

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE

April 16, 2025

4:32 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

HOUSE BILL NO. 96

"An Act establishing the Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board; relating to payment for personal care services; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 193

"An Act establishing a paid parental leave program; relating to unemployment benefits; relating to the collection of child support obligations; and relating to the duties of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 144

"An Act relating to prior authorization requests for medical care covered by a health care insurer; relating to a prior authorization application programming interface; relating to step therapy; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

HOUSE BILL NO. 161

"An Act relating to minimum paid sick leave requirements; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 80 (FIN)

"An Act extending the termination date of the Big Game Commercial Services Board; extending the termination date of the Board of Massage Therapists; extending the termination date of the Alaska Commission on Aging; extending the termination date of the Marijuana Control Board; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 80 (FIN) OUT OF COMMITTEE

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S):

State Nursing Boarding

Cheryl Payne - Anchorage
Marianne Murray - Chugiak

- CONFIRMATION(S) [ADVANCED]

Board of Massage Therapists

Michelle Steiner - Kodiak

- REMOVED FROM AGENDA

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 96

SHORT TITLE: HOME CARE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ADV BOARD

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) PRAX

02/12/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/12/25	(H)	HSS, L&C
03/25/25	(H)	HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
03/25/25	(H)	Heard & Held
03/25/25	(H)	MINUTE (HSS)
04/08/25	(H)	HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
04/08/25	(H)	Moved CSHB 96 (HSS) Out of Committee
04/08/25	(H)	MINUTE (HSS)
04/09/25	(H)	HSS RPT CS (HSS) 6DP
04/09/25	(H)	DP: PRAX, FIELDS, SCHWANKE, RUFFRIDGE, MEARS, MINA
04/09/25	(H)	FIN REFERRAL ADDED AFTER L&C
04/14/25	(H)	L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

04/14/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/16/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 193

SHORT TITLE: UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS; PAID PARENT LEAVE
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) HALL

04/15/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/15/25 (H) L&C, FIN
04/16/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 144

SHORT TITLE: INSURANCE; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RUFFRIDGE

03/21/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/21/25 (H) HSS, L&C
04/03/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
04/03/25 (H) Heard & Held
04/03/25 (H) MINUTE(HSS)
04/08/25 (H) HSS AT 3:15 PM DAVIS 106
04/08/25 (H) Moved CSHB 144(HSS) Out of Committee
04/08/25 (H) MINUTE(HSS)
04/09/25 (H) HSS RPT CS(HSS) 5DP 2NR
04/09/25 (H) DP: PRAX, FIELDS, RUFFRIDGE, MEARS,
SCHWANKE
04/09/25 (H) NR: GRAY, MINA
04/14/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/14/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/16/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: HB 161

SHORT TITLE: PAID SICK LEAVE EXEMPTION
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RUFFRIDGE

03/28/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/28/25 (H) L&C, FIN
04/14/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124
04/14/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
04/16/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

BILL: SB 80

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND BOARDS
SPONSOR(s): LABOR & COMMERCE

01/31/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/31/25 (S) L&C

02/07/25 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/07/25 (S) Heard & Held
02/07/25 (S) MINUTE(L&C)
02/12/25 (S) L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/12/25 (S) Moved SB 80 Out of Committee
02/12/25 (S) MINUTE(L&C)
02/14/25 (S) L&C RPT 2DP 2NR
02/14/25 (S) DP: BJORKMAN, GRAY-JACKSON
02/14/25 (S) NR: MERRICK, YUNDT
02/14/25 (S) FIN REFERRAL ADDED
03/06/25 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
03/06/25 (S) Heard & Held
03/06/25 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
03/10/25 (S) FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
03/10/25 (S) Moved CSSB 80(FIN) Out of Committee
03/10/25 (S) MINUTE(FIN)
03/12/25 (S) FIN RPT CS 5DP NEW TITLE
03/12/25 (S) DP: HOFFMAN, KAUFMAN, CRONK, MERRICK,
KIEHL
03/24/25 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
03/24/25 (S) VERSION: CSSB 80(FIN)
03/26/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/26/25 (H) L&C, FIN
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) <Bill Hearing Canceled>
04/16/25 (H) L&C AT 3:15 PM BARNES 124

WITNESS REGISTER

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE PRAX
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented CSHB 96(HSS).

RILEY NYE, Staff
Representative Mike Prax
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Prax, prime sponsor, presented CSHB 96(HSS).

JUDY JESSEN, Senior Political & Advocacy Organizer
The Caregivers' Union SEIU 775
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony in support of CSHB 96(HSS).

TONY NEWMAN, Deputy Director
Division of Senior & Disabilities Services
Department of Health
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on CSHB 96(HSS).

REPRESENTATIVE CAROLYN HALL
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented HB 193.

TRISTAN WALSH, Staff
Representative Carolyn Hall
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented HB 193 on behalf of Representative Hall, prime sponsor.

ALLISON RADFORD, Legislative Counsel
Legislative Legal
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the hearing on HB 193.

REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN RUFFRIDGE
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented CSHB 144(HSS); as prime sponsor, presented HB 161.

BUD SEXTON, Staff
Representative Justin Ruffridge
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of Representative Ruffridge, prime sponsor, presented CSHB 144(HSS); presented HB 161 on behalf of Representative Ruffridge, joint sponsor.

JARED KOSIN, President & CEO
Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association

POSITION STATEMENT: Anchorage, Alaska Gave invited testimony on CSHB 144(HSS).

GARY STRANNIGAN, Vice President
Congressional & Legislative Affairs
Premera Blue Cross
Everett, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony on CSHB 144(HSS).

KATI CAPOZZI, President & CEO
Alaska Chamber
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony on HB 161.

JOHN WEDDLETON, Business Owner
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony on HB 161.

REGINA DAVIS, Vice President
Davis Block & Concrete
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave invited testimony on HB 161.

SAVAYA BIEBER, Staff
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave summary of SB 80 on behalf of Senator Bjorkman, chair of the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee, prime sponsor of SB 80.

CHERYL PAYNE
Appointee, Board of Nursing
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave testimony as a governor appointee to the Board of Nursing.

MARIANNE MURRAY
Appointee, Board of Nursing
Chugiak, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Gave testimony as a governor appointee to the Board of Nursing.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[4:33:05 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR ZACK FIELDS called the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. Representatives Coulombe, Burke, Co-Chair Hall, and Co-Chair

Fields were present at the call to order. Representatives Nelson, Carrick, and Saddler arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 96-HOME CARE EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS ADV BOARD

[4:33:17 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 96, "An Act establishing the Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board; relating to payment for personal care services; and providing for an effective date." [Before the committee was CSHB 96(HSS).]

[4:33:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MIKE PRAX, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented CSHB 96(HSS). He gave a prepared sponsor statement [included in the committee file] for CSHB 96(HSS), which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Seniors are the fastest growing demographic in the state of Alaska and are living longer lives. The state's 85+ population is expected to increase by 500% between 2022 and 2050, of which, 1/3 will experience Alzheimer's and Related Dementia. The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development predicts home care, a part of Alaska's continuum of care services for seniors and people with disabilities, to be one of the fastest growing and most in demand occupations in the state.

Alaska faces an acute shortage of direct care workers, particularly outside of population centers. The potential provider workforce demographic, those age 18 to 64, is in decline. Furthermore, low pay and lack of benefits force many caregivers out of the profession and make recruitment and retention increasingly more difficult for agencies providing in-home care services.

We need to create strong and long-lasting home care infrastructure in Alaska which will expand access to quality, affordable home and community-based care for seniors and people with disabilities, keep people in their homes and out of costly facilities, and bolster the creation of jobs. We also need to ensure that

Medicaid funding for personal care services is wisely spent, with an adequate portion of the rate going to pay and benefits for direct care workers, in order to help address the workforce shortage. HB 96 accomplishes both of these objects by:

- Establishing a Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board that will investigate, advise, and develop recommendations on Medicaid rates and other policies to improve the wages, working conditions, and recruitment and retention of direct care workers.

- Requiring that agencies providing personal care services spend at least 70 percent of the total annual funding they receive from the department for personal care services on the pay and benefits of Personal Care Assistants providing such services.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX provided a personal anecdote about his family's experience with home care providers with his aunt and uncle.

[4:37:29 PM](#)

RILEY NYE, Staff, Representative Mike Prax, Alaska State Legislature, presented the sectional analysis [included in the committee file] on behalf of Representative Prax, prime sponsor of CSHB 96(HSS), which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Section 1 amends AS 44.29 by adding new sections to it and various aspects of the Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board. Thus, Sec. 44.29.900. **Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board.** This section is added to establish the advisory board on Home Care Employment Standards in Alaska.

Sec. 44.29.905. **Composition of the board.** This section elaborates on the composition of the board which will consist of a chair, 6 voting, and 4 non-voting members. The section clarifies how many members should be sought from each represented group or institution. The members will be appointed by the Commissioner of Health after solicitation of applications. Thus,

- Commissioner of Health or commissioner's designee (non-voting unless in the event of a tie)

- Commissioner of Labor and workforce development (or the commissioner's designee) (non-voting)
- Two members representing covered providers, (with variance in terms of size, services provided and geographical location) (voting)
- Two members who represent direct care workers (voting)
- One member who is an enrollee or representative of enrollees receiving covered services (voting)
- One member who represents the office of rate receive (voting)
- A representative of the Alaska Commission on Aging or another organization that represents seniors in the state (non-voting)
- A representative of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education another organization that represents people with disabilities in the state (non-voting)

*Sec. 44.29.910. **Term of office, vacancies, removal.*** This section explains how the members of the board appointed in AS 44.29.905(3) will serve and establishes how long they shall serve, options for reappointment and how vacancies will be filled.

*Sec. 44.29.915. **Meetings.*** The section establishes the duty of the chair to call for meetings of the board with regularity and as needed. It also establishes that the board should meet at least three times each year and hold additional meetings as often as necessary to accomplish its duties. At every meeting, the Board will provide space for public testimony.

*Sec. 44.29.920. **Quorum.*** The section clarifies that a majority of the members of the Board constitute a quorum in a meeting of the board for it to transact its official business and to approve any recommendations of the Board.

*Sec. 44.29.925. **Compensation.*** This section refers to established rules under AS 39.20.180 to guide compensation of members of the board through per diem and expenses reimbursement. Other than that, members of the Board will not receive compensation.

*Sec. 44.29.930. **Powers and duties.*** This section establishes the duties and powers of the board

which include advising and consulting the department on medical assistance program payment rates for covered services and payment rate adequacy for covered services, as well as investigating employment issues and concerns including wages, working conditions and workforce development and making recommendations. This section also describes state compliance with information requests and testimony, and ensures the board will have access to data needed to fulfill its responsibilities.

Sec. 44.29.935 **Biennial report.** The section requires the board to submit a written report biennially to the Commissioner. It also requires the department to take the recommendations of the board into consideration when setting rates for covered services. If the department sets a rate that differs significantly from the recommendation of the board, the commissioner shall provide written notification to the board and chair of each legislative committee having jurisdiction over Health and Social Services.

Sec. 44.29.940. **Publication of reports.** This section mandates the publication of the reports on July 1 each year and the reports must be publicly accessible. The section also elaborates on what shall be included in the published reports.

Sec. 44.29.945. **Definitions.** This section specifies the definitions of all the terms used in the sections above i.e. AS 44.29.900 - 44.29.945 including those that relate to Section 1915(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1396n(c))

Section 2 amends AS 47.07.045 by adding new subsections that require an agency providing personal care services to pay as compensation and benefits to employees providing personal care services at least 70 percent of total annual funding received by the agency for the purposes of providing personal care services, increasing to 80 percent by July 1, 2030, unless the agency receives a hardship exemption from the department. This section also requires the department to establish procedures and objective criteria for granting a hardship exemption, and sets alternative minimum requirements for an agency that qualifies for such an exemption.

Section 3 amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska by adding a new section establishing when the board should be appointed, that the first meeting should be held on or before October 1, 2025, and the issues to be investigated for the preliminary report which will be presented at the first meeting.

Section 4 amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska by adding a new section establishing the date for preliminary internet website publication of the publication to be no later than July 1, 2026.

Section 5 amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska by adding a new section instructing the Department of Health to amend the state plan under AS 47.07.045 and submit for approval to the United States Department of Health and Human Services, to the extent necessary.

Section 6 amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska by adding a new section that makes this Act conditional on the United States Department of Health and Human Services approving amendments submitted in accordance with section 5, or determines that approval is not necessary.

Section 7 sets the day after the date on which the United States Department of Health and Human Services approves amendments to the state plan or determines that approval is not necessary under section 6 of this act, as the date section 2 of this Act takes effect.

Section 8 sets July 1, 2025 as the date the Act takes effect, except as provided in section 7.

[4:44:45 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS suggested that increased support for home care would decrease the cost to Alaska with regards to nursing home care.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX responded that home care services are typically cheaper than care in nursing facilities or hospitals.

[4:46:00 PM](#)

JUDY JESSEN, Senior Political & Advocacy Organizer, The Caregivers' Union SEIU 775, began her invited testimony by

stating that SEIU 775 represents more than 55,000 direct care workers in Alaska, Montana, and Washington. She reported that Alaska is experiencing a demographic shift, noting that Alaska has had the fastest-growing senior population per capita in the country in the past decade. She further noted that this trend is expected to continue into the next decade and will create increased demand for care. She reported that older residents in Alaska and residents with disabilities are living longer lives, noting that needs become more complex with age. She also noted that Alzheimer's and elders dementia is "on the rise." She cited the Department of Labor & Workforce Development (DOLWD), predicting that "in-home care will be one of the fastest growing and in-demand occupations in the state." She further reported that the number of potential caregivers is in decline and stressed that the shortage was "even more stark" in rural and remote Alaska. She stated that the highest concentration of seniors lives in Southeast Alaska and the Peninsula.

MS. JESSEN emphasized that institutional care and congregate care settings could cost the state hundreds of thousands of dollars per person per year. She cited a Department of Health (DOH) study, reporting that care provided in-house can cost 59 percent less than services received through intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities. She additionally reported that in-home care services can cost between 45- to 90-percent less than nursing home care for seniors and people with disabilities. She cautioned that the problem would only become more costly for Alaska without immediate change to support a strong, well-trained professional direct care workforce in Alaska.

MS. JESSEN asserted that CSHB 96(HSS) would ensure that the state is maximizing the state's Medicaid personal care rate by creating a labor rate for personal care services - which, she explained, was a percent of the Medicaid rate received by agencies for personal care assistant (PCA) services which is required to go into direct pay and benefits for direct care workers. She stated that Alaska's personal care services were provided through a non-traditional consumer-directed agency with choice model, meaning that less money was needed for overhead, as the agency held fewer responsibilities. She stated that the consumer, not the agency, was responsible for recruitment, hiring, training, et cetera. Additionally, she asserted that CSHB 96(HSS) would create transparency with regards to the distribution of the Medicaid personal care rate. She stated that the reporting requirements under CSHB 96(HSS) would help assess and change the efficacy of current personal care rates.

She stated that the workforce standards advisory board, modelled after Delaware and created under CSHB 96(HSS) would help identify and plan long-term workforce needs and additionally assess whether the [personal care] rates are adequately meeting those needs. She stated that the proposed board, made up of various stakeholders, would identify priorities, recommend solutions, and assess resource needs for the caregiving industry. She said that demographic changes are underway, and caregiver shortages are deeply felt in Alaska. She concluded by asserting that CSHB 96(HSS) would be far less costly for Alaska in the long-term and provide Alaska residents with much-needed care. She thanked the committee.

[4:53:10 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE asked whether there was a set hourly rate for PCAs.

MS. JESSEN responded that "there are different service categories for which there are different rates." She explained that the hourly rate is set by DOH. She noted that the personal care services rate is one of the lower rates in Alaska. She further explained that CSHB 96(HSS) would allocate 70 percent of the personal care services rate, not 70 percent of the money received by agencies overall.

[4:54:48 PM](#)

TONY NEWMAN, Deputy Director, Division of Senior & Disabilities Services, Department of Health (DOH), answered questions during the hearing on CSHB 96(HSS). He clarified that DOH establishes rates for personal care and pays \$8.53 per 15-minute increment for PCAs.

[4:55:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER stated that the proposed advisory board in CSHB 96(HSS) appears to have a lot of authority and power, citing the powers and duties listed in the proposed legislation. He asked whether DOH was functioning adequately.

REPRESENTATIVE PRAX deferred to Mr. Newman.

MR. NEWMAN responded that the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) created a rule in 2024 called the Medicaid Ensuring Access Rule ("Access rule"), which requires the establishment of an "interested parties advisory group." He

noted that the Access rule requires by law a variety of things to be implemented by the state over the next 8 to 10 years. He explained that the advisory board established under CSHB 96(HSS) would serve as the "interested parties advisory group" whose function was to assess rates of payment for personal care and other services. He said that Alaska was federally required by 2028 or 2030 to set an adequacy rule of 80 percent, meaning that 80 percent of Medicaid rate paid for personal care services would need to be given to the direct care worker.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS stated that in 2020 or 2021, the legislature heard that there was a crisis in workforce availability, especially in homecare. He noted that a shift to nursing home care would be significantly more expensive for Alaska. He reported that Alaska attempted to ensure that there was adequate workforce availability for homecare and that it became unclear whether the workforce was being adequately paid. He asserted that CSHB 96(HSS) was necessary to collect data on pay.

REPRESENTATIVE SADDLER asked whether the powers and tools of the proposed advisory board were necessary to fulfill the requests of CMS. He referred to the proposed board as "nuclear-powered."

[4:59:21 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE thanked Representative Prax for CSHB 96(HSS), noting that she had heard through public testimony in prior years that caregivers were overworked and underpaid, and that there was little oversight.

CO-CHAIR FIELDS offered his agreement with Representative Coulombe, opining that CSHB 96(HSS) was very important in both providing adequate care and containing long-term Medicaid spending.

[CSHB 96(HSS) was held over.]

HB 193-UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS; PAID PARENT LEAVE

[5:00:55 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 193, "An Act establishing a paid parental leave program; relating to unemployment benefits; relating to the collection of child support obligations; and relating to the duties of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development."

5:01:00 PM

The committee took an at-ease from 5:01 p.m. to 5:02 p.m.

5:02:11 PM

REPRESENTATIVE CAROLYN HALL, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, gave the prepared sponsor statement for HB 193 [included in the committee file], which read as follows, [original punctuation provided]:

House Bill 193 would establish the Alaska Parental Leave Program. As the State seeks to recruit, attract and retain young families, this policy would serve a crucial purpose: giving parents the time to bond with their child. By helping families take important time off for childbirth, adoption, or fostering, the State can ensure that parents and newborns can attend follow up doctors appointments; lower the risk for re-hospitalization; have economic security that reduces stress on parents & children; further cement the bond between parents and an adopted child or foster youth; and help mothers re-enter the workforce after any one of these scenarios.

By building off of existing infrastructure in the State Department of Labor & Workforce Development, an employee's current contributions can go towards an invaluable program that returns many benefits back to our society.

5:03:48 PM

TRISTAN WALSH, Staff, Representative Carolyn Hall, Alaska State Legislature, gave a presentation on behalf of Representative Hall, prime sponsor of HB 193, via PowerPoint, titled "HB 193: Paid Parental Leave." He began on slide 2 of the PowerPoint [included in the committee file], and gave a summary of the bullet points, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Currently, the State of Alaska only has the Alaska Family and Medical Leave Act, which provides for unpaid absences for state employees and employers over a certain size.

- Paid parental leave is known to help improve the health and life outcomes of infants and parents of newborns and allows for fostering and adoption.
- 2019 National Defense Authorization Act extended paid parental leave to federal employees.
- Alaska is in competition with many states for young and talented workers. **Paid parental leave provides a well known and valuable benefit at low cost and high benefit.**
- **All other states are pursuing these policies. Alaska cannot afford to be left behind.**
- Paid parental leave allows women to reenter the workforce without being penalized.

MR. WALSH moved to slide 3, citing that in the absence of paid parental leave, "23 percent of mothers return to work within 10 days of giving birth ... due to the financial burden on the household." He further reported that is against most doctors orders.

MR. WALSH moved to slide 4, drawing the committee members' attention to a graph representative of the Heckman [Curve], a statistical model used to illustrate the importance of early investment in the first three years of a child's life. He reported that individuals have better socioemotional outcomes, and less likely to be dependent on drugs. He asserted that bonding with parents is a very transformative first step in early investment.

MR. WALSH gave an overview of how paid parental leave supports parents, shown on slide 5, which read [original punctuation provided]:

- Women who take paid leave have a **51% reduction in the odds of being rehospitalized** within 21 months of giving birth.
- Has positive associations with **reductions in stress** and increase in exercise, both critical for new mothers.
- Mothers with paid leave are **less likely to report postpartum depression**, with some studies showing a 2% reduction in poor mental health with each week of paid leave.
- Can **reduce maternal health disparities** for at risk populations, such as African American and American Indian/Alaska Native mothers.

- Fathers are more likely to report **greater engagement in children's lives**, boosting cognitive and developmental benefits for children.
- **Fathers who take paid leave are more likely to live longer.**

[5:06:38 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS requested statistics on estimated savings were Alaska to achieve a 51 percent reduction of hospitalizations based on percentage of women on Medicaid for birthing care.

[5:07:08 PM](#)

MR. WALSH continued with the presentation, moving on to slide 6, and gave an overview on how paid parental leave would impact Alaska, which read as follows [original punctuation provided, with some formatting changes]:

- Most working people in the United States do not have paid leave through their jobs, including about 75 percent of Alaskans, which is **~270,000 workers in our state.**
- Even unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act is **inaccessible for 68 percent of Alaskans.**
- **If women in Alaska participated in the labor force at the same rate as women in countries with paid leave, there would be an estimated 8,000 additional workers in the state and \$313,870,000 more wages earned statewide.**
- Women make up 47% of our total workforce; 28% of business owners are women.
- Paid leave can reduce working women's reliance on public assistance and SNAP by as much as 40% compared to women who do not have this benefit.

MR. WALSH gave an overview on how paid parental leave supports businesses, shown on slide 7, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- In states that implemented paid leave such as NY, businesses reported significantly easier time managing long absences.
- Two thirds of businesses report that they managed the absence by temporarily re-assigning work.

- Studies in California found small businesses saw a **14% decrease in per worker labor costs** when workers took paid family leave; the smallest businesses had the greatest percentage based savings.
- In CA, 92% of businesses reported that paid family leave had a positive impact on employee turnover.
- Workers who have access to paid leave are **more likely to return to work** than drop out of the labor pool.

[5:09:55 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS asked about the gender wage gap in Alaska. He remarked that the biggest driver of the gender wage gap in Alaska was mothers who temporarily left the workforce after giving birth and thus experienced an interruption in their pay and career.

[5:10:37 PM](#)

MR. WALSH continued with an overview on how paid parental leave helps businesses, shown on slide 8, which read [original punctuation provided]:

- Turnover at small businesses has been shown to cost approximately 23.5% of that worker's annual wage, and can go as high as 150% as a vacancy goes on. Paid leave can dramatically increase retention of employees.
- Studies have found that firms implementing these policies have greater revenue and profit per full time equivalent employee; technology companies saw a \$2.64 return for every \$1.00 invested. Manufacturers saw a \$2.57 return for every \$1.00.
- A recent study found that workers with paid leave are 22% more likely to recommend their job to a friend who does not have that benefit.
- Further polling found that Generation Z workers identified paid family leave as the number one policy they consider when relocating for work.

MR. WALSH moved to slide 9 and spoke to paid parental leave policies in other states. He reported that, in 2024, 199 bills [regarding paid parental leave] were filed in 36 states. He further reported that three states - Kentucky, Illinois, and South Carolina - passed legislation for paid parental leave. He noted that seventeen states were

considering expansions to existing programs and drew committee members' attention to the map on slide 9, which was representative of the status of paid parental leave in each state as of January 15, 2025.

MR. WALSH gave an overview of the unemployment insurance model policy that HB 193 was based upon, shown on slide 10, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Unemployment insurance: wage replacement for when you are unemployed and looking for work. Established in 1935 by President Roosevelt in the Social Security Act.
- Another type of wage replacement, such as short term disability is widely available: however, limited application available for family purposes beyond pregnancy complications.
- Public and private employers are familiar with unemployment insurance, payroll processes.
- State of Alaska requires employers to collect this on behalf of employees.
- Employee contribution is unique amongst many states, and can be diverted towards paid parental leave.
- Establishes a separate fund where employee's contribution is held for the collection of a claim.
- HB 193 also adjusts benefits so that an employee's wage replacement is always at least 50% of their earnings in the base period.

MR. WALSH moved to slide 11, drawing committee members' attention to a flowchart, titled "UI Parental Leave Model Flowchart," and explained that the employee contribution collected for unemployment insurance would be bifurcated, sending 0.35 percent to the State Training and Employment Program/Alaska Technical Vocational Education Program (STEP/TVEP) and sending 0.15 percent to the parental leave program envisioned by HB 193. He further explained that 0.15 percent currently goes toward the unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund. He cited Legislative Legal and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DOLWD) in explaining that the 0.15 percent of employee contribution could be diverted into a paid leave program for parents. He noted that the employer tax rate would be held harmless under the proposed legislation.

[5:16:20 PM](#)

MR. WALSH, in response to a question from Co-Chair Fields, noting that they will be presenting more modelling to the committee in the future regarding the funding mechanism under HB 193 and the solvency of the unemployment insurance (UI) trust fund.

[5:17:00 PM](#)

MR. WALSH moved to slide 12, drawing committee members' attention to a flowchart, titled "Example: hypothetical employee with the maximum taxable wage of \$51,700," and noted that the UI Tax Rate would be \$775.50, with the employee portion representing \$258.50. He further noted that of the employee portion, \$180.95 would go towards the STEP/TVEP programs and the remainder, would go towards the paid family medical leave program envisioned under HB 193. Additionally, he noted that the employer portion of \$517 would go into the UI Trust Fund.

MR. WALSH moved to slide 13 and gave an overview of the different policy levers that the legislators could pull when considering HB 193, which read [original punctuation provided]:

HB 193

In determining the program, the four main factors to consider are:

- Benefit duration
- Benefit amount (% wage replacement)
- Contribution rate
- Eligible uses

[5:18:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE stated that she received a legal memo stating that employer and employee contributions are held in the same regard by the federal government.

MR. WALSH deferred to Legislative Legal Services.

[5:20:40 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 5:20 p.m. to 5:21 p.m.

[5:21:42 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE asked whether there would be any concern of legality with the employer and employee contributions, noting

that she received a legal memo stating that the contributions are restricted similarly.

ALLISON RADFORD, Legislative Counsel, Legislative Legal Services, Legislative Affairs Agency, replied that once the state collects funds for the purpose of unemployment insurance, federal law dictates that it must be used accordingly. She explained that, under HB 193, an additional special contribution would be added and collected in the same manner as unemployment insurance contributions from the employee and deposited into a separate fund, so it is not collected for the purpose of unemployment insurance. She further explained that the amount that is collected from the employee is "credited back to the employee against their unemployment insurance burdens."

[HB 193 was held over.]

HB 144-INSURANCE; PRIOR AUTHORIZATIONS

[5:23:46 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 144, "An Act relating to prior authorization requests for medical care covered by a health care insurer; relating to a prior authorization application programming interface; relating to step therapy; and providing for an effective date." [Before the committee was CSHB 144(HSS).]

[5:23:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN RUFFRIDGE, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented CSHB 144(HSS). He explained that prior authorization (PA) was a requirement for health services and medications to be approved by the payer before a patient receives said services or medications. He noted that prior authorization has been a barrier to receiving healthcare due to both technology and old equipment. He stated that CSHB 144(HSS) was a collaborative effort to address prior authorizations in Alaska, adapt timelines for access to care, particularly in urgent or emergency situations, update access for chronic care, and update requirements for response time. He concluded that CSHB 144(HSS) was designed to be "good for patients," and improve access to healthcare.

[5:26:10 PM](#)

BUD SEXTON, Staff, Representative Justin Ruffridge, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of Representative Ruffridge, prime sponsor of CSHB 144(HSS), began on slide 2 of the PowerPoint [included in the committee file], and outlined problems that the proposed legislation was meant to address. Slide 2 read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Need for Prior Authorization (PA) before obtaining services.
- Time
- Individuals with Chronic Conditions.
- Crafting a solution that takes into account the needs and protocols for all parties.

MR. SEXTON moved to slide 3, giving an overview of the collaborative efforts put into crafting CSHB 144(HSS) and outlined the goals of the proposed legislation, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Over the past year, numerous meetings between stakeholders.
- Easy to understand process.
- Establish timelines
- Enforcement

MR. SEXTON clarified that CSHB 144(HSS) would establish mechanisms of enforcement for the Division of Insurance.

MR. SEXTON gave an overview of the timelines expected under CSHB 144(HSS), shown on slide 4, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Easy to understand by patients and healthcare providers.
- Process must be reasonable and efficient.
- Determination with 72 hours for standard request.
- 24 hours for an expedited request.
- Prior Authorization request is approved if timeline is not met under the updated process.

MR. SEXTON gave a summary of the proposed process for prior authorizations with incomplete information, shown on slide 5, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- If more information is needed to make a determination,

the insurer shall send a request within one calendar day for an expedited request and three calendar days for a standard request.

- Information due to the insurer between five to 14 days.

MR. SEXTON moved to slide 6 of the PowerPoint, and gave a summary of improvements to the prior authorization process, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- PA standards listed on the health care insurer's website or portal (both locations if available).
- PA criteria based on peer-reviewed, evidenced-based clinical review criteria.
- Consistently applied by all sources including Utilization Review Organizations.

MR. SEXTON moved to slide 7 and asserted that CSHB 144(HSS) was intended to be favorable to the patients. He gave the bullet points of slide 7, which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- Patients benefit...if the standards by the insurer and the utilization review organization are different.
- For each service, the insurer must list:
- If a prior authorization process is necessary.
- Date the requirement became effective

MR. SEXTON moved to slide 8 and gave an overview of changes to care regarding chronic conditions, which read [original punctuation provided]:

- PA is valid for not less than 12 months.
- Automatic renewal if condition remains unchanged.
- Stage 4 metastatic cancer/Step therapy.

MR. SEXTON moved to slide 9 and gave an overview of accountability and compliance under CSHB 144(HSS), which read [original punctuation provided]:

- Dept of Insurance Director shall monitor compliance.
- Examination of health care insurers at least every two years:
- PA response times and adherence to timeframes.

- Accuracy and completeness of PA requirements.
- Consistency of PA practices by Utilization Review Organizations and Third-Party Administrators.

MR. SEXTON moved to slide 10 and gave an overview of enforcement mechanisms under CSHB 144(HSS), which read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

- The director may impose penalties
- May impose a penalty for each instance of noncompliance
- Persistent or severe violations may warrant suspension or revocation of health insurer's certificate of authority

[5:30:50 PM](#)

JARED KOSIN, President & CEO, gave invited testimony on CSHB 144(HSS). He stated that AHHA strongly supported CSHB 144(HSS). He asserted that, while prior authorization is a useful process for reviewing appropriateness of medical care, it was a deeply flawed process that has, in past, led to critical delays in patient care. He stated that CSHB 144(HSS) was a collaboration among providers, insurers, regulators to improve the PA process for patients. He highlighted improvements for patients under CSHB 144(HSS), including: long-term approval for chronic conditions, decreasing turnaround times from five days to 72 hours, no restrictions on key therapies for stage IV cancers, and requiring an exception process to step therapy protocol. He asserted that the proposed legislation creates transparency around "the processes that are used, how they're used, when they're effective, who [is] doing these reviews, ... how accountability is going to be applied, and ... how bill is being enforced." He concluded by asserting that CSHB 144(HSS) was a comprehensive bill with strong support from both insurers and hospitals in Alaska and invited questions from the committee.

[5:33:25 PM](#)

GARY STRANNIGAN, Vice President, Congressional & Legislative Affairs, Premera Blue Cross, gave invited testimony on CSHB 144(HSS). He stated that Premera Blue Cross has been providing services to residents in Alaska before statehood. He stated that Premera Blue Cross supported efforts to promote the affordability of their products in continued service of their customers. He asserted that affordability has become a gateway in restricting access to care. He stated that prior

authorization was important to affordability in helping ensure that members are getting the "right care at the right time in the right setting at the right price." He asserted that CSHB 144(HSS) was representative of a reasonable compromise by all parties and encouraged the passage of CSHB 144(HSS).

[CSHB 144(HSS) was held over.]

HB 161-PAID SICK LEAVE EXEMPTION

[5:35:13 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 161, "An Act relating to minimum paid sick leave requirements; and providing for an effective date."

[5:35:35 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE JUSTIN RUFFRIDGE, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented HB 161. He stated that, upon the passage of Ballot Measure 1, there were concerns across the small business community in Alaska about the effect on small businesses. He asserted that the proposed legislation would not change key provisions of or repeal Ballot Measure 1, "most notably the increase to minimum wage," which he stated was broadly supported across Alaska. He explained that HB 161 would alter some sections regarding change to paid sick leave requirements for businesses. He stated that the adjustments made by HB 161 would alleviate some of the burden on small businesses under Ballot Measure 1.

[5:37:34 PM](#)

BUD SEXTON, Staff, Representative Justin Ruffridge, Alaska State Legislature, presented HB 161 on behalf of Representative Ruffridge, joint sponsor of HB 161. He began on the second slide of the PowerPoint [included in the committee file] and drew committee members' attention to a graph representative of comparisons between Ballot Measure 1 and HB 161 with regards to the number of employees, leave cash out option, employer notification, and seasonal workers. The second slide read as follows [original punctuation provided]:

[Ballot Measure 1] Leave accrual applies to small businesses with 15 or more employees, not more than 56 hours a year

[HB 161] Leave accrual applies to businesses with 50 or more employees

[Ballot Measure 1] Leave accrual applies to small businesses with fewer than 15 employees, not more than 40 hours a year.

[HB 161] Applies to businesses with 50 or more employees

Leave cash out

[Ballot Measure 1] No language

[HB 161] An employer may, at the employee's request, allow an employee to exchange accrued sick leave for the cash value of the accrued sick leave.

Notify employer

[Ballot Measure 1] No requirement for good faith effort by employee to notify the employer before the workday begins

[HB 161] Requires the employee to make a good faith effort to provide notice to the employer in advance of the use of paid sick leave and before the start of the workday.

Seasonal workers

[Ballot Measure 1] No language

[HB 161] Exempt seasonal workers from sick leave accrual.

MR. SEXTON moved to the third slide of the presentation and drew committee members' attention to the image which listed entities in support of HB 161. He concluded by reading the third slide as follows [original punctuation provided]:

Enables Alaskan businesses to thrive

Taking care of our local businesses

means taking care of our workforce

Allows employees to cash out their
accrued sick leave

[5:39:50 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK asked how HB 161 compared to the law pre-Ballot Measure 1.

REPRESENTATIVE RUFFRIDGE responded that prior to Ballot Measure 1, there were no requirements regarding paid sick leave. He further noted that everything in Ballot Measure 1 was "essentially new." He explained that HB 161 was constitutional in allowing the amending of Ballot Measure 1, as it would be unconstitutional to repeal it or return to law pre-Ballot Measure 1.

[5:41:19 PM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease at 5:41 p.m.

[5:42:03 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE stated that most of the businesses in her district, while aware of the minimum wage provision, were not aware of the provisions for paid sick leave under Ballot Measure 1. She stressed that, without the amendments under HB 161 to Ballot Measure 1, small businesses would close, increase prices, or lose workers. She noted that she and Representative Ruffridge worked with Legislative Legal to ensure that they were within legal parameters and not undermining the intent of Ballot Measure 1. She opined that HB 161 would help small businesses transition into the paid sick leave requirements of Ballot Measure 1.

[5:44:07 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS facilitated a brief discussion of the remaining agenda items.

[5:45:18 PM](#)

KATI CAPOZZI, President & CEO, Alaska Chamber, began her invited testimony by introducing the Alaska Chamber, noting that it represents businesses of "all sizes and industries across the state." She emphasized that the legislature has broad powers to

amend initiatives and encouraged committee members to "fix the most harmful records" of Ballot Measure 1. She stated that small businesses owners, particularly those in hospitality and tourism, have experienced a lot of hardship, including a global pandemic, workforce shortages, inflation, and newly introduced tariffs. She stated that Ballot Measure 1 introduced a "one-size-fits-all" mandate across Alaska. She stated that since its passage, many voters did not understand the true implications of the ballot measure. She cited the Alaska Chamber's most recent public opinion survey, reporting that 40 percent of Alaska residents did not know that mandated paid sick leave was included in the ballot measure. Additionally, she reported that 58 percent of respondents affirmed that they would support a paid sick leave exemption for employers with fewer than 50 employees. She asserted that exemptions to paid sick leave [under HB 161] were necessary because Ballot Measure 1 had duplicative compliance measures for employers that already provided comprehensive paid sick leave and paid time off. She asserted that Ballot Measure 1 would cause recordkeeping and administrative complications for small- and medium-sized employers and additionally asserted that it would cause operational disruptions due to inflexible accrual and usage standards, particularly with regard to seasonal and hospitality businesses.

MS. CAPOZZI stated that the Alaska Chamber supports HB 161 because it would introduce "critical guardrails and clarifications that would allow businesses to comply with the spirit of paid sick leave while reducing regulatory overreach and economic harm." She stated that HB 161 would reduce compliance burdens, clarify sick leave definitions, exempt seasonal employers whose operations peak at six months or less, and provide flexibility by permitting employees to cash-out unused sick leave. She said that HB 161 would encourage voluntary compliance over mandates. She asserted that HB 161 encourages job protection and growth and protects remote and rural businesses in Alaska. She thanked the committee for their consideration and stated that she was available for questions.

[5:50:26 PM](#)

JOHN WEDDLETON, Business Owner, began his invited testimony by stating that his business was celebrating 41 years. He reported that his business had provided paid time off for the past 20 years. He noted that in his first 10 to 20 years of business, Ballot Measure 1 would have proved difficult for his business. He opined that the cap at 50 employees [under HB 161] was

important, noting that it's likely that most businesses in Alaska have less than 50 employees. He suggested that HB 161 would set a standard that all businesses provide paid time off. He offered appreciation for the option under HB 161 that would allow employees to cash out paid time off. He offered his support for HB 161 and encouraged committee members to support the proposed legislation.

[5:52:50 PM](#)

MS. CAPOZZI, in response to a question from Co-Chair Hall on the history of the Alaska Chamber's position on Ballot Measure 1, responded that her organization had been leading in their efforts to oppose Ballot Measure 1 for over a year.

[5:54:07 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE COULOMBE commented that the Alaska Chamber had been in opposition for a long time, but that the Anchorage Chamber did not declare an official position.

[5:54:44 PM](#)

REGINA DAVIS, Vice President, Davis Block & Concrete, began her invited testimony by stating that her business has supplied concrete for construction projects throughout the state for over 50 years, employing locals. She asserted that HB 161 was a practical solution that balanced "worker protections with the realities of running a small business in Alaska's unique economy." She said that HB 161 would protect small businesses by mitigating the burdensome paid sick leave requirements imposed by Ballot Measure 1. She said that the mandate to provide paid sick leave to every employee, including temporary staff, would strain their finances and administrative resources. She stated that HB 161 would raise the threshold to businesses with 50 or more employees. She further stated that HB 161 would support Alaska's seasonal economy, noting that her business projects increase in the summer and rely on seasonal workers. She asserted that requiring paid sick leave for seasonal workers creates administrative challenges and costs that do not align with the temporary nature of seasonal workers. She asserted that the exemption for seasonal workers under HB 161 would ensure that her business could continue to hire locally during the summer months. Additionally, she asserted that her business would need to raise prices or cut jobs to meet the requirements of Ballot Measure 1. She echoed other speakers in acknowledging the many obstacles small businesses have faced in recent years.

She concluded by urging committee members' support of HB 161 and said that she was available for questions.

[HB 161 was held over.]

SB 80-EXTEND BOARDS

[5:58:44 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the next order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 80(FIN), "An Act extending the termination date of the Big Game Commercial Services Board; extending the termination date of the Board of Massage Therapists; extending the termination date of the Alaska Commission on Aging; extending the termination date of the Marijuana Control Board; and providing for an effective date."

[5:58:57 PM](#)

SAVAYA BIEBER, Staff, Senator Jesse Bjorkamn, Alaska State Legislature, summarized CSSB 80(FIN).

[5:59:56 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR HALL moved to report CSSB 80(FIN) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSSB 80(FIN) was reported out of the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

State Nursing Board

[6:00:20 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR FIELDS announced that the final order of business would be confirmation hearing on the governor's appointees to the Board of Nursing.

[6:00:40 PM](#)

CHERYL PAYNE, Appointee, Board of Nursing, gave testimony as a governor appointee to the Board of Nursing. She stated that she has worked primarily in the airline and tourism industry. She said that her experience caring for her elderly parents sparked her desire to give back to the nursing community. She stated that she was dedicated to adequate resources, support systems,

and training in the nursing field. She further stated that she was dedicated to high standards of nursing practice and patient safety, highlighting quality care as critical to improving health outcomes for all communities. She emphasized the importance of fostering cooperation between nurses, educators, and regulatory bodies. She stated that diverse representation in the public seat was important. She acknowledged the importance of public input during the Board of Nursing's quarterly meetings with regard to nursing practices. She concluded by stating that she hoped to continue to represent the public seat on the Board of Nursing with meaningful contribution. She thanked the committee members for their time.

[6:03:31 PM](#)

MARIANNE MURRAY, Appointee, Board of Nursing, gave testimony as a governor appointee to the Board of Nursing. She stated that she has been a nurse for over 32 years, noting that she has worked in an emergency room, in nursing administration, and in the educational realm. She stated that she has worked as a faculty member at both the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) and Alaska Pacific University (APU). She stated that she served as the Executive Director of the Alaska Board of Nursing during 2019 and 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. She asserted that nurses are the backbone of the healthcare system, noting that they provide "compassionate care, advocating for patients, and upholding the highest standards of practice." She stated that she understood the "unique logistical hurdles," required cultural training, and the critical need for a well-supported and competent nursing workforce in Alaska. She said that her service on the Board of Nursing was not just a professional aspiration, but a deeply felt responsibility. She asserted that her passion for nursing, understanding of healthcare in Alaska, and commitment to effective and ethical governance would allow her to make meaningful contributions to the Board of Nursing. She concluded by thanking the committee members for their consideration.

[The committee did not make a statement on the record regarding the confirmation hearings but after reviewing the qualifications of the governor's appointees, the following names were forwarded to a joint session for consideration: Cheryl Payne and Marianne Murray to the Board of Nursing. Signing the report regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects an individual member's approval or disapproval of the appointee, and the nomination is merely forwarded to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.]

6:06:39 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at [6:06] p.m.