

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 28, 2026

1:02 p.m.

DRAFT

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Sarah Vance

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 24

"An Act relating to aggravating factors considered at sentencing."

- MOVED HB 24 OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 20

"An Act relating to fees for paper documents; and relating to unfair trade practices."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 24

SHORT TITLE: AGGRAVATING FACTORS AT SENTENCING

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) JOSEPHSON

01/22/25	(H)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(H)	STA, JUD
05/01/25	(H)	STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120
05/01/25	(H)	Heard & Held
05/01/25	(H)	MINUTE (STA)
05/06/25	(H)	STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120

05/06/25 (H) Heard & Held
 05/06/25 (H) MINUTE(STA)
 05/10/25 (H) STA AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
 05/10/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 05/12/25 (H) JUD AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
 05/12/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 05/13/25 (H) STA AT 3:15 PM GRUENBERG 120
 05/13/25 (H) Moved HB 24 Out of Committee
 05/13/25 (H) MINUTE(STA)
 05/14/25 (H) STA RPT 4DP 2DNP 1AM
 05/14/25 (H) DP: HOLLAND, HIMSCHOOT, STORY, CARRICK
 05/14/25 (H) DNP: VANCE, MCCABE
 05/14/25 (H) AM: MOORE
 05/15/25 (H) JUD AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
 05/15/25 (H) Heard & Held
 05/15/25 (H) MINUTE(JUD)
 05/16/25 (H) JUD AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120
 05/16/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 01/28/26 (H) JUD AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

BILL: HB 20

SHORT TITLE: PROHIBIT FEES FOR PAPER DOCUMENTS

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) SADDLER

01/22/25 (H) PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
 01/22/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 01/22/25 (H) L&C, JUD
 02/14/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
 02/14/25 (H) Heard & Held
 02/14/25 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
 02/19/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
 02/19/25 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
 05/12/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
 05/12/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
 05/14/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
 05/14/25 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard
 05/15/25 (H) L&C AT 9:00 AM BARNES 124
 05/15/25 (H) Heard & Held
 05/15/25 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
 05/16/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
 05/16/25 (H) Moved HB 20 Out of Committee
 05/16/25 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
 05/18/25 (H) L&C RPT 3DP 3NR
 05/18/25 (H) DP: BURKE, SADDLER, FIELDS
 05/18/25 (H) NR: COULOMBE, CARRICK, NELSON
 01/28/26 (H) JUD AT 1:00 PM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HB 24.

REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HB 20.

KAI ELKINS, Staff
Representative Dan Saddler
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the sectional analysis for HB 20, on behalf of Representative Saddler, prime sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:02:16 PM](#)

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

^#hb24

HB 24-AGGRAVATING FACTORS AT SENTENCING

[1:03:12 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 24, "An Act relating to aggravating factors considered at sentencing."

[1:03:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 24. He paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

In Alaska today, prosecutors may seek additional sentencing for crimes motivated by bias, if the perpetrator's action was targeted because of the

victim's race, sex, color, creed, physical or mental disability, ancestry, or national origin. These crimes are typically known as 'hate crimes,' as they would likely not occur if it were not for the hatred of the perpetrator towards members of a specific group or class of people. HB 24 would add 'sexual orientation or gender identity' to this list.

Before an act is deemed a hate crime, the defendant must first be tried and convicted of a crime. It is only during the sentencing phase of the criminal process that these aggravating factors may come into play, and only if the crime can be shown to be motivated by bias against a particular class or group. Currently, 47 states plus the District of Columbia allow for sentence enhancement when the defendant has been convicted of a hate crime. Of these statutes, 34 include sexual orientation as an aggravating factor, and 24 include gender identity.

Tammie Willis is a vocal LGBTQ+ activist from Sterling. In November 2019, while organizing an annual Pride event, she found a threatening note containing homophobic slurs on her car. Roughly a week later, a large rock was thrown at her car while she drove to work. On December 9, she was attacked in her home by an knife-wielding assailant. She received dozens of stitches, bruising on her arms, legs, and stomach, and a concussion. These attacks occurred within days of announcements touting Pride in the Park planning meetings. It is clear that Mrs. Willis was targeted because of her LGBTQ identity and advocacy.

Amending AS 12.55.155(c) to include 'sexual orientation or gender identity' would not reverse the attack Ms. Willis suffered. However, it would send a powerful message that Alaska rejects crime motivated by hate, and that we as a state are willing to punish it accordingly. As Alaskans and Americans, we have a constitutional right to be and express ourselves. We must support crime victims who are targeted for exercising these rights, and I urge you to join me in supporting HB 24 to do just that.

[1:07:48 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COSTELLO asked how aggravating factors are addressed in the criminal system and whether multiple can be selected.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON said the prosecutor can choose as many aggravators as they feel merit consideration by the jury.

CHAIR GRAY interpreted Representative Costello's question to ask whether multiple aggravating factors could be added to account for a person's religion, race, sexual orientation, for example, if more than one applies.

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON answered yes, but it would be a "very strange fact pattern," because the prosecutor would have to show that each of these things applied. He shared an example in reference to Wisconsin v. Mitchell.

[1:10:23 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on HB 24. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:11:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JOSEPHSON said the bill stuck with him because the crime was obviously motivated by hate based on the victim's sexual orientation. He added that most people could not be targeted in this way because they don't share that orientation. He explained that the bill would be a tool that is used by 31 other states.

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CHAIR GRAY expressed his appreciation for the bill and said he understands the need for it. He shared a personal anecdote and opined an aggravating factor is appropriate for such crimes.

[1:13:23 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP stated that Alaska is making strides towards protecting people who are attacked for being part of an identifiable group. He said he intends to support HB 24.

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REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved to report HB 24 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

There being no objection, HB 24 was reported out of the House Judiciary Standing Committee.

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[1:14:43 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:14 p.m. to 1:17 p.m.

^#hb20

HB 20-PROHIBIT FEES FOR PAPER DOCUMENTS

[1:17:56 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 20, "An Act relating to fees for paper documents; and relating to unfair trade practices."

[1:18:16 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE DAN SADDLER, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 20. He paraphrased the sponsor statement [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

House Bill 20 would prevent businesses from charging customers an extra fee or a different - typically higher - rate for services when they choose to receive paper copies of statements, invoices and other documents, instead of going "paperless."

Not all Alaskans have consistent internet access in their homes. Unfairly being charged a higher rate for the same service punishes them for something that may be out of their control.

Additionally, not all members of Alaska's elderly population are computer savvy and can easily access online documents. This same population may be on a fixed income and disproportionately feel the impact of an additional service charge each month.

HB 20 seeks to end the system of charging different fees or rates for customers depending on whether they choose to go "paperless," and by doing so would protect Alaskans from this unfair business practice.

[1:20:31 PM](#)

KAI ELKINS, Staff, Representative Dan Saddler, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Saddler, prime sponsor, presented the sectional analysis for HB 20 [included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1: Page 1, lines 3-11 Section 1 amends AS 21.36 by adding a new section, AS 21.36.525, which prohibits insurers from charging an additional fee or different rate for individuals who prefer to receive paper copies of invoices, statements and other documents. This section does not, however, prevent an insurer from charging a fee for providing duplicate copies of any documents previously provided.

Section 2: Page 1, lines 12-15, & page 2, lines 1-4 Section 2 amends AS 45.45 by adding a new section, AS 45.45.940, which prohibits businesses from charging an additional fee or a different rate for individuals who prefer to receive paper copies of invoices, statements and other documents. This section does not, however, prevent a business from charging a fee for providing duplicate copies of any documents previously provided. Section 2 defines "business" by the meaning given in AS 43.70.110, which states a business is "a for profit or nonprofit entity engaging or offering to engage in a trade, a service, a profession, or an activity with the goal of receiving a financial benefit in exchange for the provision of services, or goods or other property."

Section 3: Page 2, lines 5-6 Section 3 adds to the list of unlawful business acts and practices in Title 45 to include violations of AS 45.45.940, established in Section 2 of this bill.

[1:22:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA asked how the prohibition of paper fees has impacted business fees or premiums in other states that have enacted a similar policy.

MR. ELKINS shared his understanding that New York enacted a similar law and has not run into any issues.

[1:23:02 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY asked whether the bill would ban discounts for customers who choose to go paperless.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER answered yes. He explained that there would be no cap on fees, but they cannot be differential.

CHAIR GRAY pointed out that there are expenses associated with sending out paper bills, such as ink and postage, so going paperless is a cost savings to the business.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER contended that doing business through paper is the status quo and changes to that need to be addressed. If businesses are saving money by using electronic billing and offering a discount to customers, that would be great, he opined, but to changing the status quo and charge an extra cost for that does not seem fair. He added that businesses still print out paper and do not proportionally apportion those costs to the client. He asserted that these customers are already paying a cost for service, and certain expenses should just be part of the cost of doing business.

[1:25:29 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY shared a scenario that further challenged the idea of eliminating discounts for paperless documents, which he characterized as government overreach.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER stated that this is not intended to persist into the future forever, and those who prefer paper would "move onto other things" with time. He said this is intended to protect against digital costs. He added that small charges add up and every little bit hurts.

CHAIR GRAY suggested amending the bill to only apply to places where sending online statements is not feasible or unreliable.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER stated that there's no formal metric for reliable or unreliable internet service. He acknowledged that we live in a time where more people are availing themselves to internet services, but there are people who prefer not to operate that way and should not be penalized for doing so.

[1:29:29 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA commented on digital equity issues in her district and opined that the bill is a good step towards making [paper billing] available for everyone.

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The committee took a brief at-ease at 1:30 p.m.

[1:30:21 PM](#)

CHAIR GRAY opened public testimony on HB 20. After ascertaining that no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER added that HB 20 would not apply to state or government agencies.

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CHAIR GRAY announced that HB 20 would be held over.

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CHAIR GRAY offered closing comments on the committee's upcoming agenda.

[1:33:22 PM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:33 p.m.