

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

May 1, 2025

9:02 a.m.

[9:02:48 AM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Hoffman called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:02 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

Senator Forrest Dunbar, Sponsor; Sonja Kawasaki, Council, Senate Majority; Senator Cathy Giessel, Sponsor; Representative Calvin Schrage, Sponsor; Bruce Botelho, Citizens Against Money in Politics, Juneau; Representative Ky Holland; Senator Scott Kawasaki.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Michele Brown, Program Director, Housing Alaskans Public Private Partnership, Anchorage; Nithya Thiru, Housing Organizer, Alaska Public Interest Research Group, Anchorage; Jason Norris, Self, Anchorage; Mark Davis, Special Counsel, Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, Anchorage; Brandon Brefczynski, Deputy Director, Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, Anchorage; Mike Coons, Self, Wasilla; Mercedes Arciniega, Outreach and Good Government Lead, Alaska Public Interest Research Group, Anchorage; Evelyn Trefon, Self, Newhalen; Kevin Morford, President, Alaska Move to Amend, Chugiak.

SUMMARY

SB 14 AIDEA FINANCE WORKFORCE HOUSING DEVELOP

SB 14 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 95 CHILD CARE: ASSISTANCE/GRANTS

SB 95 was REPORTED out of committee with four "do pass" recommendations, three "no recommendations" and with one previously published fiscal note: FN 1(DOH).

SB 96 CHILD CARE: TAX CREDITS

SB 96 was REPORTED out of committee with four "do pass" recommendations, three "no recommendations", and with three previously published fiscal notes: FN 1(LWF), FN 2(REV), and FN 3(CED).

SB 97 BIG GAME PERMIT PROGRAM

SB 97 was REPORTED out of committee with six "do pass" recommendations, one "no recommendation", and with three new fiscal notes: two from Department of Fish and Game and one from Department of Natural Resources.

CSHB 16(STA)

CAMPAIGN FINANCE, CONTRIBUTION LIMITS

CSHB 16(STA) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#sb95

SENATE BILL NO. 95

"An Act relating to the child care assistance program and the child care grant program; and providing for an effective date."

[9:04:03 AM](#)

SENATOR FORREST DUNBAR, SPONSOR, reintroduced the legislation.

Co-Chair Stedman MOVED to REPORT SB 95 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

SB 95 was REPORTED out of committee with four "do pass" recommendations, three "no recommendations" and with one previously published fiscal note: FN 1(DOH).

[9:05:25 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:08:41 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#sb96

SENATE BILL NO. 96

"An Act relating to education tax credits for certain payments and contributions for child care and child care facilities; relating to the insurance tax education credit, the income tax education credit, the oil or gas producer education credit, the property tax education credit, the mining business education credit, the fisheries business education credit, and the fisheries resource landing tax education credit; providing for an effective date by amending the effective date of secs. 1, 2, and 21, ch. 61, SLA 2014; and providing for an effective date."

[9:09:32 AM](#)

SONJA KAWASAKI, COUNCIL, SENATE MAJORITY, reintroduced the legislation.

Senator Kiehl MOVED to REPORT SB 96 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

SB 96 was REPORTED out of committee with four "do pass" recommendations, three "no recommendations", and with three previously published fiscal notes: FN 1(LWF), FN 2(REV), and FN 3(CED).

[9:10:44 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:12:34 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#sb97

SENATE BILL NO. 97

"An Act establishing a big game guide concession area permit program on land in the state; relating to the duties of the Big Game Commercial Services Board, the Board of Game, the Department of Fish and Game, and the Department of Natural Resources; requiring the Board of Game to establish an initial big game guide concession area; and providing for an effective date."

[9:13:02 AM](#)

SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL, SPONSOR, reintroduced the legislation.

Senator Cronk MOVED to REPORT SB 97 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note. There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

SB 97 was REPORTED out of committee with six "do pass" recommendations, one "no recommendation", and with three new fiscal notes: two from Department of Fish and Game and one from Department of Natural Resources.

[9:14:01 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:16:19 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#sb14

SENATE BILL NO. 14

"An Act relating to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority; and relating to workforce housing development projects."

[9:16:41 AM](#)

SENATOR FORREST DUNBAR, SPONSOR, introduced the legislation.

[9:19:34 AM](#)

Senator Kiehl wondered how the bill would guide Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority's (AIDEA) participation.

Senator Dunbar replied that there would be private sectors involved, but there would be flexibility to decide the various means of financing.

Senator Kiehl stated that he would have further conversations with the sponsor about the financing.

[9:21:48 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman asked whether the bill would inadvertently put the state in a mortgage business with the inclusion of AIDEA in the bill.

Senator Dunbar replied that it was difficult to get private sector financing for multi-family housing construction in the state.

[9:25:04 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman stressed that the issue was about suitable lenders. He felt that the state might undercut the private marketplace. He felt that there was already a housing mechanism in the state through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC).

Senator Dunbar replied that the idea was originally proposed by a private sector developer, in which could be provided by AIDEA.

Co-Chair Stedman felt that AHFC had various means of financing.

[9:30:34 AM](#)

MICHELE BROWN, PROGRAM DIRECTOR, HOUSING ALASKANS PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill.

[9:34:39 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:35:03 AM](#)

RECONVENED

[9:35:58 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hoffman OPENED public testimony.

[9:36:19 AM](#)

NITHYA THIRU, HOUSING ORGANIZER, ALASKA PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill.

[9:38:27 AM](#)

JASON NORRIS, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation.

Co-Chair Stedman wanted to hear from AIDEA.

Co-Chair Hoffman CLOSED public testimony.

Co-Chair Stedman wanted to know about the housing development in commercial areas, and AIDEA's participation in those projects.

[9:41:56 AM](#)

MARK DAVIS, SPECIAL COUNSEL, ALASKA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORT AUTHORITY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), replied that AIDEA had the ability to work on workforce housing with various programs, and currently used the programs for housing on shipyards. He stressed that AIDEA did not make many direct loans, so it was usually a collaborative process with other funding sources.

[9:43:47 AM](#)

BRANDON BREFCZYNSKI, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ALASKA INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORT AUTHORITY, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), echoed Mr. Davis's comments. He stated that the loan participation programs was one of AIDEA's most successful programs.

[9:45:32 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman stressed that he was aware of a housing need in his district, and cautioned AIDEA about converting a fabrication facility into housing. He encouraged the examination of offsite housing.

Senator Kiehl reviewed the fiscal note.

SB 14 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#hb16

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 16 (STA)

"An Act requiring a group supporting or opposing a candidate or ballot proposition in a state or local election to maintain an address in the state; amending campaign contribution limits for state and local office; directing the Alaska Public Offices Commission to adjust campaign contribution limits for state and local office once each decade beginning in 2031; relating to campaign contribution reporting requirements; relating to administrative complaints filed with the Alaska Public Offices Commission; relating to state election expenditures and contributions made by a foreign-influenced corporation or foreign national; and providing for an effective date."

[9:47:39 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CALVIN SCHRAGE, SPONSOR, introduced the legislation. He referred to the Sponsor Statement (copy on file):

In 2024, Alaska 23RCF2 was certified after a grassroots effort that gathered signatures from nearly 30,000 registered Alaskan voters and met the 7 percent threshold in 32 out of Alaska's 40 house districts. 23RCF2 will be put before voters in the 2026 primary election if the Alaska Legislature does not pass materially similar legislation.

Alaska has historically touted some of the strongest, most effective campaign finance laws in the nation, which served to promote better accountability and trust in our elections and elected officials. In recent years, Alaskans have shown their support for

fair and reasonable contribution limits, including a 2006 ballot initiative that passed overwhelmingly with 73 percent support. However, in 2021, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down Alaska's statutory campaign contribution limits, opening our state and local elections to the threat of unlimited political contributions directly to candidates from anyone, anywhere in the country.

House Bill 16 (HB 16) reinstates fair, reasonable, and constitutional campaign contribution limits, which will be adjusted based on Alaska's consumer price index rates moving forward. This will ensure that these limits remain constitutional.

[9:50:16 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman requested a history of the issue, and wondered why the federal limits were not included in the bill.

Representative Schrage detailed some history of campaign finance reform in the state.

Co-Chair Stedman wondered why the bill was not a ballot measure.

Representative Schrage responded that it was an attempt to establish limits before the next election.

[9:55:19 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman requested a history of large contributions in the elections.

Representative Schrage replied that an individual was limited to \$2000 per election cycle, and explained that there were other means to contribute or influence a political campaign.

Co-Chair Hoffman wondered whether there were specific limits to political parties on how much they receive and how much they contribute to candidates.

Representative Schrage responded in the affirmative, agreed to provide that information.

[9:59:10 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hoffman remarked that he had heard of contribution of "hints" of where the funds would go.

[10:04:08 AM](#)

Senator Kiehl asked about the address requirement in the bill.

Representative Schrage replied that it was an amendment, and stated that the state could impose disclosure requirements.

Co-Chair Stedman remarked that the intention was to limit outside influence from another state.

Representative Schrage replied that it was a \$2000 limit.

Co-Chair Hoffman wondered whether each member of a family could contribute.

Representative Schrage replied in the affirmative.

[10:08:01 AM](#)

BRUCE BOTELHO, CITIZENS AGAINST MONEY IN POLITICS, JUNEAU, spoke in support of the bill.

[10:13:01 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman wondered why the issue would not be on the ballot.

Mr. Botelho replied that it was the desire to be in place for the 2028 election.

Co-Chair Stedman felt that the voters should have the right to vote on the issue.

Mr. Botelho disagreed, and felt that the voters wanted campaign contribution limits.

[10:15:43 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hoffman wondered if there was a correlation between urban and rural Alaska.

Mr. Botelho detailed the percentages of support.

[10:20:00 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hoffman OPENED public testimony.

[10:20:23 AM](#)

MIKE COONS, SELF, WASILLA (via teleconference), testified against the legislation.

[10:23:05 AM](#)

MERCEDES ARCINIEGA, OUTREACH AND GOOD GOVERNMENT LEAD, ALASKA PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of the legislation.

[10:25:39 AM](#)

EVELYNN TREFON, SELF, NEWHALEN (via teleconference), spoke in support of the bill.

[10:26:56 AM](#)

KEVIN MORFORD, PRESIDENT, ALASKA MOVE TO AMEND, CHUGIAK (via teleconference), testified in support of the bill.

Co-Chair Hoffman CLOSED public testimony.

Senator Kiehl addressed the one zero fiscal note from the Department of Administration.

Representative Schrage thanked the committee for hearing the legislation.

CSHB 16(STA) was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#

ADJOURNMENT

[10:30:48 AM](#)

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.