

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 10, 2025

9:34 a.m.

[9:34:14 AM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Hoffman called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:34 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senator Donny Olson, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Mike Cronk
Senator James Kaufman
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Kelly Merrick

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Liz Harpold, Staff, Senator Donny Olson; David Scott, Staff, Senator Bert Stedman; Emily Ricci, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Health; Dr. Bob Lawrence, Chief Medical Officer, Department of Health; Senator Matt Claman, Sponsor; Susie Frenzel, Director of Victim Services and Forensic Science, Department of Public Safety; David Kanaris, Chief of Forensic Laboratory, Department of Public Safety.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Michelle Baker, Executive Vice President, Southcentral Foundation, Anchorage; David Wilson, Director of Public Policy, Matsu Health Foundation, Wasilla; Jared Kosin, President and Chief Executive Officer, Alaska Hospital and Healthcare Association, Anchorage; Isaac Smoldon, Communications Director, MY House, Wasilla; Ben Mallott, President, Alaska Federation of Natives; Mateo Jaime, Youth Board Member, Facing Foster Care; James Cockrell, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, Anchorage.

SUMMARY

SB 44 MINORS and PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS

SB 44 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 57 APPROP: CAPITAL/SUPPLEMENTAL/FUNDS

SB 57 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 69 SEXUAL ASSAULT EXAMINATION KITS/TRACKING

SB 69 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 76 COMPLEX CARE RESIDENTIAL HOMES

SB 76 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

CSHB 69(RLS) am

EDUCATION: FUNDING, SCHOOLS, DEVICES

SCS CSHB 69(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with one "do pass" recommendations, four "no recommendations", and two "amend" recommendations; and with one zero fiscal note from Department of Education and Early Development, one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Education and Early Development, and one new fiscal impact note from the Senate Finance Committee/Fund Capitalization.

#hb69

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 69(RLS) am

"An Act relating to education; relating to open enrollment in public schools; relating to school and student performance reports; relating to school and district accountability; relating to charter schools; relating to an annual report for correspondence study programs; relating to the base student allocation; relating to reading proficiency incentive grants; relating to wireless telecommunications devices in

public schools; relating to the duty of the legislature to pass a public education appropriation bill; relating to the duty of the governor to prepare a public education appropriation bill; establishing the Task Force on Education Funding; relating to a report on regulation of school districts; and providing for an effective date."

[9:35:20 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hoffman acknowledged the legislators in the gallery.

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to ADOPT the committee substitute for CSHB 69(RLS) am, Work Draft 34-LS0309\U (Marx, 4/7/25). There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

Senator Kaufman OBJECTED for discussion.

[9:36:16 AM](#)

LIZ HARPOLD, STAFF, SENATOR DONNY OLSON, explained the changes in the committee substitute (CS). She relayed that the CS backed everything out of the Senate Education Committee CS except for the \$1000 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and provided for a July 1 effective date.

Senator Kaufman remarked that funding needed to be in line with policy changes. He thought a great deal of work had been done in the Senate Education Committee. He thought the CS took away from all the work done and created a simple funding bill. He asked about the path for success.

Co-Chair Hoffman believed that the issue needed to be addressed and referenced discussion about the level of funding for the BSA. He continued that the CS was being put forward to determine the level of support for funding at the level proposed.

Senator Cronk asked about posing questions to the commissioner of the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED).

Co-Chair Hoffman stated no.

Senator Cronk remarked that he had spent some time considering the work of the Senate Education Committee. He observed that the proposed budget for the Anchorage School District (ASD) was substantially higher than other districts when compared to its deficit. He mentioned abnormally high attrition balances. He did not think ASD was proposing to use the fund balances, which would not carry over for the following year. He thought a half-truth was being perpetuated regarding the funds that were needed.

Co-Chair Hoffman felt that the question could be applied to each district and stressed that the committee was considering the BSA and what level of support there was in the legislature and as well on the third floor.

[9:39:29 AM](#)

Senator Kaufman WITHDREW his OBJECTION and remarked that there needed to be a thoughtful and durable compromise that the governor and the other body would support. He was worried that the committee was going down the path of failure.

Co-Chair Hoffman acknowledged other legislators in the audience.

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to REPORT SCS CSHB 69(FIN) from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal notes. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

SCS CSHB 69(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with one "do pass" recommendations, four "no recommendations", and two "amend" recommendations; and with one zero fiscal note from Department of Education and Early Development, one new fiscal impact note from the Department of Education and Early Development, and one new fiscal impact note from the Senate Finance Committee/Fund Capitalization.

[9:41:37 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:43:42 AM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Hoffman handed the gavel to Co-Chair Stedman.

#sb57

SENATE BILL NO. 57

"An Act making appropriations, including capital appropriations and other appropriations; making reappropriations; making appropriations to capitalize funds; and providing for an effective date."

9:44:02 AM

Senator Kiehl MOVED to ADOPT the committee substitute for SB 57, Work Draft 34-GS1460\T (Walsh, 4/9/25).

Co-Chair Stedman OBJECTED for discussion.

9:44:26 AM

AT EASE

9:46:36 AM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Stedman asked staff to come forward to discuss the changes.

9:46:49 AM

DAVID SCOTT, STAFF, SENATOR BERT STEDMAN, explained the changes in the CS. He pointed to the Attachment A, Attachment B, and Attachment C documents (copies on file). He read from a prepared statement:

- Before I begin, I'd like to turn the committee's attention to the attachments provided.
 - These are all posted on BASIS and available to the public.

- A little bit about the process... meetings with governor's office, OMB, the departments, the agencies, the university.
 - With expertise of Legislative Finance
 - data, information, and history
 - In collaboration with House counterparts.

- Very generally Mr. Chairman, I plan to explain what was added to CS1 - the bare-bones match-only budget we introduced on March 31. Then I will explain the maneuvers we are using to fund this budget.

- At a very basic high-level view: this budget adds Two tranches of spending.
- This budget adds back 26 projects requested by the governor with a total of \$89m.
- This budget also adds a deferred maintenance package currently totaling \$36m.
 - At your direction and recommendation Mr. Chairman, we engaged with our counterparts in the House and we came to an agreement that deferred maintenance is a serious concern and liability that needs to be addressed.
 - Major Maintenance - \$19m
 - University - \$5m
 - MEHS - \$1.4m - not eligible: compete against all other state assets.
 - Courts - \$750k
 - Statewide - \$10m
 - Collaboration. We should all expect that total to increase when the bill gets to the House.
- Returning now back to the Projects added.
 - As I stated previously there are 27 projects added to the budget totaling \$89m
 - \$46m in UGF -19 projects
 - \$34m in DGF - 5 projects
 - \$9m in OTHER - 3 projects
 - Point out that the approved projects are funded at full request.
 - Negotiate with the agencies -- squeeze as much UGF out as we could

[9:50:51 AM](#)

Mr. Scott continued address his written remarks:

- Notable projects are:
 - Dixon Diversion
 - AEA to get the FERC license for the project.
 - AEA and the Railbelt utilities are in partnership.
 - AHFC
 - Rental Assistance for victims displaced b/c of DV.
 - Senior Housing

- Supplemental Housing
 - Several IT (information technology) projects out in the departments - allow government to operate efficiently. Hardware, software, networks.
 - DOA
 - LAW - uses a reappropriation
 - Labor and Workforce Dev.
 - Dept. of Revenue
 - Judiciary Courthouse Security
 - Dept. of Public Safety
 - Maintenance of Aircraft and Boats
 - Equipment purchase
 - Remodel of Fairbanks Post Evidence Building
 - AEA - Port Electrification for Cruise Ship Terminals
 - Dalton Highway Maintenance
 - Renewable energy fund 6 projects
 - Pelican
 - Naknek
 - Skagway
 - Kwethluk
 - Quinhagak
 - Nenana
 - AMHS vessel maintenance and overhaul
 - \$26m of DGF Marine Highway Fund (Farebox revenue)
 - Harbor Matching Grant
 - Eliason Harbor in Sitka
 - Aurora Harbor in Juneau
 - Statter Harbor in Auke Bay
- Explain funding mechanisms we used for this budget.
 - Reappropriations
 - This budget reappropriates old UGF from two sources
 - Old and stalled projects at DOT \$47.1m
 - Section 13 of the bill. Page 44.
 - Old match - highway and aviation. \$20.9m
 - \$68m UGF displaced.

- Increased the AIDEA dividend to the statutory cap.
 - AS 44.88.088 states that the AIDEA dividend must be between 25 percent and 50 percent of the net income.
 - The AIDEA board authorized a \$20m dividend this year. That is 30 percent of their net income.
 - 50 percent of the net income: \$12.5m
 - These actions displaced \$80m of UGF
- Mr. Chairman, I'll close by stating that this budget has:
 - \$162m UGF - \$119m less than the Governor's submitted budget.
 - Denied \$49m in Administration requests.
 - Of the approved projects we reduced by \$10m.
 - Displaced \$80m in UGF with the reappropriations and AIDEA
 - Total capital spend is \$2,903.0
- Standing by for questions.

[9:58:28 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman noted that there were no additions for individual districts. The concentration had been on K-12 education major maintenance, the University of Alaska, and the courts. The budget removed quite a few of the governor's submitted projects and went back and reappropriated funds from old projects. He explained that the proposed budget changes were "a one-time maneuver," and the budget for the following year would be more challenging. He asked members to review the budget and bring any amendments to his office by four o'clock in the afternoon.

[10:00:14 AM](#)

AT EASE

[10:00:22 AM](#)

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Stedman REMOVED the OBJECTION. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered. The CS for SB 57 was ADOPTED.

SB 57 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

[10:00:52 AM](#)
AT EASE

[10:02:25 AM](#)
RECONVENED

Co-Chair Stedman handed the gavel to Co-Chair Hoffman.

#sb76
SENATE BILL NO. 76

"An Act relating to complex care residential homes; and providing for an effective date."

[10:03:03 AM](#)

EMILY RICCI, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, (DOH) introduced herself. She explained that the department was working on the bill in close coordination with the Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS).

DR. BOB LAWRENCE, CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, discussed a presentation entitled "State of Alaska, Department of Health, Department of Family and Community Services, SB 76: COMPLEX CARE RESIDENTIAL HOMES" (copy on file). He looked at slide 2, "SB 76 Supports Alaska's System of Care":

SB 76 strengthens Alaska's health care system, enabling Alaskans to access services in settings tailored to their specific care needs.

Dr. Lawrence addressed slide 3, "What Is Complex Care?"

Definition: Co-occurring behavioral, medical, or disability-related needs requiring a multi-disciplinary team and multiple programs.

Vision: A coordinated system that delivers compassionate, timely, and person-centered care for the most vulnerable and complex Alaskans.

Dr. Lawrence pointed to slide 4, "What Is Complex Care?":

- Behavioral health conditions
- Disruptive behaviors
- Carceral system involvement
- Out of state treatment
- Psychiatric hospitalization
- Public safety encounters
- Co-occurring medical conditions
- Frequent emergency department visits
- Harm to self or others

Ms. Ricci discussed slide 5, "What Does SB 76 Do?"

SB 76 creates the necessary statutory framework to allow the Department of Health to license and regulate a new setting:

Complex Care Residential Homes (CCRHs)

Ms. Ricci relayed that the department envisioned the new setting to be homelike, based in the community, and with multi-disciplinary support and consistent monitoring for individuals.

[10:07:51 AM](#)

Ms. Ricci pointed to slide 6, "CCRHs Fill a Gap in the Care Continuum":

There is a gap in Alaska's current continuum of care for ongoing, specialized residential settings.

Ms. Ricci drew attention to more acute settings listed on the right-hand side of the slide, including psychiatric hospitals or residential psychiatric treatment centers for youth. The left-hand side of the slide showed less acute settings for care, which relied on funding and support from the department's Home and Community Based Waiver services. She continued that there was a small group of individuals with severe behavioral and medical needs. There may be some cognitive impairment, but the level did not qualify them for the waiver. For the individuals, she identified that the system was struggling to find appropriate discharge care, and a greater amount of care was needed than was currently available in the system.

Senator Kiehl recalled that the previous year the legislature passed a bill in which the department had worked on creating a different category of home. He asked how the new category fit into what she was describing.

Ms. Ricci replied that the new "Adult Host Homes" license was created with statutory support the previous year and would fit under the waiver between the assisted living homes and complex care homes. Currently the individuals supported in the bill did not meet the requirements for the Home and Community Based Waiver system.

10:11:20 AM

Ms. Ricci looked at slide 7, "Establishing a New Residential Setting":

- Identify Needs and Define Scope
- Create New License Type
- Determine Services to be Provided
- Establish Reimbursement Mechanisms

Ms. Ricci identified that next steps would include working with the people currently providing care for the individuals in question.

Dr. Lawrence pointed to slide 8, "Who Would Benefit from CCRHs?"

- Youth
 - Multiple behavioral health diagnoses
 - Treatment in an out-of-state facility
- Adult
 - Severe and persistent mental illness
 - Frequent hospital visits and self harm history
- Senior
 - Dementia with behavioral health diagnoses
 - Does not qualify for Medicaid waiver services
 - Fetal alcohol and autism spectrum disorders
 - Cognitive impairment
 - Highly disruptive behaviors

Dr. Lawrence looked at slide 9, "Key Features of a CCRH":

CCRHs will offer a new residential care setting in Alaska.

Fewer than 15 residents
24/7 care from a multi-disciplinary team
More supportive than assisted living homes and less restrictive than a psychiatric hospital
Specialized monitoring, intervention, and/or treatment to meet the needs of residents

Dr. Lawrence emphasized that the new care setting proposed in the bill would be adaptable.

Dr. Lawrence spoke to slide 10, "Benefits of a CCRH":

- Improves care for Alaskans with complex needs
- Adds a license type for home-like settings that offer care in the most clinically appropriate environment
- Allows for service specialization and for specific requirements to be set forth in regulations
- Promotes community safety by offering a new service setting for individuals with complex behavioral health needs

Dr. Lawrence qualified that the new care setting being proposed would offer care beyond an assisted living home but not so restricted in a hospital or psychiatric care facility.

[10:15:00 AM](#)

Ms. Ricci discussed slide 11, "Sectional Analysis":

Section 1. Amends AS 47.32.010(b) to add "complex care residential homes" to the list of entities regulated by the Department of Health.

Section 2. Amends AS 47.32.900(2) to update the definition of "assisted living home" to exclude complex care residential homes.

Section 3. Adds AS 47.32.900(11) to modify the definition of "hospital" to clarify that it does not include complex care residential homes.

Ms. Ricci pointed to slide 12, "Sectional Analysis":

Section 4. Adds AS 47.32.900(22) to introduce a new definition for "complex care residential home." It is

defined as a residential setting that provides 24-hour multi-disciplinary care on a continuing basis for up to 15 individuals with mental, behavioral, medical, or disability-related needs requiring specialized care, services and monitoring.

Section 5. Amends the uncodified law by adding a new section that requires the Department of Health to submit for approval by the United States Department of Health and Human Services amendments to the state Medicaid plan or apply for waivers necessary to implement the provisions of Sections 1-4.

Ms. Ricci looked at slide 13, "Sectional Analysis":

Section 6. Amends the uncodified law by adding a new section specifying that sections 1-4 of the bill will only take effect if the United States Department of Health and Human Services approves the required Medicaid waivers or amendments by July 1, 2031. The commissioner of health is required to notify the reviser of statutes within 30 days once the necessary approvals are received.

Section 7. Provides that sections 1-4 take effect the day after the United States Department of Health and Human Services approves amendments to the state plan or waivers submitted under Section 5.

Senator Kaufman looked at the fiscal notes and asked about federal funds. He asked if there were any potential issues with funding.

Ms. Ricci replied that the department did not anticipate any issues but was still building out funding sources from a Medicaid perspective. One of the aspects of the populations that was particularly challenging was that there were individuals with very specific needs and specific demographics. She discussed a category of youth with disruptive behaviors but did not qualify or developmental or intellectual disability waivers. She discussed a category of adults with severe eating disorders, that were more extreme than was typically imagined and needed specialized care in a structured setting. She discussed adults with dementia that had inappropriate behaviors that the Alask Pioneer Home and others could not care for. For the groups, there could be certain Medicaid waivers to cover the care that was needed. She relayed that the department would be working with

consultants to identify the different Medicaid waivers and funding streams that aligned with each of the needs.

[10:19:08 AM](#)

Senator Kaufman asked if there was anticipation of getting more clarity on funding streams that might be reflected in revised fiscal notes.

Ms. Ricci relayed that the current available information the department had was reflected in the fiscal notes. She noted that the department intended to build out the certification, funding, and services with providers, stakeholders, and contractual experts.

Senator Kiehl asked about the zero Medicaid services fiscal note. He asked if the department anticipated that the note would really be indeterminate.

Ms. Ricci relayed that the fiscal note was zero because many of the individuals in question were receiving very high-cost care that was paid for through the Medicaid program. She added that also any waivers the state would be considering there was a federal budget neutrality requirement. For those reasons the department thought the fiscal note would be zero.

[10:21:19 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hoffman OPENED public testimony.

[10:21:38 AM](#)

MICHELLE BAKER, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation. She worked in the behavioral services division. She mentioned adults and children awaiting to be discharged from the hospital without residential services with complex care services. She gave examples of individuals that needed complex care that was not currently available. She recommended an amendment to the bill and referenced Section 4, line 10, and removing "not more than 15." She reasoned that removing the language would give providers more flexibility to think about clinical service delivery models.

[10:25:52 AM](#)

DAVID WILSON, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY, MATSU HEALTH FOUNDATION, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke in support of the legislation. He thought the bill was a vital step in providing required care. He thought the bill would set a standard for excellence in care. He echoed the comments of the previous testifier regarding amended language in the bill.

[10:27:52 AM](#)

JARED KOSIN, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, ALASKA HOSPITAL AND HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill. He cited that one out of every seven hospital beds in the state was occupied by individuals that needed to go but had no option for appropriate care to transition to. He urged the passage of the bill.

[10:29:00 AM](#)

ISAAC SMOLDON, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR, MY HOUSE, WASILLA (via teleconference), spoke in support of the legislation. He believed the legislation would allow My House to better serve its clients. He urged the committee to pass the bill as soon as possible.

Co-Chair Hoffman CLOSED public testimony.

Senator Kiehl reviewed the fiscal notes. He addressed FN 1 from DOH, OMB Component 2665. He detailed that an FY 26 cost of \$153,200 and one full-time position with an even funding split between federal receipts and General Fund (GF) match. The amount leveled off at \$150,200 with the same funding composition.

Senator Kiehl addressed FN 2 from DOH, OMB Component 2944. The note reflected a first cost in FY 27 of \$197,100 split almost 50/50 between federal receipts and GF match for one full-time nurse consultant position. The amount leveled off the following year slightly higher with \$204,100 going forward.

Senator Kiehl addressed FN 3 from DOH Medicaid Services, OMB Component 3234, which had zero fiscal impact.

Dr. Lawrence thanked the committee.

Ms. Ricci thanked the committee.

SB 76 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

[10:32:17 AM](#)

AT EASE

[10:35:27 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#sb44

SENATE BILL NO. 44

"An Act relating to the rights of minors undergoing evaluation or inpatient treatment at psychiatric hospitals; relating to the use of seclusion or restraint of minors at psychiatric hospitals; relating to a report published by the Department of Health; relating to inspections by the Department of Health of certain psychiatric hospitals; and providing for an effective date."

[10:36:23 AM](#)

SENATOR MATT CLAMAN, SPONSOR, introduced the bill. He explained that in 2022 the United States Department of Justice (DOJ) investigated Alaska's behavioral health care system for youth. It found the state had an overreliance on institutionalization to treat minors with behavior health disabilities in Alaska. In response to the finding, DOJ embarked upon a behavioral health roadmap for Alaska's youth in fall 2023. His office appreciated the steps that providers stakeholders in the state put into regional meetings and a drafted report. He stressed the urgent need for transparency and parent/guardian involvement in the psychiatric hospitals that served the state's youth.

Senator Claman explained that the bill enhanced and protected the rights of the young patients then had care or evaluation at the psychiatric hospitals. The bill had four main objectives. The first was to ensure youth patients had access to at least one hour of interaction with parents or legal guardians per week. Secondly, to ensure there were twice-per-year unannounced inspections of facilities providing residential treatment to youth psychiatric

patients in which 50 percent of all youth patients were interviewed about their experiences. Thirdly, to report within 24 hours in any case restraint was used, available to DOH and the patient's parent or guardian. Fourth, to enhance transparency there was a required report by DOH to prepare an annual report about minors in psychiatric hospitals. He read from written testimony of a parent from Fairbanks with a long history of psychiatric care.

[10:39:39 AM](#)

BEN MALLOTT, PRESIDENT, ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES (via teleconference), (AFN) spoke to the benefits of the legislation. He believed the bill ensured children in vulnerable states had the ability to communicate with parents or guardians. He supported the transparency and other provisions of the bill. He mentioned a lack of available care in the state, which could be traumatizing for young people. He mentioned trauma to residents of villages that had experienced institutions.

[10:42:01 AM](#)

MATEO JAIME, YOUTH BOARD MEMBER, FACING FOSTER CARE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill. He recounted being placed in a psychiatric institution for two months due to no foster homes being available. He recalled physical violence from staff. He recounted poor conditions.

[10:45:05 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hoffman OPENED public testimony.

Co-Chair Hoffman CLOSED public testimony.

Senator Kiehl reviewed three fiscal notes. He addressed FN 1 from DOH, OMB Component 2944, with an FY 26 cost of \$212,100 UGF and one full time position.

Senator Kiehl addressed FN 2 from DFCS, OMB Component 3314. The department reported a zero fiscal note.

Senator Kiehl addressed FN 3 from DFCS, OMB Component 3321, which was a zero fiscal note.

Senator Claman thanked the committee.

SB 44 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

[10:46:43 AM](#)

AT EASE

[10:48:43 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#sb69

SENATE BILL NO. 69

"An Act relating to sexual assault examination kits; establishing the sexual assault examination kit tracking system; and providing for an effective date."

[10:49:16 AM](#)

SUSIE FRENZEL, DIRECTOR OF VICTIM SERVICES AND FORENSIC SCIENCE, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY (DPS) introduced herself.

DAVID KANARIS, CHIEF OF FORENSIC LABORATORY, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, introduced himself.

Mr. Kanaris discussed the presentation, "Senate Bill (SB) 69 Sexual Assault Examination Kit Tracking System" (copy on file). He addressed slide 2, "Key Provisions":

- Timelines for transmittal and testing of Sexual Assault Kits
- Codifying the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System
- Survivor Rights and Transparency

Mr. Kanaris highlighted slide 3, "Time Processing of Kits

- Medical providers must notify law enforcement within 14 days after evidence collection
- New Requirement
- Law enforcement must transfer kits to an accredited laboratory within 20 days
- Currently 30 days
- Laboratory must complete testing within 120 days
- Currently 180 days

Mr. Kanaris pointed to slide 4, "Survivor Rights and Transparency":

- Survivors must be notified when their kits are tested
- The tracking system enables survivors to stay informed and connected to their case without compromising their privacy or needing to re-engage with law enforcement
- The system ensures survivors can securely monitor the status of their kits and opt-in for automated updates

Mr. Kanaris looked at slide 5, "Codification of the Sexual Assault Kit Tracking System":

- Sexual assault examination kit tracking system will be operated by the Department of Public Safety
- Data remains confidential to protect survivor privacy

Mr. Kanaris relayed that the current administration and legislative body had all been supportive of building the kit tracking system.

Mr. Kanaris showed slide 6, which showed a photograph of the kit storage room that illustrated the problem. He thought that there were about 40,000 kits in the system over time, and there was an average of 500 to 600 sexual assault case kits per year. The crime lab was working as fast as it possibly could. Data from 2024 showed that the lab was able to work the kits within 133 days, and it was working to reduce the amount of time needed.

[10:53:07 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman wondered about how minors were treated, and if the kits were tracked. He asked about information for parents or guardians.

Mr. Kanaris relayed that about 16 percent of cases were from minor cases, which were entered into the database and given priority for faster processing. The survivor or parent/guardian would be supplied with a tracking number through which hit could access the database.

Senator Kiehl understood that the fiscal note requested taking on state funding for a position that was currently

grant funded. He was supportive of the bill. He asked what would happen with the position if the bill was not passed.

Mr. Kanaris replied that there was a question of whether a state position could handle the capacity, which he doubted. He did not think current staffing levels were a sufficient way to work.

[10:55:05 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hoffman OPENED public testimony.

Co-Chair Hoffman CLOSED public testimony.

Senator Kiehl reviewed FN 1 from the Department of Public Safety, OMB Component 527. The note asked for \$197,500 in FY 26, \$148,000 of which was for the position. The position was reflective of additives. The out years showed the cost of the software rising slowly but steadily.

[10:56:27 AM](#)

JAMES COCKRELL, COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), gave a prepared statement. He thanked the committee. He requested that members look at what the department had done in closing gaps in the system over the past few years. He thought the state had come a long way in how it had treated victims. He thought the kit system was one way to offer victims control over the process. He relayed that the bill was a priority for the department.

SB 69 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

Co-Chair Hoffman stated that the next meeting would be the following day at 9am.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[10:58:16 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m.