

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON TRIBAL AFFAIRS

May 1, 2025
8:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Maxine Dibert, Chair
Representative Ashley Carrick
Representative Robyn Niayuq Burke
Representative Andi Story
Representative Rebecca Schwanke
Representative Jubilee Underwood
Representative Elexie Moore

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

HOUSE BILL NO. 59

"An Act relating to demonstration state-tribal education compacts; relating to demonstration state-tribal education compact schools; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 59(TRB) OUT OF COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL NO. 126

"An Act relating to the reinstatement of Native corporations; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: HB 59

SHORT TITLE: STATE-TRIBAL EDUCATION COMPACTS

SPONSOR(S): RULES BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

01/22/25	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(H)	TRB, EDC
02/11/25	(H)	TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
02/11/25	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
02/13/25	(H)	TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
02/13/25	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
02/18/25	(H)	TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

02/18/25 (H) -- MEETING CANCELED --
03/13/25 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
03/13/25 (H) Heard & Held
03/13/25 (H) MINUTE (TRB)
04/08/25 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
04/08/25 (H) Heard & Held
04/08/25 (H) MINUTE (TRB)
04/24/25 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106
04/24/25 (H) Heard & Held
04/24/25 (H) MINUTE (TRB)
05/01/25 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

BILL: HB 126

SHORT TITLE: REINSTATEMENT OF NATIVE CORPS
SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) FOSTER

03/05/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/05/25 (H) TRB, CRA
05/01/25 (H) TRB AT 8:00 AM DAVIS 106

WITNESS REGISTER

JOEL ISAAK, PhD
Compacting Consultant
Department of Education and Early Development
Soldotna, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of the sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor, gave comments on Amendment 1 to HB 59.

DEENA BISHOP, Commissioner
Department of Education and Early Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of the sponsor, House Rules by request of the governor, gave comments on Amendment 1 to HB 59.

PAUL LABOLLE, Staff
Representative Neal Foster
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: On behalf of the prime sponsor, Representative Foster, presented CSHB 126.

ROBERT SCHMIDT, Director
Division of Banking and Securities
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on CHHB 126.

SYLVAN ROBB, Director
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on CHHB 126.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[8:03:37 AM](#)

CHAIR MAXINE DIBERT called the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs meeting to order at 8:03 a.m. Representatives Schwanke, Story, Carrick, and Dibert were present at the call to order. Representatives Moore, Underwood, and Burke arrived as the meeting was in progress.

HB 59-STATE-TRIBAL EDUCATION COMPACTS

[8:04:32 AM](#)

CHAIR DIBERT announced that the first order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 59, "An Act relating to demonstration state-tribal education compacts; relating to demonstration state-tribal education compact schools; and providing for an effective date."

[8:05:26 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY noted that the next committee of referral for HB 59 would be the House Education Standing Committee, of which she is a member. She commented on discussion plans that this committee has for HB 59.

CHAIR DIBERT expressed agreement that the proposed bill has brought up some good discussion. She expressed appreciation to the tribes and their work on the bill.

[8:07:12 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY observed that she missed the amendment deadline, and she noted her plans to introduce an amendment during the next committee of referral. She explained that the amendment would request that the Department of Education and Early Development compile a list of curricula and lessons recommended by Tribal Compacted Public Schools (TCPS). She

expressed the importance of this concerning school districts and students across the state.

8:10:14 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SCHWANKE moved to adopt Amendment 1 to HB 59, labeled 34-GH1518\A.1 to HB 59, Bergerud, 4/30/25, which read as follows:

Page 1, line 9:
Delete "seven"
Insert "five"

Page 6, line 15:
Delete "2033"
Insert "2031"

Page 6, line 21:
Delete "2032"
Insert "2030"

8:10:21 AM

CHAIR DIBERT objected for the purpose of discussion.

8:10:23 AM

REPRESENTATIVE SCHWANKE explained that there are many moving pieces in tribal compacting, and with the advancement of TCPS, she expressed the understanding that issues would arise. She stated that the proposed amendment would change the reevaluation period for TCPS from seven to five years. She argued that a review after five years would allow discussion and insights on the compacting progress before the five-year contracts end and the renewal process begins. She suggested that this timeline adjustment would better serve the stakeholders.

8:12:10 AM

REPRESENTATIVE STORY questioned whether the amendment had been discussed with the sponsor of the proposed legislation.

REPRESENTATIVE SCHWANKE responded in the negative.

8:13:05 AM

JOEL ISAAK, PhD, Compacting Consultant, Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), stated that the seven-year period was used to give tribes enough time to start and operate the TCPS program. He expressed the understanding that the change in Amendment 1 would still give tribes time to do this. Concerning the timeframe for submitting the report on TCPS back to the legislature, he pointed out that the current version of the proposed legislation would give DEED a flexible timeline; therefore, the amendment would align with the intent of the proposed bill. He expressed the understanding that the tribes would be appreciative of coming back before the legislature "sooner rather than later."

[8:14:37 AM](#)

DEENA BISHOP, Commissioner, Department of Education and Early Development, expressed support for Amendment 1. She expressed the understanding that this could help tribal compacting move forward into the five-year process sooner. She stated that DEED is "eagerly awaiting" approval so the TCPS program could begin.

[8:15:25 AM](#)

CHAIR DIBERT removed her objection. There being no further objection, Amendment 1 was adopted.

[8:16:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY moved to report HB 59, as amended, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 59(TRB) was reported out of the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs.

[8:16:31 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:16 a.m. to 8:20 a.m.

HB 126-REINSTATEMENT OF NATIVE CORPS

[8:20:33 AM](#)

CHAIR DIBERT announced that the final order of business would be HOUSE BILL NO. 126, "An Act relating to the reinstatement of Native corporations; and providing for an effective date."

[8:21:24 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:21 a.m. to 8:22 a.m.

[8:22:08 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for HB 126, Version 34-LS0099/I, Gunther, 3/25/25, ("Version I") as a working document.

CHAIR DIBERT objected for the purpose of discussion.

[8:22:36 AM](#)

PAUL LABOLLE, Staff, Representative Neal Foster, Alaska State Legislature, on behalf of the prime sponsor, Representative Foster, presented HB 126, Version I. He explained that the proposed legislation would allow Native corporations to reincorporate after they have been involuntarily dissolved. He stated that the original version of the proposed legislation would give a corporation a two-year window to reincorporate as the same entity that had been listed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), with the same rights and assets as established under the federal law. He explained that when a corporation in Alaska is involuntarily dissolved, it currently cannot reincorporate as the same entity; rather, the assets must be redistributed to the shareholders and a new corporation would have to be created. He added that the corporation could retain the same name, but it would not be considered the same entity. He stated that the proposed legislation would help maintain consistency with ANCSA. He discussed previous attempts at passing similar legislation.

[8:25:22 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK expressed the understanding that the proposed CS would make the reinstatement permanent. She requested clarification on any other changes made.

MR. LABOLLE replied that a slight technical change would be made in the language on page 1, line 5 through line 7, and line 8 through 11. Per Legislative Legal Services, he expressed the understanding that this had been done so the language would be more specific. He stated that the "main meat" of the proposed legislation has not been changed.

[8:27:05 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE UNDERWOOD questioned the meaning of "involuntary dissolution."

MR. LABOLLE explained that an involuntary dissolution of a corporation in Alaska could happen for many different reasons. He described some Native corporations as "very small organizations" with a board, but no employees; therefore, in some situations, such as people passing away or moving out of town, paperwork filings could be overlooked.

[8:27:44 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MOORE questioned the process of verifying that a dissolved Native corporation had resolved its issue.

MR. LABOLLE referred to the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCED).

[8:28:12 AM](#)

ROBERT SCHMIDT Director, Division of Banking and Securities, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, explained that the Division of Banking and Securities would have a limited role in overseeing this, and he deferred the question to the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing.

[8:29:15 AM](#)

SYLVAN ROBB, Director, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, explained that the verification process to be reincorporated would be the same for all corporations in the state, and any dissolved Native corporation would need to submit the necessary paperwork to the division, along with the required fees. He said that at this point the corporation could be reinstated.

[8:30:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CARRICK asked how many corporations have been involuntarily dissolved.

MR. LABOLLE expressed uncertainty on the current number, but in 2018, there were 19 corporations between 2010 and 2018.

[8:30:51 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MOORE questioned the process of corporations being dissolved on an involuntary basis.

MR. LABOLLE responded that if paperwork for the corporation has not been filed on time, there would be a two-year waiting period. If the error has not been corrected after this, DCED would dissolve the corporation. He reiterated that this is the same for all corporations.

[8:32:01 AM](#)

CHAIR DIBERT removed her objection. There being no further objection, Version I was before the committee.

[8:32:38 AM](#)

The committee took a brief at-ease.

[8:32:55 AM](#)

CHAIR DIBERT opened public testimony on HB 126. After ascertaining that there was no one who wished to testify, she closed public testimony.

[8:33:36 AM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 8:33 a.m. to 8:36 a.m.

[8:36:04 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STORY moved to report CSHB 126, Version 34-LS0099/I, Gunther, 3/25/25, out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. There being no objection, CSHB 126(TRB) was reported out of the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs.

[8:37:01 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs meeting was adjourned at 8:37 a.m.