years in the prior amendment. The amendment maintained two years because of the power differential

involved. He acknowledged that there were nefarious actors but there were also people in love, and they did not know any better.

4:06:47 PM

AT EASE

4:09:42 PM

RECONVENED

Representative Gray clarified that currently in statute if a 16 year old was working at Subway and her supervisor co-worker was 18.5 years old they could have a consensual sexual relationship, it was currently legal. He recounted that the bill moved the age to 18. Currently, a 16.5 year old could have consensual sexual relations with a supervisor who was 18, however under the bill she could not. He explained that the amendment would preserve the "very tight less than two year" provision. He reiterated that it was currently allowed, and it was a logical amendment to the bill.

Representative Hannan was a reluctant yes on the first amendment, because she did not want to expand the close in age measure. Therefore, she deferred to the concerns expressed by the domestic violence staff and others that were concerned that people would not seek help because they were aware that mandatory reporters would report the relationship. She indicated that the examples often cited in the second amendment happened in the workplace. She recounted from personal experience as a prior teacher when the predator was the assistant coach of a team, which was a position of authority. She provided an example of a volleyball assistant coach at Kodiak Highschool charged with multiple sexual abuse charges. She recalled that it was a recent case that happened four years ago. She asserted that she did not want to extend the two year window. She thought a position of authority created a "bright line" that prohibited sexual relations until all involved were adults. She reiterated why she supported the first amendment. However, she did not want to perpetuate the idea that 16 and 17 year olds should be having sex with adults even if they were only 2 years older. She believed that the "world view" between a 19 year old and a 17 year old was "very different" and a "magical bright line" existed on the day one turns 18 "where the decisions were

different and invested with them." She did not support the amendment.

[4:13:24 PM](#)

Co-Chair Josephson relayed some of the recent committee discussion regarding his amendment that proved his perspective. He cited an American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) brief that stated often the judge had no discretion without mitigators, which translated to an 8.5 year sentence. He was attempting to keep the bill "reasonable" and reminded Representative Hannan that the amendment did not extend the provision but maintained the current law of 2 years.

Representative Stapp communicated that Co-Chair Josephson changed his mind on his earlier comments. He explained his reasoning that he could not comprehend how the shift manager of a fast food restaurant would ever know that they would be an unclassified felon, especially in light of the 6 year extension in Amendment 2. He did not like the amendment, but he did not want someone to be a felon for the rest of their life if the bill passed and someone was in an established relationship, which became illegal.

[4:16:43 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster noted that the Department of Law (DOL) was in the room for questions.

Representative Galvin wanted to hear from the department. She noted that the House Finance Committee was not a policy committee, but she wanted to know how often the scenario happened and how the department viewed the amendment.

KACI SCHROEDER, SENIOR ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL, CRIMINAL DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF LAW, looked at the amendment as one of the better ways to preserve the two year age difference. She emphasized that it was a policy call for the committee to decide where to draw the line, but she maintained that DOL did not identify any legal issues with the amendment. She answered that she did not have statistics on how often the close in age scenario happened, but she was aware that it did. She elaborated that in close in age cases, the department looked at the elements of the case and whether it could prove the elements beyond a reasonable doubt. In addition, the case was examined in the "interest of

justice," whether pursuing the case was the right thing to do for all involved.

Representative Galvin commented that the committee heard an example from Representative Hannan and several other scenarios. She reasoned that the committee wanted to establish a "clear sense of the law." She was concerned over the penalty and understood how serious changing the law was and wanted to make an "appropriate" and informed change.

[4:20:02 PM](#)

Ms. Schroeder answered that the first part of the amendment applied to sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree making it an unclassified felony that carried a sentence of 20 to 30 years and a lifetime registration as a sex offender. She delineated that the second part of amendment was a class B felony sex offense subject to a term of 5 to 15 years for a first time felon and a maximum of 99 years.

[4:20:54 PM](#)

Representative Stapp WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

Representative Hannan OBJECTED.

Representative Hannan spoke to her objection. She discussed two related cases she was aware of from personal experience of sexual relations between a senior and freshmen that both led to prosecution. She understood normal teenage behavior, but she did not want to diminish the ideal of statutory rape and carving out protections for adults. Her major concern was protecting minors and 18 year olds needed to be aware that there were restrictions on behavior; especially in instances of camps, coaching, etc.

[4:23:05 PM](#)

AT EASE

[4:26:44 PM](#)

RECONVENED

Representative Jimmie provided an example of two 17 year olds in a relationship and one child turned 18 first and became an assistant sports coach and the relationship was reported, she wondered whether it would be a classified

felony. Ms. Schroeder answered that if the relationship involved sexual penetration, it would be an unclassified sex felony and if it involved sexual contact, it would be a class B sex felony.

Co-Chair Josephson provided wrap up. He contended that the bill was "tough." He remarked that he had respect for Representative Hannan's viewpoint, but he maintained that the amendment was not watering down anything; it was a conforming amendment. He referred to the stepfather scenario and pointed out that all ages would be prohibited from sexual relations with their stepchildren. He asked for support.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Jimmie, Galvin, Stapp, Josephson, Schrage, Foster

OPPOSED: Johnson, Bynum, Hannan

The MOTION PASSED (6/3). There being NO further OBJECTION, Amendment 2 was ADOPTED.

[4:29:38 PM](#)

Co-Chair Schrage MOVED to REPORT CSHB 101(FIN) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

Representative Bynum objected. He strongly supported the bill but was opposed to the recent amendments. He believed that the bill was a massive improvement to current law. He WITHDREW the OBJECTION.

Representative Johnson OBJECTED.

A roll call vote was taken on the motion.

IN FAVOR: Hannan, Galvin, Stapp, Bynum, Jimmie, Josephson, Schrage, Foster

OPPOSED: Johnson

The MOTION PASSED (8/1).

There being NO further OBJECTION, CSHB 101(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with four "do pass"

recommendations, three "no recommendation" recommendations, and two "amend" recommendations and with two new zero notes from the Department of Administration, one new zero note from the Department of Law, two new zero notes from the Department of Public Safety, one new zero note from Judiciary, and two previously published zero notes: FN1 (DFC) and FN5 (COR).

Representative Gray thanked the committee for hearing the bill.

#hb27

HOUSE BILL NO. 27

"An Act relating to medical care for major emergencies."

[4:32:57 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster asked the sponsor to provide a brief recap of the bill.

KATIE GIORGIO, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE GENEVIEVE MINA, SPONSOR, provided an overview of the bill. She summarized that HB 27 provided a coordinated statewide system of care for Alaskans experiencing heart attacks and strokes. The state had a trauma system of care for many years centered in the Department of Health (DOH), which included training, coordination, adoption of protocols, a trauma center registry system with hospitals that specified different levels of care, and robust data collection. The legislation strove to replicate the trauma system of care to heart attack and stroke emergencies. The program would be housed within DOH. She added that a Guardian Flight letter of support was recently added to the member's bill files (copy on file).

[4:35:15 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster OPENED public testimony.

BRIAN WEBB, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He shared that he was a paramedic and critical care flight paramedic for 50 years. He relayed that since the passage of HB 168 [Trauma Care Centers/Fund, Chapter 98 SLA 10, 06/21/2010] in 2010, which established trauma centers and a trauma system of care, the state was

collecting and using important trauma related data to identify "hot spots", allocate additional resources, and develop a design pattern to enact preventative measures. He elaborated that the data allowed Alaska EMS to target resources, training protocols, and equipment acquisition towards trauma care. He emphasized that HB 127 would accomplish the same outcome for medical emergencies. The same type of volunteer hospital facility designation for Level 1 through Level 5 trauma centers that allowed for inspections and facilitated facility recertifications would be established for heart attack and stroke medical emergencies. The bill allowed EMS to determine where to deliver the patients to the most appropriate facility and help decrease mortality. He added that the bill would result in cost savings, better patient outcomes, and a reduction in permanent disability. He asked for support.

[4:38:12 PM](#)

TIMOTHY PETERSON, PHYSICIAN, JUNEAU (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He shared that he was calling on behalf of his position as Medical Director, Southeast Region EMS, which assisted 27 different agencies transporting patients. He was concerned about patient safety and outcomes. He spoke about a recent regional conference that included all the medical directors in Southeast Alaska, medical directors from Airlift Northwest, Guardian Flight, LifeMed, Inc., and medical representatives from Carnival Cruise Lines. The discussion centered on the geography and remoteness of Southeast Alaska. The bill's inception was born out of the lack of an Emergency Medical System like the Trauma Care System. He emphasized the lack of data analysis to help with the transport decisions of life threatening medical emergencies where time was critically important to outcomes. He added that training and equipment were important to assist in getting the patient to the right facility.

Representative Hannan asked for confirmation that he was in support of the bill. Dr. Peterson answered in the affirmative. Representative Hannan thanked him for his work.

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JAMIE MORGAN, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS REGIONAL LEAD, AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION, SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA (via

teleconference), testified in favor of the bill. She believed that the bill would ensure timely and effective treatment for heart attack and stroke medical emergencies. She relayed that the American Heart Association (AHA) advocated for quality systems of care based on nationally recognized standards for heart attack and stroke patients. She emphasized that the right care at the right time at the right facility was essential for time sensitive emergencies like strokes. She delineated that approximately 795 thousand people each year experienced a stroke in the United States (U.S.). A care system that reduced stroke related deaths by 2 to 3 percent saved 20 thousand lives. The care systems improved patient outcomes and were cost effective. She concluded that establishing a system of heart attack and stroke care improved outcomes and saved lives.

[4:43:33 PM](#)

Co-Chair Foster CLOSED public testimony.

Co-Chair Foster set an amendment deadline of April 29 at 5:00 pm

HB 27 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Foster reviewed the schedule for the following meeting.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[4:45:03 PM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.