

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 29, 2025

1:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Andrew Gray, Chair
Representative Chuck Kopp, Vice Chair
Representative Ted Eischeid
Representative Genevieve Mina
Representative Sarah Vance
Representative Mia Costello
Representative Jubilee Underwood

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: DEPARTMENT OF LAW

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

CORI MILLS, Deputy Attorney General (Civil Division)
Office of the Attorney General
Department of Law
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented an overview of the Department of Law.

ANGIE KEMP, Division Director
Criminal Division (Central Office)
Department of Law
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented an overview of the Department of Law.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:05:53 PM](#)

CHAIR ANDREW GRAY called the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Representatives Underwood, Costello, Mina, Eischeid, Vance, Kopp, and Gray were present at the call to order.

OVERVIEW: Department of Law

[1:06:43 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY announced that the only order of business would be an overview by the Department of Law (DOL).

[1:07:08 PM](#)

CORI MILLS, Deputy Attorney General (Civil Division), Department of Law (DOL), co-presented a PowerPoint, titled "Alaska Department of Law FY 2026 Overview" [hard copy included in the committee packet]. She introduced DOL's leadership team and shared the department's mission, duties per AS 44.23.020, and values. In addition to its statutory duties, DOL participates as a public advocate to the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA), enforces consumer protection and antitrust laws, and oversees the adoption of regulation. She segued to the Civil Division, which provides legal services to the executive branch and effectively acts as the largest law firm in the state with 145 attorneys and 250 total staff.

[1:18:56 PM](#)

MS. MILLS, in response to a series of committee questions, said there is a 6-7 percent vacancy rate for DOL attorneys, which is down from 20 percent several years ago; the department struggles to hire law office assistants; the ability to retain attorneys has helped decrease the workload for the Child Protection Section and contributed to a lower vacancy rate, despite a smaller applicant pool; a new section was created that focuses on recruitment and retention and oversees a successful fellowship program within the Civil Division.

[1:24:38 PM](#)

MS. MILLS resumed the presentation with an explanation of the Civil Division's organizational chart and the type of work performed by each section. In response to further committee questions, she gave an update on the Revised Statute 2477 (RS

2477) Chicken litigation, which asserted ownership of multiple rights-of-way in Chicken, Alaska. She reported that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has filed a notice of intent to sue on another large section of trails, so DOL is working on a strategy to obtain as many trails as possible rather than litigating each one. She also addressed the department's cybersecurity efforts.

[1:40:50 PM](#)

ANGIE KEMP, Division Director, Criminal Division (Central Office), Department of Law (DOL), continued the presentation with an overview of the Criminal Division's mission. She reported that Alaska's crime rate is at a 40-year low with a reduction in sexual assault, property crimes, aggravated assault, and burglary offenses. She reported that in fiscal year 2024 (FY 24), the division's conviction rate was 82 percent in felony cases, a statistical increase from prior years. She highlighted several convictions across the state, illustrating the department's statewide success, and listed the division's regional leadership. She continued by detailing the stages of a criminal case: investigation, informed referral, formal referral, pretrial litigation, pretrial resolution, trial, sentencing, and post-trial litigation.

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MS. KEMP, in response to committee questions, talked about factors that may contribute to delays in pre-trial custody, and highlighted the backlog that was created during the COVID-19 Pandemic. She reported that the average number of cases per prosecutor is 144 and referenced a 1998 study that found that a public defender should have no more than 59 cases assuming a 60-hour work week. She suggested that this could be applicable to prosecutors as well, which indicates that a rate of 144 may be high. She spoke to the difference in caseload between rural and urban Alaska, noting that in Dillingham, for example, there is an average caseload of 339 per position. Increasing the number of prosecutors is one path to lowering the average caseload; however, currently, there are less law students and fewer that pass the bar. She highlighted challenges with retention and efficiency among younger prosecutors.

[2:30:00 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.