

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE

January 31, 2025

9:51 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Zack Fields, Co-Chair
Representative Carolyn Hall, Co-Chair
Representative Ashley Carrick
Representative Dan Saddler
Representative Julie Coulombe
Representative David Nelson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Robyn Niayuq Burke

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 57

"An Act relating to wireless telecommunications devices in public schools; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 57

SHORT TITLE: COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) FIELDS

01/22/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(H)	L&C, EDC
01/29/25	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
01/29/25	(H)	Heard & Held
01/29/25	(H)	MINUTE(L&C)
01/31/25	(H)	L&C AT 9:15 AM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

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

POSITION STATEMENT: As staff to Representative Fields, prime sponsor of HB 57, presented the summary of changes for Version N of HB 57.

KELLY LESSENS, Individual Member
Anchorage School Board
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As an invited testifier, answered questions on HB 57.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[9:51:50 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR ZACK FIELDS called the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 9:51 a.m. Representatives Carrick, Hall, Coulombe, and Fields were present at the call to order. Representatives Nelson and Saddler arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 57-COMMUNICATION DEVICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

[9:52:11 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the only order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 57, "An Act relating to wireless telecommunications devices in public schools; and providing for an effective date."

CO-CHAIR FIELDS stated the committee would be looking at a committee substitute (CS), sponsored by himself, to HB 57.

[9:52:45 AM](#)

COURTNEY OWEN, Staff, Representative Zack Fields, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Fields, prime sponsor of HB 57, presented the summary of changes for Version N of HB 57 [copy included in the committee file], which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Page 1, lines 11 and 12, Sec 14.33.300 (a)

This section was added to include exceptions for the use of wireless telecommunication devices for educational purposes, when permitted by a teacher or school administrator.

Page 2, lines 5 and 6, Sec. 14.33.300 (b)

This section was added to include exceptions for the use of wireless telecommunication devices for educational purposes, when permitted by a teacher or school administrator.

Page 2, lines 9 and 10, Sec 14.3.300 (c)

This section was added to emphasize the privacy rights of students with regards to their personal telecommunication devices.

[9:53:41 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS thanked Ms. Owen for her presentation. He noted that the CS would bring the bill into alignment with the proposal from the administration and the Department of Education and Early Development. Co-Chair Fields asked Co-Chair Hall for a motion.

[9:54:05 AM](#)

CO-CHAIR HALL moved to adopt the proposed CS for HB 57, Version 34-LS0064\N, Bergerud, 1/28/25, ("Version N") as a working document.

[9:54:21 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER objected for the purposes of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER noted that when he was in school, wireless telecommunication devices were not provided for educational purposes. He asked what kind of devices are issued to the students by the schools.

[9:54:50 AM](#)

MS. OWEN deferred to Ms. Lessens of the Anchorage School Board.

[9:54:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK expressed appreciation for the language in the proposed CS, Version N. She noted that while she was a substitute teacher in Fairbanks, Alaska, there were occasions in which the technology was not functional in the classroom, and students would use their cellphones to access educational materials. Representative Carrick stated her support for Version N.

[9:55:46 AM](#)

KELLY LESSENS, Individual Member, Anchorage School Board, as an invited testifier, answered questions on HB 57. Ms. Lessens answered that Chromebooks are the devices issued to students by the schools. She explained that prior to the influx of COVID-19 relief funds, growing budgetary restraints did not permit every student to receive electronic devices in the Anchorage School District (ASD). The ASD purchased a large number of Chromebooks after the pivot to remote learning due to COVID-19. After the COVID-19 funding ended, the district walked back their grade 3 to 12 1:1 device initiative to a grade 6 to 12 1:1 device initiative. She stated that roughly half of the Anchorage School District has a Chromebook, which they are obliged to bring into the classroom every day. She noted that when students forget their Chromebooks or forget to charge the devices, they are unable to participate in class activities. She explained that sometimes the quality of instruction via a Chromebook would be compromised if a student is not prepared for class. Ms. Lessens stated that, to her knowledge, a Chromebook is the only issued device, although she admitted that there may be hotspots, but she is unsure.

[9:58:11 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER said he appreciated the increased flexibility in the proposed CS, Version N. He commented that implementation of Version N would be difficult.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER removed his objection to the motion to adopt the proposed CS for HB 57, Version 34-LS0064\N, Bergerud, 1/28/25, as a working document. There being no further objection, Version N was before the committee.

[HB 57, Version N, was held over.]

[9:58:43 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

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