

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 14, 2025

1:02 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Chuck Kopp, Vice Chair

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Alaska Police Standards Council

David Ross - Kenai
Daniel Carothers - Juneau
Timothy Collins - Kodiak

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Commission on Judicial Conduct

Bill Satterberg - Fairbanks

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

State Commission for Human Rights

Dorene Lorenz - Juneau
Jessie Ruffridge - Soldotna

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association

Jebediah Cox - Wasilla

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

Violent Crimes Compensation Board

Robert Urata - Juneau

- CONFIRMATION(S) ADVANCED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

DAVID ROSS, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Kenai, Alaska

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

DANIEL CAROTHERS, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Juneau, Alaska

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

TIMOTHY COLLINS, Appointee
Alaska Police Standards Council
Kodiak, Alaska

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

BILL SATTERBERG, Appointee
Commission on Judicial Conduct
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the Commission on Judicial Conduct.

ED MARTIN, representing self
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to Mr. Satterberg's appointment

DORENE LORENZ, Appointee
State Commission for Human Rights
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the State Commission for Human Rights.

JESSIE RUFFRIDGE, Appointee
State Commission for Human Rights
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the State Commission for Human Rights.

JEBEDIAH COX, Appointee
Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association
Wasilla, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association.

DR. ROBERT URATA, MD, Appointee
Violent Crimes Compensation Board
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as the governor's appointee to the Violent Crimes Compensation Board.

LAUREL SHOOP, representing self
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in Support of Dr. Urata.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:02:44 PM](#)

CHAIR ANDREW GRAY called the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:02 p.m. Representatives Costello, Mina, Eischeid, and Gray were present at the call to order. Representatives Vance and Underwood arrived as the meeting was in progress.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):
Alaska Police Standards Council
Commission on Judicial Conduct
State Commission for Human Rights
Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association
Violent Crimes Compensation Board

[1:03:23 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY announced that the only order of business would be confirmation hearings. He informed the committee that although

absent from today's hearing, Representative Kopp is supportive of Mr. Ross's confirmation.

[1:04:16 PM](#)

DAVID ROSS, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC), Kenai police chief, said he served on APSC for the last three years and looked forward to his continued service and an opportunity to help address the need for a professional and well-trained law enforcement workforce in Alaska.

[1:05:31 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked Mr. Ross about his vision and goals for APSC.

MR. ROSS said APSC's primary focus is to consider regulation changes and officer certification to help retain good officers and eliminate the "not good" officers. In response to a follow up question, he said in recent years, the council considered a broad regulation package that included changes to in-service training; changes to the age of corrections officers; and regulation changes in regard to creating a supervisory and a management level certificate for law enforcement agencies.

[1:07:48 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on Mr. Ross's appointment. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:08:38 PM](#)

DANIEL CAROTHERS, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC), highlighted his 28 years of experience for the Department of Corrections (DOC) [resume included in the committee packet], and said he appreciated the governor for his appointment.

[1:09:34 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked Mr. Carothers about his vision for APSC, as well as his work on the council.

MR. CAROTHERS shared his belief that his firsthand experience at DOC gave him a good understanding of correctional and probation

officers and what kind of regulations and training would benefit those positions.

[1:10:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE, referencing Mr. Carothers's resume, highlighted his varied work history and achievements and asked about the probation and parole supervision classification system that he implemented in 1982.

MR. CAROTHERS described the custody board he developed while working as the district supervising probation officer in Bethel. He said the board determined how often he would need to make contact with each person on probation.

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on Mr. Carothers's appointment. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:15:28 PM](#)

TIMOTHY COLLINS, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council (APSC), Alaska State Troopers (AST) sergeant, detailed his background in law enforcement [resume included in the committee packet] and said if confirmed, he would work diligently to uphold the highest standards of law enforcement in Alaska, ensuring that officers are equipped with the training, resources, and support their need to serve the community effectively. He said he's committed to promoting transparency, ethical policing, and accountability to foster trust between law enforcement and the public they serve.

[1:17:57 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked Sergeant Collins about his vision for APSC, as well his work on the council.

SERGEANT COLLINS said ensuring that officers are held to high standards, held accountable if they do something wrong, and given a second chance if its deserved. In addition, he suggested implementing mandatory management training for new supervisors within police and corrections in Alaska, which is an area that is lacking.

[1:19:17 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on Mr. Collins' appointment. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:20:08 PM](#)

BILL SATTERBERG, Appointee, Commission on Judicial Conduct, gave an overview of his professional background [resume included in the committee packet]. He said he requested to serve because the role of the judiciary is important, and the commission plays an integral role in its integrity, impartiality, and accountability.

[1:22:37 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on Mr. Satterberg's appointment.

[1:22:58 PM](#)

ED MARTIN, representing self, testified in opposition to Mr. Satterberg's appointment. He shared his experience with the Commission on Judicial Conduct and expressed his hope that no appointments would be made until conducting a full investigation of the commission and its actions over the course of several years. He urged members to review the documents he submitted to the committee.

CHAIR GRAY closed public testimony on Mr. Satterberg's appointment.

[1:26:37 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY asked whether Mr. Satterberg, as a Fairbanks defense attorney, would need to recuse himself in certain scenarios.

MR. SATTERBERG responded yes, he would recuse himself if the case involved a close friend, if he were a complainant, or if he could not maintain impartiality on an active case.

[1:27:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked Mr. Satterberg for his response to the request for more public engagement from the Commission on Judicial Conduct.

MR. SATTERBERG agreed that there should be public access to these boards and commissions, and that public input is important; however, he observed that people can be long-winded and that controls need to be established to maintain order, respect, and brevity.

REPRESENTATIVE VANCE asked whether there is an opportunity for public comment at the meetings.

MR. SATTERBERG said there is a public comment period at the beginning of the meeting, after which point, a closed session is held to discuss matters that may be damaging if, for example, an invalid complaint against a judge were to be a matter of public record.

[1:31:59 PM](#)

DORENE LORENZ, Appointee, Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (ASCHR), shared her extensive background in news, media, and film [resume included in the committee packet]. She said she has a strong sense of fairness and justice that was engrained in her from her diverse family. She distributed a booklet titled "Civil Rights Heroes of Alaska Volume," which she hoped would engage young Alaskans.

[1:34:03 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COSTELLO asked what Ms. Lorenz hoped to accomplish on ASCHR.

MS. LORENZ said ASCHR had several bills before the legislature that she described as "cleanup common sense" items, including a name change from the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights to the Alaska State Commission for Civil Rights; an update that would align the date of the annual reporting requirements with the fiscal year to ensure that everyone has the information at the beginning of the year; and provide an opportunity for due process.

[1:36:53 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY questioned the difference between human rights and civil rights.

MS. LORENZ described civil rights as the right to have credit, somewhere to live, and respect within the workplace. Conversely, human rights are the right to clean drinking water,

homeless shelters, food, and imprisonment for no reason, for example, which are not under ASCHR's purview.

[1:39:10 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on Ms. Lorenz's appointment. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:40:00 PM](#)

JESSIE RUFFRIDGE, Appointee, Alaska State Commission for Human Rights (ASCHR), gave an overview of her personal and professional background and her community service experience [resume included in the committee packet], specifically in support of teen parents through the nonprofit organization, Young Life Alaska. In her past 4 years of service on the commission, she said she has enjoyed the ability to engross herself in the state's civil rights history and build connectivity.

[1:46:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked about the biggest challenges facing the commission outside of the proposed name change.

MS. RUFFRIDGE shared her understanding that there had been unrest and discord before her appointment to ASCHR. She said solid representation and support for the commission's mission has been the most satisfying aspect.

[1:47:22 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on Ms. Ruffridge's appointment. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:48:13 PM](#)

JEBEDIAH COX, Appointee, Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association ("the bar"), said thanks to the hard work of its staff, the bar has been able to expand and enhance its [indisc.] offerings, which allows its members to stay current with evolving legal standards and practices. Additionally, the staff worked tirelessly to manage and ultimately pay off the K Street building, a significant milestone that represents sound financial stewardship. Another testament to the staff's careful

planning and fiscal responsibility is that the bar's dues have not increased in over a decade.

[1:50:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA questioned the biggest challenges facing the bar during Mr. Cox's time serving on the Board of Governors.

MR. COX said the bar has worked tirelessly on closing the justice gap by adding more pro bono work, alternative licensing methods, apprenticeship avenues, and recruitment tactics to increase diversity in the field. Another hurdle was improving Alaska's Uniform Bar Exam (UBE) cutoff score, which is now on par with 40 other states. Additionally, the bar increased the number of CLEs [Continuing Legal Education] to meet the legislature's request.

[1:52:02 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COSTELLO asked whether there had been an uptick in UBE applicants.

MR. COX said the number hasn't changed too much. The bar is working to remove barriers by making allowances for medical exclusions and other UBE approved accommodations, as well as computer-based tests.

[1:52:59 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on Mr. Cox's appointment. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:53:51 PM](#)

DR. ROBERT URATA, MD, Appointee, Violent Crimes Compensation Board (VCCB), informed the committee that he had served on VCCB for 4 years, and expanded on his professional background and education [resume included in the committee packet]. He said he particularly enjoyed helping victims of violent crime and hoped to continue this work with the legislature's blessing.

[1:55:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COSTELLO asked about the compensation limits and whether they hinder VCCB's ability to help victims.

DR. URATA acknowledged the function of compensation limits; however, he expressed concern about the diminishing budget and federal reimbursements.

REPRESENTATIVE COSTELLO questioned the limits for helping families.

DR. URATA responded a maximum of \$40,000, but that amount is rarely awarded. He shared his understanding that most are around \$5,000 or \$10,000.

[1:57:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA questioned the biggest challenges facing VCCB.

DR. URATA answered the budget and "being able to help everyone." He suggested that the board may need to either make the average award smaller or help fewer people.

[1:58:43 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on Dr. Urata's appointment.

[1:59:10 PM](#)

LAUREL SHOOP, representing self, testified in support of Dr. Urata's appointment. She explained that Dr. Urata had been an immeasurable contribution to the board and helps families in a significant way.

[1:59:44 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY closed public testimony on Dr. Urata's appointment.

[2:00:02 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY moved to advance the confirmations of David Ross, Daniel Carothers, and Timothy Collins to the Alaska Police Standards Council, Bill Satterberg to the Commission on Judicial Conduct, Dorene Lorenz and Jessie Ruffridge to the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, Jebediah Cox to the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association, and Robert Urata to the Violent Crimes Compensation Board to the joint session of the House and Senate for consideration. She reminded members that signing the reports regarding appointment to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or

disapproval of the appointees, and that the nominations are merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection. There being no objection, the confirmations were advanced.

[2:00:43 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 2:00 p.m.

[2:00:53 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY gave closing remarks.

[2:01:46 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:01 p.m.