

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE

April 9, 2025

3:17 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 50 (L&C)

"An Act relating to the comprehensive plans of first and second class boroughs."

- MOVED CSSB 50 (L&C) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 171

"An Act relating to interchange fees on tax and gratuity; and relating to the Alaska Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 70

"An Act relating to emergency medical services for operational canines; relating to the powers, duties, and liability of emergency medical technicians and mobile intensive care paramedics; relating to the practice of veterinary medicine; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 70 (L&C) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 50

SHORT TITLE: MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS: HOUSING

SPONSOR (s) : SENATOR (s) DUNBAR

01/22/25 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/17/25
01/22/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25 (S) CRA, L&C
02/04/25 (S) CRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/04/25 (S) Heard & Held
02/04/25 (S) MINUTE(CRA)
02/11/25 (S) CRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/11/25 (S) Moved CSSB 50(CRA) Out of Committee
02/11/25 (S) MINUTE(CRA)
02/12/25 (S) CRA RPT CS 2NR 2DP SAME TITLE
02/12/25 (S) NR: MERRICK, YUNDT
02/12/25 (S) DP: DUNBAR, GRAY-JACKSON
03/03/25 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/03/25 (S) Heard & Held
03/03/25 (S) MINUTE(L&C)
03/07/25 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/07/25 (S) Moved CSSB 50(L&C) Out of Committee
03/07/25 (S) MINUTE(L&C)
03/10/25 (S) L&C RPT CS 3DP SAME TITLE
03/10/25 (S) DP: BJORKMAN, DUNBAR, YUNDT
03/17/25 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
03/17/25 (S) VERSION: CSSB 50(L&C)
03/21/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/21/25 (H) CRA, L&C
03/25/25 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
03/25/25 (H) Heard & Held
03/25/25 (H) MINUTE(CRA)
04/01/25 (H) CRA AT 8:00 AM BARNES 124
04/01/25 (H) Moved CSSB 50(L&C) Out of Committee
04/01/25 (H) MINUTE(CRA)
04/02/25 (H) CRA RPT 4DP 1NR
04/02/25 (H) DP: HOLLAND, HALL, HIMSCHOOT, MEARS
04/02/25 (H) NR: RUFFRIDGE
04/07/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/07/25 (H) Heard & Held
04/07/25 (H) MINUTE(L&C)
04/09/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 171

SHORT TITLE: INTERCHANGE FEES: TAX & GRATUITY

SPONSOR (s) : REPRESENTATIVE (s) ELAM

04/02/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/02/25 (H) L&C, FIN
04/07/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

04/07/25 (H) Heard & Held
04/07/25 (H) MINUTE (L&C)
04/09/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 70

SHORT TITLE: EMERGENCY MED SVCS; OPERATIONAL CANINES

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) SCHRAGE

01/27/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/27/25 (H) HSS, L&C
02/18/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
02/18/25 (H) Heard & Held
02/18/25 (H) MINUTE (HSS)
03/13/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
03/13/25 (H) Heard & Held
03/13/25 (H) MINUTE (HSS)
03/20/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
03/20/25 (H) Moved CSHB 70 (HSS) Out of Committee
03/20/25 (H) MINUTE (HSS)
03/21/25 (H) HSS RPT CS (HSS) 2DP 2DNP 2NR
03/21/25 (H) DP: FIELDS, MEARS
03/21/25 (H) DNP: PRAX, SCHWANKE
03/21/25 (H) NR: RUFFRIDGE, MINA
03/31/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
03/31/25 (H) Heard & Held
03/31/25 (H) MINUTE (L&C)
04/02/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/02/25 (H) Heard & Held
04/02/25 (H) MINUTE (L&C)
04/07/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/07/25 (H) Scheduled but Not Heard
04/09/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR FORREST DUNBAR
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, gave closing remarks on SB 50.

ANNA BRAWLEY, Community Planner
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 50.

MARGE STONEKING, Advocacy Director
American Association of Retired Persons Alaska

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 50.

SALLY COX, Local Government Specialist
Division of Community & Regional Affairs
Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on SB 50.

MICHAEL CERVATES, Owner
The Banks Alehouse
Fairbanks, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of HB 171.

GLENN GROSSMAN, Payments Consultant
Electronic Payments Coalition
Warsaw, Indiana

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 171.

DOUG LADENBURGER, Director of Treasury Management
Northrim Bank & Alaska Banker Association
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 171.

MARK BURGESS, President & CEO
Credit Union One
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 171.

TIM SULLIVAN, President
Alaska Credit Union League
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to HB 171.

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, answered questions during the hearing on HB 70.

JEREMY HOUSTON, Staff
Representative Calvin Schrage
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on behalf of Representative Schrage, prime sponsor of HB 70.

BRIAN WEBB

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 70.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:17:32 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR ZACK FIELDS called the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:17 p.m. Representatives Fields, Hall, Carrick, Burke, and Nelson were present at the call to order. Representatives Coulombe and Saddler arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 50-MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS: HOUSING

[3:17:49 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the first order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 50(L&C), "An Act relating to the comprehensive plans of first and second class boroughs."

[3:18:17 PM](#)

SENATOR FORREST DUNBAR, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, gave closing remarks on CSSB 50(L&C). He stated that CSSB 50(L&C) would add a housing development plan to Title 29, which would encourage but not require first- and second-class boroughs to prioritize housing development in their comprehensive plans.

[3:18:57 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS opened public testimony on CSSB 50(L&C).

[3:19:08 PM](#)

ANNA BRAWLEY, Community Planner, testified in support of SB 50. She stated that she was a planning professional who had worked in communities across Alaska. She stated that SB 50 would connect two important roles of local government: creating community visions and goals and taking action to meet housing as a community need. She explained that comprehensive plans, when done well, can build "community consensus ... through practical strategies." She stated that comprehensive plans entail land

use, transportation, infrastructure, economic development, and public lands and facilities; at the intersection of these, she asserted, was housing. She stated that, because housing challenges can differ from community to community, the solutions should be locally crafted and enacted. She listed potential challenges to housing: cost of construction, availability of land, aging housing stock, necessity of major repair, overcrowding, individuals living in deteriorated buildings, aging residents looking to downsize, new residents looking for homes to buy, affordable rental units, et cetera. She reiterated that the local comprehensive planning process allows communities to address challenges unique to their area. She stated that comprehensive plans can include creating a new plan, updating data and demographic trends, adopting a targeted housing strategy, or picking priorities in a pre-existing plan. She concluded by offering her support and asserting that the proposed legislation encourages, but does not prescribe, how the community plans housing.

[3:22:06 PM](#)

MS. BRAWLEY, in response to Representative Carrick, replied that she had previously worked with the City of Valdez after it had updated its comprehensive plan. She reported that about a quarter of the housing stock in Valdez were mobile homes from the pipeline era. She reported that residents in Valdez wanted to buy homes but were unable to afford them. She stated that she worked with the community on updating the zoning codes as a way to remove barriers to housing. She said that Valdez was a great example of a community using its comprehensive plan to identify housing as a focus and follow-through on implementation.

[3:23:43 PM](#)

MARGE STONEKING, Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska, stated that AARP is the largest non-profit, non-partisan membership organization in Alaska and the United States, stating that AARP's mission is to "empower people to choose how they live as they age." She stated that housing is critical for aging residents in Alaska. She asserted that much improvement is needed, from availability to cost attainability, to accessibility. She stated that it was crucial to address demographic shifts in population, noting that the population of older adults in the U.S. continues to increase. She cited AARP's Home & Community Preference Survey, reporting that the vast majority of older adults prefer to live in their own homes

long-term. She further reported that two-thirds of adults aged 50 years and older live in single-family homes and 85 percent own the homes that they live in. She also reported that less than 5 percent of houses in the U.S. have the accommodations necessary for moderate mobility difficulties. She noted that Alaska has fastest growing aging population in the nation and, because of this, it was critical to include housing development plans in comprehensive planning processes. She asserted housing should include a range of size and price, and accessibility options. She asserted that SB 50 would provide a good opportunity for statewide encouragement of housing development to local jurisdictions.

[3:26:17 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether municipal housing plans should include requirements for accessible accommodation.

MS. STONEKING replied that the requirement was likely beyond the scope of SB 50 but noted that AARP advocates for a percentage of local housing development to incorporate universal design.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether a housing plan would include requirements for a percentage of housing to include accessible accommodations.

SENATOR DUNBAR, in response to Representative Saddler's question regarding requirements under SB 50, stated that the proposed bill would not mandate the inclusion of accessible accommodation, but certain local jurisdictions do have some provisions for accessible accommodation. He cited Title 21 in Anchorage, Alaska, as an example. He commented that he was not aware of any requirement in Alaska mandating a certain percentage of housing including accessible accommodation. He further cited Holtan Hills in Girdwood as an example, noting that they set aside a portion of housing for low-income individuals. He reiterated that SB 50 would not give any additional powers or place any additional requirements on local governments.

[3:28:36 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS, after ascertaining that there was no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on CSSB 50(L&C).

[3:28:59 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether there were any local governments that require housing to have particular accommodations.

[3:29:24 PM](#)

SALLY COX, Local Government Specialist, Division of Community & Regional Affairs, Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development (DCCED), at the invitation of Co-Chair Fields, replied that she would get back to committee with a response.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS entertained a motion.

[3:29:58 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR HALL moved to report CSSB 50(L&C) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSSB 50(L&C) was reported out of the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

[3:30:14 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 3:30 p.m. to 3:32 p.m.

HB 171-INTERCHANGE FEES: TAX & GRATUITY

[3:32:46 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 171, "An Act relating to interchange fees on tax and gratuity; and relating to the Alaska Unfair Trade Practices and Consumer Protection Act."

[3:33:06 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS opened public testimony on HB 171.

[3:33:21 PM](#)

MICHAEL CERVATES, Owner, The Banks Alehouse, testified in support of HB 171. He stated that interchange fees are charged on tax and gratuities. He reported that there is no sales tax in Fairbanks, but that there is an alcohol tax. He noted that he pays for the interchange fees and does not take it out of his workers' tips. He noted that, since COVID-19, both the cost of food and labor have increased for his restaurant. He stated that profit margins for restaurants typically sit between 1 and

2 percent. He echoed a prior hearing, noting that interchange fees constitute between 70 and 90 percent of the overall fees charged by a credit card. He reported that his restaurant, at 70 percent of the total fees, loses approximately \$53,900 in interchange fees [annually]. He remarked that that number was roughly equivalent to three full-time employees. He stated that he would be able to invest money lost from interchange fees back into his business or his community.

[3:37:11 PM](#)

GLENN GROSSMAN, Payments Consultant, Electronic Payments Coalition, testified in opposition to HB 171. He stated that he was a professor of finance by trade. He stated that the modern electronic payment system was robust and efficient, noting that all merchants could accept payments from vendors of their choice. He stated that merchants receive efficiency, and fraud protection as benefits. He stated that interchange fees cover the cost of the aforementioned. He asserted that businesses could cover the cost of interchange fees in other ways, such as offering discounts through cash transactions or charging a credit card surcharge fee. He noted that the proposed legislation had not been implemented in any other state. He asserted that most businesses would need at least 10 years to "break even" in order to update their point-of-sales systems were HB 171 to become law. He asked committee members to take into consideration consumer convenience, commerce for merchants, and the cost of enactment on small businesses. He asserted that the proposed legislation would place the burden on small businesses, and that large retailers would benefit.

[3:40:12 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked about the profit margin for banks. He noted that the profit margins for restaurants and retailers are approximately 1 to 2 percent.

MR. GROSSMAN responded that banks do not profit from interchange fees and asserted that banks actually lose money on interchange fees. He noted that the only way a bank can generate profit in credit card business is to have customers "revolve on their debt."

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked for confirmation that banks lose money on credit cards.

MR. GROSSMAN replied that banks lose money unless customers revolve debt. He stated that banks only profit on balances and not paid on monthly statement for credit cards.

MR. GROSSMAN, in response to an additional question from Representative Saddler, stated that interest rate varies based on client or cardholder and issuer.

[3:43:36 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked the largest members by market share of the Electronic Payments Coalition.

MR. GROSSMAN stated that banks are largest issuers of credit cards and stated that the interchange fees go back to the banks, such as Capital One, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, which he noted were the largest issuers. He commented that credit unions and community banks are also issuers and face the same economics as large banks.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked how much Capital One, Bank of America, and JP Morgan Chase collect in interchange fees from Alaska.

MR. GROSSMAN replied that he did not have that data. He further noted that information was private to the institutions.

[3:45:31 PM](#)

MR. GROSSMAN, in response to a question from Representative Saddler, replied that he was a professor at Grace College, in Winona Lake, Indiana.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked if Mr. Grossman was employed by the Electronic Payments Coalition.

MR. GROSSMAN stated that he was a subject matter expert, noting that he worked in electronic payments for nearly 20 years. He stated that he acted more in the capacity of a consultant to the Electronic Payments Coalition.

[3:46:41 PM](#)

DOUG LADENBURGER, Director of Treasury Management, Northrim Bank & Alaska Banker Association (ABA), testified in opposition to HB 171. He asserted that the proposed legislation would introduce an inefficient and unmanageable process for local businesses and financial institutions. He noted that 99 percent of businesses

in Alaska were small businesses who employed over 50 percent of the state's private workforce. He asserted that, were HB 171 to become law, businesses and service providers would be required to implement timely and costly new point-of-sales solutions. He asserted that this requirement could tank small businesses. He asserted that transactions through cash or check could be more expensive than interchange fees on a credit card transaction. He cautioned that, were HB 171 to become law, there could be unexpected errors resulting in "unexpected fees and compliance challenges." He further cautioned that e-commerce businesses may not want to conduct business in Alaska. He offered his belief that the process for credit card transactions was effective, efficient, and secure and additionally argued that HB 171 "would disrupt the process for small businesses and our local financial institutions."

[3:49:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked for the definition of a point-of-sale solution and asked whether implementation would be a one-time cost.

MR. LADENBURGER explained that point of sales would be whatever equipment or system a business uses to accept and process credit cards, noting that there is a wide variety of systems. He noted that e-commerce only requires a computer for transactions. He asserted that HB 171 would create a requirement that a small business would need to implement a system that would separate the tax and the gratuities. He opined that HB 171 would cause many difficulties for businesses and local financial institutions because it is attempting to force change on an automated system.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked how consumers would know the difference.

MR. LADENBURGER replied that, if a business decided not to implement a new system, they might require consumers pay for their goods and services with a credit card and the tax and/or gratuities with a check or cash.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER commented that Mr. Ladenburger was presuming that businesses would entirely abandon credit card sales, which he opined was "realistic and hard to believe."

[3:52:20 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS opined that the notion that machines or software would be unable to differentiate between a charge and a tip was implausible.

[3:52:36 PM](#)

MARK BURGESS, President & CEO, Credit Union One, testified in opposition to HB 171. He stated that Credit Union One provides financial services for over 96,000 members in Alaska, noting that Credit Union One recently opened branches in Wasilla and Kotzebue. He noted that they would be opening a branch in Skagway and remarked that Credit Union One was the only option credit union option for the communities of Skagway and Kotzebue. He stated that similar legislation has been introduced 72 times in 31 states since 2006, passing in only one state - Illinois. He further stated that the federal district court granted an injunction against that act in Illinois in December [2024], finding that it is likely to violate the National Banking Act and would not apply to federally chartered banks and credit unions. He asserted that the proposed legislation would then only apply to state-chartered banks and credit unions. He emphasized that Credit Union One is the only state-charted credit union in Alaska and asserted that the proposed legislation would impose increased costs and leave state-chartered institutions at a disadvantage when competing with federal institutions. He asserted that HB 171 would create, at best, a two-tiered system for banks and credit unions, and encouraged committee members to vote no.

[3:54:14 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked how much money from interchange fees is going to large banks versus small local unions.

MR. BURGESS responded that he did not have that data.

[3:54:41 PM](#)

TIM SULLIVAN, President, Alaska Credit Union League, testified in opposition to HB 171. He explained that the Alaska Credit Union League was composed of nine Alaska credit unions that provide financial services for over 500,000 Alaska residents. He explained that credit unions are member-owned financial institutions and do not have shareholders. He explained that, for credit unions, fees are used to cover credit union operations and provide products and services for members. He stated that fraud protection was a critical service that was

covered by interchange fees. He stated that merchants are not responsible for fraud, and under the Fair Credit Billing Act, the cardholder is only responsible for a maximum of \$50. He remarked that most card issuers offer zero liability policies on their cards. He reported that credit card fraud in 2025 was estimated to be approximately \$12.5 billion, much of which would be returned to consumers due to the "efforts and infrastructure paid for and built by credits unions and banks through interchange fees." He stated that the Alaska Credit Union League was opposed to HB 171.

[3:56:02 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether customers have the ability to influence rates of interchange fees.

MR. SULLIVAN replied that the financial provider and the vendors/restaurants, not the cardholder members, decide interchange fees.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether it would be possible for card providers to charge only a fee for fraud protection.

MR. SULLIVAN replied that percentages have not increased in approximately 10 years. He stated the reason that credit card companies have been increasing their collection of fees is due to people using their credits with more frequency.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER illustrated his question with a scenario, asking if someone has \$100 restaurant bill, would it cost more for the credit card provider to run card with a 1 percent tip versus 25 percent tip.

MR. SULLIVAN replied that it is the same flat percentage rate.

[3:58:59 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS, after ascertaining that there is no one else who wished to testify, closed public testimony on HB 171.

[3:59:09 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE asked the sponsor to comment on the credit union issue. She wondered if they could amend the bill to avoid federal litigation.

[3:59:43 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE ELAM responded that he has heard small businesses throughout the country are trying to fight back against interchange fees. He opined that banks have a big voice. He could not guarantee that HB 171 would not go to litigation. He stated that other credit unions and banks within the state of Alaska are profiting from tax collection and tips and thus profits made from taxes and tips would decrease. He commented that small businesses would no longer be tax collectors. He further stated that small businesses would not lose any money from the actual sale of their goods and merchandise.

[4:01:26 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS commented, "Big banks will fight tooth and nail to keep money flowing into big banks."

[4:01:36 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE stated that she has heard big banks warning that consumers would lose reward programs and fraud protection should HB 171 become law. She further stated that she had businesses' best interests in mind and wanted to see the full picture.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS requested a breakdown of what different credit card fees pay for.

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE remarked that it was unclear how what percentage of the interchange fees were going towards services like fraud protection.

[HB 171 was held over.]

HB 70-EMERGENCY MED SVCS; OPERATIONAL CANINES

[4:02:40 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 70, "An Act relating to emergency medical services for operational canines; relating to the powers, duties, and liability of emergency medical technicians and mobile intensive care paramedics; relating to the practice of veterinary medicine; and providing for an effective date." [Before the committee was CSHB 70(HSS).]

CO-CHAIR FIELDS entertained amendments.

[4:03:08 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt Amendment [1] to CSHB 70(HSS), labeled 34-LS0245\I.5, Gunther, 4/5/25, which read as follows:

Page 1, line 7, through page 2, line 25:

Delete all material and insert:

"(a) A person may not practice veterinary medicine, surgery, or dentistry unless the person is licensed as a veterinarian under this chapter or has a temporary permit issued under AS 08.98.186, except that a person may perform [FUNCTIONS AUTHORIZED BY]

(1) functions authorized by regulation of the board if the person is licensed as a veterinary technician; [OR]

(2) functions authorized by a permit issued under AS 08.02.050 if the person is employed by an agency that has a permit issued under AS 08.02.050; or

(3) emergency medical services on an operational canine under AS 18.08.082(a)(6) if the person is certified as an emergency medical technician or licensed as a mobile intensive care paramedic."

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

Page 3, lines 25 - 27:

Delete "to operational canines the emergency medical services enumerated on a written document filed with the department by the medical director and approved by the department in regulation"

Insert "emergency medical services to an operational canine"

Page 5, line 29, following "danger;":

Insert "and"

Page 5, line 31, through page 6, line 11:

Delete "; and

(3) meets at least one of the following requirements:

(A) the emergency medical technician or mobile intensive care paramedic has obtained informed consent from the owner of the operational canine or a person authorized to make medical decisions about the operational canine;

(B) the emergency medical technician or mobile intensive care paramedic is employed by the governmental agency that owns or has authority to make medical decisions about the operational canine; or

(C) the emergency medical technician or mobile intensive care paramedic provides the emergency medical service in accordance with a written protocol developed and approved by a veterinarian"

Page 6, lines 6 - 28:

Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

CO-CHAIR HALL objected.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER shared his concern that the proposed legislation would give emergency medical technicians (EMTs) too much authority. He explained that Amendment [1] would, in Section 1, "add language to say emergency medical services to clarify ... that EMTs can only perform emergency medical services in operational canines and not perform any other kind of veterinary medicine." He referenced public testimony, citing concerns about EMTs providing intensive medical care for canines. He stated that it would remove Section 2, offering his belief that Section 2 would give EMTs too much authority. He further stated that Section 2 allowed EMTs to enter a home, or have a car moved or destroyed for the purpose of gaining access to an injured or potentially injured operational canine. He explained that Section 3 states that "EMTs can provide operational canines only the services that are listed on a document filed with the medical director and approved by the Department of Health." He explained this his amendment would remove this limitation, asserting that it was redundant. He stated that Amendment [1] would additionally remove conditions that must be met for EMTs to provide services to operational canines, listed in Section 7. He offered his belief that the requirements listed in Section 7 are onerous. He concluded by stating that Amendment [1] would remove Section 8, as he did not believe Section 8 to be a likely scenario. He explained that Section 8 refers to a scenario in which an operational canine is receiving emergency services from a practitioner via telehealth between the owner and an EMT.

[4:06:14 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS requested Representative Shrage, prime sponsor of CSHB 70 (HSS), to share his thoughts on Amendment [1].

[4:06:29 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, deferred to his staff member for a response.

[4:06:44 PM](#)

JEREMY HOUSTON, Staff, Representative Calvin Schrage, Alaska State Legislature, answered questions on behalf of Representative Shrage, prime sponsor of CSHB 70 (HSS). He stated that their office was opposed to changes made to Sections 2 and 3. He further stated that they found changes made to Sections 1 and 8 amenable.

[4:07:29 PM](#)

BRIAN WEBB, at the invitation of Co-Chair Fields, noted that he had been working with Representative Schrage on HB 70. He explained that there are already statutes regarding domicile entry by EMS, due to local authorities not always readily being available in the event of emergencies in all communities.

MR. WEBB referred to Section 3, explaining that it was added because Alaska Statute (AS) is clear that dogs in Alaska are considered private property. He noted that, because dogs are considered private property, permission has to be granted for treatment. He noted that it is the same for humans, explaining that EMS have to obtain permission for treatment. He noted that 13 other states that have enacted similar legislation "wrestled with the same issues." He further stated that DOH licenses all EMS clinicians and further defined the scope of practice. He explained that the EMS medical director further determines what EMTs are allowed to do within their scope of practice. He provided a personal anecdote to illustrate his answer, noting that he was an EMT 3. He stated that there are clear definitions between the scope of practice given by the state versus what is allowed by the EMS medical director.

CO-CHAIR HALL maintained her objection.

[4:11:54 PM](#)

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Saddler and Nelson voted in favor of the motion to adopt Amendment [1] to CSHB

70(HSS). Representatives Burke, Carrick, Coulombe, Hall, and Fields voted against it. Therefore, Amendment [1] failed to be adopted by a vote of 2-5.

[4:12:30 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER moved to adopt Amendment [2] to CSHB 70(HSS), labeled 34-LS0245\I.7, Gunther, 4/7/25, which read as follows:

Page 1, line 7, through page 2, line 1:

Delete all material and insert:

"(a) A person may not practice veterinary medicine, surgery, or dentistry unless the person is licensed as a veterinarian under this chapter or has a temporary permit issued under AS 08.98.186, except that a person may perform [FUNCTIONS AUTHORIZED BY]

(1) **functions authorized by** regulation of the board if the person is licensed as a veterinary technician; [OR]

(2) **functions authorized by** a permit issued under AS 08.02.050 if the person is employed by an agency that has a permit issued under AS 08.02.050; **or**

(3) **emergency medical services on an operational canine under AS 18.08.093 if the person is certified as an emergency medical technician or licensed as a mobile intensive care paramedic.**"

Page 6, lines 16 - 28:

Delete all material.

Renumber the following bill sections accordingly.

CO-CHAIR HALL objected for the purpose of discussion.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER spoke to Amendment [2], explaining that it would make changes to Section 1 and Section 8 of the proposed legislation as he had previously described in Amendment [1].

[4:13:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SHRAGE stated that he was supportive of the amendment.

CO-CHAIR HALL removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment [2] to CSHB 70(HSS) was adopted.

4:13:53 PM

CO-CHAIR HALL moved to report CSHB 70(HSS), as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 70(L&C) was reported out of the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

4:14:16 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 4:14 p.m.