

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
SENATE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 19, 2025

1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Matt Claman, Chair  
Senator Jesse Kiehl, Vice Chair  
Senator Gary Stevens  
Senator Löki Tobin  
Senator Robert Myers

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

ALASKA POLICE STANDARDS COUNCIL

Daniel Carothers - Douglas

David Ross - Kenai

- CONFIRMATIONS ADVANCED

PRESENTATION(S) : CRIMINAL DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

DANIEL CAROTHERS, Appointee  
Alaska Police Standards Council  
Douglas, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as the governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

DAVID ROSS, Appointee  
Alaska Police Standards Council  
Kenai, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as the governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

AMBER NICKERSON, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to the governor's appointment of Mr. Carothers to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

EMILY KLOC, representing self  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in opposition to the governor's appointment of Mr. Carothers to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

JOHN SKIDMORE, Deputy Attorney General  
Criminal Division  
Department of Law

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented an overview of the Criminal Division of the Department of Law.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:30:43 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN called the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Stevens, Kiehl, and Chair Claman. Senators Tobin and Myers arrived thereafter.

#### **CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) ALASKA POLICE STANDARDS COUNCIL**

[1:31:15 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN announced the consideration of governor's appointees to the Alaska Police Standards Council. He invited the appointee, Mr. Carothers, to put himself on the record and begin his remarks.

[1:31:46 PM](#)

DANIEL CAROTHERS, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council, Douglas, Alaska, provided an overview of his background and experience in law enforcement, stating he served 28 years with the Department of Corrections. He said his knowledge and expertise would be valuable to the Council. He explained that he has held positions as a correctional officer, probation officer, and superintendent and has a strong understanding of the duties and responsibilities associated with each role.

[1:33:06 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL sought confirmation that this is a reappointment.

MR. CAROTHERS answered in the affirmative.

SENATOR KIEHL raised a question about investigations and complaints received by the Council, asking how those break down between police officers and correctional officers.

MR. CAROTHERS explained that based on his experience, he estimates that 51 percent or more of complaints are received against police officers, whether municipal or state. He estimated that 49 percent or fewer involve corrections employees.

[1:34:23 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN asked what the duration of his first term was.

MR. CAROTHERS expressed his belief that it was three years.

CHAIR CLAMAN asked whether three years was a full term.

MR. CAROTHERS replied that if three years is a full term, then yes.

CHAIR CLAMAN remarked that he was unsure of the term length himself and said that sometimes appointments complete someone else's term.

MR. CAROTHERS replied that he had not completed someone else's term.

[1:34:50 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN announced the consideration of the next governor's appointee to the Alaska Police Standards Council. He invited the appointee, Mr. Ross, to put himself on the record and begin his remarks.

[1:35:11 PM](#)

DAVID ROSS, Appointee, Alaska Police Standards Council, Kenai, Alaska, said he was appointed to one of the four police chief seats on the Council. He described his background and experience in law enforcement. He stated that he serves as the police chief for the City of Kenai and has worked with the department for 24 years, nine of those as the police chief. He said he has lived in the Kenai area for more than 53 years.

MR. ROSS stated that he has served on the Council for three years, during which time, the Council has accomplished valuable work. He said he would not have considered returning for another term if he did not believe in the Council's efforts. He looks forward to serving as an opportunity to support professional and well-trained law enforcement. He expressed that he is honored to be considered for reappointment.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked whether he recognized that his role on the Council is to serve as a member of an independent body that makes decisions collectively.

MR. ROSS replied, yes, he does.

CHAIR CLAMAN asked whether he had experienced any problems during the past three years serving in that capacity and maintaining the Council's independence.

MR. ROSS replied, no.

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CHAIR CLAMAN announced that Senator Tobin joined the meeting.

[1:37:15 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN opened public testimony on the governor's appointees to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

[1:37:39 PM](#)

AMBER NICKERSON, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to the appointment of Mr. Carothers to the Alaska Police Standards Council. She stated that her opposition was based on her personal experience with Mr. Carothers during his tenure as superintendent at Lemon Creek Correctional Center in Juneau, Alaska, from 1996 to 1997.

MS. NICKERSON said that while incarcerated at Lemon Creek Correctional Center, she was subjected to sexual abuse by a correctional officer. She reported the incident to Mr. Carothers and the assistant superintendent. Rather than ensuring her safety or investigating her claim, she said she was retaliated against. She testified that Mr. Carothers placed her in segregation and later transferred her to Wildwood Correctional Center in Kenai, Alaska.

MS. NICKERSON explained that at the time, she and another female inmate were seeking legal representation to pursue a lawsuit in

Juneau regarding the sexual abuse. She stated that both were transferred to different facilities as a result, which further isolated them and obstructed their efforts for justice. She described the emotional and psychological harm resulting from these events as severe and lasting. She said that instead of fulfilling his duty to protect incarcerated individuals, the superintendent used retaliation against those reporting misconduct. She expressed this reinforced a culture of fear and impunity within the correctional system.

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SENATOR MYERS joined the meeting.

[1:39:35 PM](#)

MS. NICKERSON continued her testimony. She asserted that his conduct demonstrated a disregard for ethical standards and the well-being of those in custody. She said that given her firsthand experience she urged the legislature to reconsider his reappointment. A person who fails to uphold the fundamental principles of justice and accountability, should not be entrusted with oversight of police standards in Alaska. She indicated that a written copy of her opposition was submitted via email.

[1:40:27 PM](#)

EMILY KLOC, representing self, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in opposition to the appointment of Mr. Carothers to the Alaska Police Standards Council. She stated that Mr. Carothers previously served as superintendent at Lemon Creek Correctional Center in Juneau and failed to ensure the safety and well-being of individuals at that facility, which is a main role of a superintendent. She asserted that if Mr. Carothers was unwilling to uphold the basic standards of a facility he managed, there is little confidence in his ability to uphold the standards necessary for his role on the Alaska Police Standards Council. She strongly urged the committee to oppose his reappointment and thanked the committee for the opportunity to testify.

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CHAIR CLAMAN closed public testimony on the governor's appointments to the Alaska Police Standards Council.

[1:41:45 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN solicited a motion.

[1:41:50 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL stated that the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee reviewed the following governor's appointees and recommends they be advanced to a joint session for consideration:

Alaska Police Standards Council

Daniel Carothers - Douglas

David Ross - Kenai

SENATOR KIEHL reminded members that signing the report(s) regarding appointments to boards and commissions in no way reflects individual members' approval or disapproval of the appointees; the nominations are merely advanced to the full legislature for confirmation or rejection.

[1:42:18 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN stated [that in accordance with AS 39.05.080,] the appointments will be forwarded to a joint session for consideration.

[1:42:34 PM](#)

At ease.

**PRESENTATION(S) : CRIMINAL DIVISION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LAW**

[1:44:13 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN reconvened the meeting and announced a presentation with updates from the Criminal Division of the Department of Law.

CHAIR CLAMAN invited Mr. Skidmore to put himself on the record and begin his presentation.

[1:45:29 PM](#)

JOHN SKIDMORE, Deputy Attorney General, Criminal Division, Department of Law, presented an overview of the Criminal Division of the Department of Law.

MR. SKIDMORE moved to slide 2, Criminal Division:

[Original punctuation provided.]

MISSION

To seek justice, promote public safety and public respect for government through prompt, effective, and compassionate prosecution of cases.

[1:46:12 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to slide 3, How We Achieve Our Mission:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**What we do**

- We prosecute violations of state criminal law

**What we do not do**

- We do NOT prosecute violations of federal criminal laws
- We do NOT prosecute violations of municipal criminal laws
- We do NOT prosecute traffic tickets

[1:46:45 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN raised a question about State attorneys who helped the Municipality of Anchorage, asking how many cases proceeded to trial after a staff attorney was assigned.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that the Department received approximately eight requests for assistance and that only one case had actually gone to trial.

[1:47:29 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN asked whether it surprised him, as deputy attorney general for the Criminal Division, that having an attorney prepared to go to trial often led to settlement of cases that might not have otherwise settled.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that it did not surprise him. He stated that this outcome was exactly what the Department anticipated. As trials began to increase within the State system, the Department of Law (DOL) observed a corresponding rise in case resolutions. He explained that the prospect of a trial, and the likelihood of conviction, often prompts defendants to confront the situation and choose to resolve their cases rather than risk a potentially greater sentence.

[1:48:20 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to slide 4, Types of Cases:

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Violent - Homicide, Robbery, Assault, Kidnapping, Sexual Assault, Sexual Abuse of Minor
- Property - Theft, Burglary, Criminal Mischief, Forgery, Fraud
- Drugs - Possession and Distribution
- DUI
- Miscellaneous - Misconduct Involving Weapons, Escape, Perjury, Fish & Game, etc.
- Appeals (state and federal courts)
- Petition to Revoke Probation & Post Conviction Relief

MR. SKIDMORE stated that slide 4 displays the types of cases handled by the Criminal Division. He drew attention to appeals, noting that most public discussion about the criminal justice system centers on trials, while less attention is given to the appellate process. He emphasized that appeals are an equally important component of the system and an area of concern. He said the Criminal Division also handles petitions to revoke probation and post-conviction relief applications, emphasizing that the Division's responsibilities extend beyond trial work.

[1:49:12 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to slide 5, Key Issues Impacting Our Work:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Time to disposition

Expanding discovery obligations

High caseloads

Inexperienced workforce

MR. SKIDMORE stated that slide 5 outlines key issues the Criminal Division faces in its operations: high caseloads, increased discovery obligations, time to disposition, and an inexperienced workforce. He reported that the Division has made progress in addressing these challenges. He said caseloads are

getting under control and are improving, and the level of experience within the workforce is also improving.

[1:49:38 PM](#)

SENATOR MYERS raised the issue of escalating discovery obligations and the large volume of information involved, which is measured in terabytes. He observed that every prosecutorial division is likely facing challenges, similar to the Division's, with discovery obligations as technology advances nationwide. He asked whether prosecutorial divisions across the country are also experiencing increased time to disposition as a result.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he did not have an answer to that question. He stated that in conferences he has attended, prosecutors from around the country consistently discuss the increasing discovery obligations and the challenges they present. He said, however, that he has not seen data or statistics regarding how these obligations have affected time to disposition in other states.

[1:50:38 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN sought confirmation that a national organization exists for district attorneys or prosecutors.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that the organization is called the National District Attorneys Association.

CHAIR CLAMAN asked whether that organization might have statistics on the effect of growing discovery obligations on time to disposition in other states.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he did not know whether the National District Attorneys Association has that specific information, but he could contact them to find out. He said that he might be able to solicit some anecdotal data. However, to his knowledge, the association has not conducted any formal or uniform study across all 50 states or within selected states. He added that the information would likely vary depending on the responses received from individual prosecutors' offices.

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MR. SKIDMORE continued discussing slide 5. He said two areas where the Division has seen notable improvement are in its caseload volume and workforce experience. He reiterated his concern that discovery material is increasing exponentially. It is a reality of modern law enforcement practices.

MR. SKIDMORE explained that law enforcement agencies are implementing body-worn cameras, and other agencies are following suit. Each recording requires considerable time to review and consumes a substantial amount of digital storage. He said this raises logistical challenges, such as how law enforcement transmits that data to the Department, and how the Department, in turn, provides it to the defense.

MR. SKIDMORE emphasized that additional information is not a bad thing, but it presents logistical challenges that must be wrestled with. He said although there are no current funding requests before the legislature at this time to address the issue, the Department is taking steps to tackle the problem. He stated that when asked to identify key issues facing the Division, this is one the Division grapples with.

[1:52:40 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to the graphs on slide 6, Felonies, to discuss caseloads. He said the graph on the left shows the number of felony cases filed and the number of felony cases disposed. He explained that in and around FY20, the number of felony filings ranged between 7,000 and 8,000, but by FY24, that figure had dropped to approximately 6,000. He described this decline as a positive development, indicating that fewer felony cases are being filed, which corresponds to Alaska's crime rate being at one of the lowest levels in 40 years.

MR. SKIDMORE stated that the more significant point is that during the same period, the number of felony dispositions surpassed the number of filings. The orange "disposition" line on the graph crosses above the blue "filed" line, meaning the Division is closing more cases than it is taking on. He said this trend shows that caseloads are beginning to decline, which is a very positive outcome. Although caseloads remain higher than desired, maintaining this downward trend is positive.

MR. SKIDMORE said the bar graph on the right shows the number of trials and convictions which occurred in a given fiscal year. For example, in FY19, the Division had 157 trials, and in FY20, it had 151 trials.

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SENATOR KIEHL observed that during the pandemic, and in the period immediately following it, the conviction rate for cases that went to trial was significantly lower than other periods. He asked why that might have occurred.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he did not have a definitive explanation but offered these theories:

- During the pandemic, the Division had a higher percentage of inexperienced prosecutors who were not as well prepared for trial as seasoned attorneys. He explained that prosecutors develop their skills through trial experience, but that training ground was largely unavailable during the pandemic.
- During the pandemic, the Division had to take numerous innovative steps to protect public health, such as ensuring adequate jury spacing. Logistical complications caused trials to last much longer than usual; it was problematic.

MR. SKIDMORE stated that he could not say with certainty whether these factors caused the lower conviction rate, but they were the notable differences during that period. Since emerging from the pandemic, those conditions have normalized, and conviction rates are returning to previous levels. He reiterated that while his theories may not explain the cause, there appeared to be a correlation.

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SENATOR KIEHL sought confirmation that, aside from convictions, the other two elements of the orange "disposition" line represent pleas and dismissals.

MR. SKIDMORE confirmed that was correct.

SENATOR KIEHL asked how those trend lines compare to each other and to the overall disposition line.

MR. SKIDMORE expressed his belief that some of the dismissals have increased. He explained that in Alaska, law enforcement officers have the authority to file charges directly, meaning not every charge is reviewed by a prosecutor before being filed in court. Drawing from his experience in Dillingham, he said law enforcement officers would regularly file complaints, which is fully lawful in Alaska. However, after reviewing the discovery, he found that a notable number of those cases were not suitable for trial or could not be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, and he would dismiss them. He said this practice continues in many areas of the state and affects the dismissal rate. He expressed his belief that the dismissal rate has increased, though that is not the sole explanation for the trend but rather one contributing factor.

SENATOR KIEHL stated that he was more interested in the broader dynamics than in detailed statistics and sought confirmation that the crime rate is down, but the dismissal rate is up.

MR SKIDMORE answered in the affirmative.

SENATOR KIEHL asked how to interpret the relationship between the trend lines showing felonies "filed" and felonies "disposed."

MR. SKIDMORE agreed that it presents an interesting conundrum for which he has no clear explanation. He said that in conversations with the University of Alaska Justice Center, its researchers have noted the same pattern and expressed interest in studying it further. He reiterated that neither he nor the Justice Center currently have an answer.

2:00:06 PM

SENATOR MYERS referred to the felony and misdemeanor slides, both of which show a decline in filings. He observed that the data appeared to track charges rather than defendants. He noted that if each charge represented a separate defendant, the totals would suggest that approximately 21,000 to 22,000 individuals were charged per year, or roughly nine percent of the state's adult population. He expressed interest in seeing comparable charts based on the number of defendants, not just the number of charges. He asked whether filings are declining because fewer people are being charged with crimes, or because the same number of people are being charged with fewer counts.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he does not have those statistics available, specifically, how often a single defendant is charged in multiple cases. He said that, anecdotally, within the last three days he had reviewed at least seven defendants who each had multiple active cases—not simply multiple counts within one case, but separate cases altogether. He stated that this occurs frequently, though he did not have the data showing to what extent or how it interacts with the broader filing numbers. He said that analysis could be done but would require an analyst to compile the data.

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SENATOR MYERS commented that as a layperson reviewing the numbers, he understands that one individual can be charged with multiple counts, such as robbery, assault, and burglary in connection with a single incident. He noted, however, that he has also seen cases in which one person was charged with first-

degree murder, second-degree murder, and first-degree manslaughter for the same act. He said that while he recognizes this as a prosecutorial tool, it may appear differently to the public and can make statistical interpretation more complex. He said he was trying to distinguish between these situations because the difference can be misleading.

MR. SKIDMORE clarified that when the Division reports statistics, the numbers represent cases, not counts. He explained that one case corresponds to one defendant; if there are codefendants, each is counted as a separate case. He said the Division avoids reporting by count because doing so can be highly misleading. For example, one person may be charged with 25 counts of sexual abuse of a minor, representing 25 separate incidents, while another may face multiple homicide charges, first-degree murder, second-degree murder, and manslaughter, for a single act based on different legal theories. He said these are very different dynamics, and for that reason, the Division focuses on case-based statistics. He added that while it would be possible to analyze data by the number of defendants, counts are too complex for meaningful statistical comparison.

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CHAIR CLAMAN referred to the data on felonies filed versus disposed and noted that, as mentioned earlier, some cases are filed by law enforcement and later dismissed when prosecutors decide not to proceed. He sought confirmation that filings include both cases filed by prosecutors and cases filed by law enforcement, but cases reviewed by prosecutors and not filed, do not appear in the dataset.

MR. SKIDMORE confirmed that was correct. He explained that filings include any criminal case formally filed in court, whether by a prosecutor or a law enforcement officer. Cases referred to the Department of Law that are screened and not filed are not included in these figures. He said that those represent a separate, referrals to the office, statistic.

[2:05:02 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN drew attention to the bar graph on the right representing felony trials. He sought confirmation that these are strictly trials resulting in verdicts, not cases resolved by plea agreements after trial had begun.

MR. SKIDMORE replied, correct. He said the trials shown represent cases that went to conclusion and for which a verdict was returned. Cases that began trial but were resolved through

plea agreements partway through are not included in that category.

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CHAIR CLAMAN observed that, excluding the pandemic years, the conviction rate at trial for FY19, FY20, and FY24 appears to be about 80 percent. He asked what the conviction rate at trial was approximately ten years before FY19.

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MR. SKIDMORE replied that his understanding is that conviction rates at trial have historically hovered around the 80 percent range.

[2:06:17 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN requested that data on conviction rates for the ten years preceding FY19 be provided to the committee.

MR. SKIDMORE agreed to conduct that research.

[2:06:29 PM](#)

SENATOR STEVENS asked what useful insights, if any, could be drawn from the data collected during the COVID-19 period.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that several observations stood out. He said because many people stayed home and avoided public activity during the pandemic, the Division saw a substantial decrease in new case filings. The more significant observation was the Division's inability to move cases forward, which created backlogs. Ongoing cases could not be resolved because trials were not taking place. One chart shows dispositions exceeding filings, and the other, declining trial numbers that rebounded when the court returned to full operations. Though the courts remained functioning during the pandemic, their full operational capacity was essential for the system to run efficiently. He emphasized that none of this was the fault of anyone, it was the result of a health pandemic that required extra steps to manage.

MR. SKIDMORE expressed his belief that one positive outcome from the pandemic was realizing the Division could do more remote work than previously thought possible. While prosecutors cannot fully telework because of daily court hearings, the Department's investment in laptops just before the pandemic proved valuable. It allowed work flexibly and efficiently from multiple locations. He said this experience improved operational nimbleness and adaptability. He said the subject is broad and

could be viewed from many angles if there are specific question about it.

[2:09:05 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to the graphs on slide 7, Misdemeanors. He stated that the trends for misdemeanors are very similar to those shown for felonies. Both the overall number of misdemeanors filed and disposed decreased with the number of dispositions surpassing those filed. This means more cases were resolved than filed. Misdemeanor trials rebounded, and conviction rates have increased. He characterized all of these developments as extremely positive.

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CHAIR CLAMAN observed that, excluding the pandemic years, the misdemeanor conviction rate at trial appears to be around 70 percent. He asked what the conviction rate at trial was approximately ten years before FY19 and requested insight into why the misdemeanor conviction rate seems to run about ten percent lower than the felony conviction rate.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that the Division's most experienced prosecutors generally handle felony cases. This does not mean that misdemeanor prosecutors are less capable; instead, they tend to be newer to the profession and are still gaining experience. He said the difference in experience level is one factor that stands out.

MR. SKIDMORE said that another factor is the sheer volume of misdemeanor cases compared to felonies. He noted that approximately 6,000 felony cases were filed in FY24, while misdemeanor filings totaled around 9,000, roughly 3,000 more cases. He said that this larger caseload, combined with the fact that misdemeanor prosecutors often have less time for in-depth case review and preparation, may contribute to the lower conviction rate. He said felony cases are typically screened more carefully and handled by attorneys with more refined trial experience.

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MR. SKIDMORE moved to slide 8, Offices With The Highest Caseloads:

[Original punctuation provided.]

<b>CASELOADS</b>	<b>Dillingham</b>	<b>Palmer</b>	<b>Ketchikan</b>
Total: Felony &	289	2783	554

Misdemeanors

Total Felonies	109	909	139
	including	including	including
	28 Murders,	112 Murders,	15 Murders,
	SAMs, & SAs	SAMs, & SAs	SAMs, & SAs
Average Open Caseload	289	253	185
<u>Per Prosecutor</u>			

MR. SKIDMORE stated that slide 8 shows total case numbers. He explained that the numbers shown on the previous two slides represent the number of cases filed in a given year. However, the total number of cases handled by the Division are significantly higher due to the time required for disposition. As a result, the overall caseload for prosecutors is substantially higher than the annual filing numbers alone would suggest. He said slide 8 only references felony and misdemeanor cases that are open, active prosecutions, and omits petitions to revoke probation, appeals-some of which are handled by line attorneys, and post-conviction relief cases. There is a substantial difference in actual workload numbers that slides 6 and 7 do not reflect.

MR. SKIDMORE stated that the Division's goal is for prosecutors to handle approximately 100 cases each. The offices represented on the slide are all operating well above that target. He stated that the Division submitted budget requests related to this issue. He said the purpose of presenting this information is to give the committee a clear sense of current caseload levels and how those workloads affect the various offices.

[2:14:13 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked whether the National District Attorneys Association has established a best practices standard for caseloads or whether the target of 100 cases per prosecutor is specific to Alaska.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he was not aware of a target number for best practices. National District Attorneys Association information indicates it is difficult to determine an appropriate number of cases. He explained that caseloads encompass a great scope of crimes, from Class B misdemeanors, which may carry a maximum of 90 days in jail, to serious offenses such as homicides, which require far more time and resources. The time commitment between those two types of cases

differs dramatically, making it hard to come up with an exact number.

MR. SKIDMORE said that the Division had reviewed several case studies that recommended approximately 50 to 75 felonies per prosecutor, with slightly higher numbers for misdemeanors. Because most prosecutors in Alaska handle a mix of both, the Division set a target of about 100 cases, with the exception of Dillingham, as a balanced estimate. He clarified that this figure represents the average caseload per office, calculated by dividing the total number of cases handled by the number of prosecutors assigned to that office. A 100-case target is an Alaska-based goal derived from available research.

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SENATOR TOBIN noted that experience appears to be a factor in case disposition success. She asked whether the 100-case target applies to all prosecutors, or whether newer prosecutors are assigned smaller caseloads to allow more time for learning.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that the 100 cases is meant to apply to all prosecutors. He agreed that experience affects efficiency and outcomes, noting that more seasoned prosecutors are typically able to handle larger caseloads more efficiently than less experienced prosecutors.

[2:17:03 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to slides 9 and 10, Appellate Workload Over the Years. Slides 9 and 10 represent cases handled by the Office of Criminal Appeals, which is an office in the Criminal Division. The bar graph provides a visual comparison, by year, of the number of briefs filed, the number of briefs received, and the number of cases opened, whereas the chart on slide 10 provides the same data in actual numbers.

[2:17:20 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE drew attention to the chart on slide 9 and explained that:

- The gray line represents the number of briefs filed by the Office of Criminal Appeals each year.
- The dark blue line represents the number of opening briefs received. Opening briefs are typically filed by defendants.

- The light blue line represents the number of cases opened. Typically, a defendant initiates the appellate process by filing a Notice of Appeal.

MR. SKIDMORE stated that the chart spans roughly ten years. He highlighted that one point of pride for the Division is that the gray line—the number of briefs filed by the Division—has almost always remained above the dark blue line. This means the appeals office has kept pace with, or exceeded, the incoming appellate workload. He expressed concern about the sharp rise in the number of Notices of Appeal that were filed in 2023 and 2024. He explained this indicates that while the Division is not yet under immediate strain, the enormous number of appellant filings signals an impending increase in workload and pressure on staff. He stated that it is an area the Division is monitoring closely.

2:19:18 PM

SENATOR MYERS referred to the spike in open cases in 2023 and 2024. He asked whether defendants delayed filing because of the pandemic and, under normal circumstances, might have filed those notices earlier. He further wondered whether the spike could instead reflect insufficient attention to the work during the pandemic, which may have led to errors, thus opening the door to appeals.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that is one potential explanation, but he expressed uncertainty that it is the only explanation for the dramatic increase. He explained that as the number of trials rise, it is natural to expect a corresponding rise in Notices of Appeal. He said what concerns the Division is that the volume of appeals has climbed to levels not seen in prior years, even when the number of trials was similar. He offered another possible reason for the spike, citing the increased funding received by the state's public defense agencies around 2022. He said those funding increases were warranted, but there appears to be a notable correlation between that additional support and the rise in appeal filings. He clarified that he was not asserting causation, only that it is an interesting pattern worth noting.

2:20:58 PM

CHAIR CLAMAN noted that, unlike some of the other statistics presented, the appellate figures reflect three separate events. He explained that the light blue line represents the number of Notices of Appeal filed, but that does not necessarily mean the corresponding opening brief—typically filed by the defendant—was submitted in the same year. He suggested that if a Notice of Appeal was filed in 2014, the opening brief might not have been

filed until 2015, and likely, the State's responsive brief would also have been filed in 2015. He observed that, unlike the trial case statistics, appellate data reflect the timing of specific filing events rather than the complete lifecycle of a case.

MR. SKIDMORE agreed, stating that is absolutely correct and there are two legitimate ways to interpret this data. One is to view it in terms of annual output—how many briefs were filed in a given year compared to how many new cases were initiated—to assess whether the workload is balanced. The other is to recognize that appellate filings do not follow a simple linear sequence within the same year; the process takes longer than trials. He explained that the average time to disposition for appellate cases is between three and five years, with a one- to two-year interval between the filing of a Notice of Appeal and the submission of the opening brief.

[2:22:49 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN said he shares the concern about the large number of filings in 2023 and 2024 and what it will take to process those cases as they move through the system. He observed that when compared to 2018, 2019, and 2020—generally pre-pandemic—the 2023 figures do not appear drastically different. He noted that 2024 is somewhat higher, but the 2023 levels seem comparable to earlier years, suggesting that while there may be an increase, it is not dramatically out of line.

MR. SKIDMORE agreed, stating that while the 2023 numbers are somewhat elevated, they are not alarming given the expected lag time in appellate processing. He said, however, the 2024 data are more concerning, particularly following the 2023 uptick. He explained that although he is not “ringing alarm bells,” the Division views the recent increase as an important trend to monitor closely. He noted that the three- to five-year disposition period remains a concern, and while the backlog had been declining in 2021 and 2022 as more cases were closed than opened, the pattern in 2023 and 2024 suggests a possible reversal. He expressed concern that appellate delays could begin to rise again, recalling that in 2017 and 2018, the court system and both prosecution and defense agencies had to work intensively to address a significant appellate backlog. He said the spike raises concerns that such a backlog could reemerge.

[2:25:23 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN remarked that he has no quarrel with that observation.

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SENATOR MYERS requested data on appeal outcomes, asking how many cases were overturned, retried, or upheld. He stated that if the vast majority of appeals resulted in no change, it would indicate that the Criminal Division is performing well, even with rising numbers. However, if a large number of cases were reversed or retried, it might warrant further discussion.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that there are two main categories of appellate resolutions: published opinions and summary dispositions on the merits. He reported that there were 31 published opinions, of which 14 were affirmed, eight were reversed or vacated, and six were affirmed in part and vacated in part—roughly a 50-50 split overall. He said there were 100 summary dispositions, with 84 affirmed, eight reversed, and four affirmed in part and reversed in part. He concluded that, taken together, a substantial majority of appeals were affirmed.

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CHAIR CLAMAN remarked that, based on the numbers for summary dispositions, he suspects that more than 80 percent of convictions were affirmed.

MR. SKIDMORE responded that he had not calculated the exact percentage but agreed that the affirmation rate would be good.

[2:27:31 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE continued the discussion of Appellate Workload Over the Years, slide 10:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Appellate Workload Over the Years**

	<b>Briefs Filed</b>	<b>Opening Briefs Received</b>	<b>Cases Opened</b>
2014 Total	153	134	154
2015 Total	168	154	157
2016 Total	148	141	148
2017 Total	181	164	166
2018 Total	162	131	195
2019 Total	139	128	169
2020 Total	139	131	150
2021 Total	147	130	100
2022 Total	126	95	99

2023 Total	88	81	153
2024 Total	97	117	203

MR. SKIDMORE stated that slide 10 has the same information shown on slide 9 but instead of a visual bar graph, the chart lists the exact number of briefs filed, opening briefs received, and cases opened. He explained that this format allows committee members another way to analyze the data.

[2:28:25 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to slide 11, Post Conviction Relief (PCR):

[Original punctuation provided.]

What is a PCR?

376 pending PCRs

Work of PCRs

- civil discovery
- review old files & old court records
- different legal issues/standards

<b>FY Year PCR was filed</b>	<b># of Cases</b>
2000 - 2009	6
2012 - 2015	15
2016 - 2019	68
2020	40
2021	30
2022	44
2023	47
2024	80
2025	46
Grand Total	376

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MR. SKIDMORE explained that post conviction relief (PCR), refers to cases in which an individual has already been tried, convicted, and exhausted the standard appellate process, but then seeks to challenge the conviction through a secondary method known as a collateral attack. He said these petitions are typically based on claims of newly discovered evidence, allegations of ineffective assistance of counsel, or something along those lines.

MR. SKIDMORE said the rationale behind including this slide is to highlight the number of pending PCRs. He underscored that of

the six PCR cases filed between 2000 and 2009, all six remain unresolved. He stated that the cases are old, still kicking around, and pending outcomes. A PCR can be 24 years old and still active. That is how long they can last, and they substantially affect the workload of staff handling them.

MR. SKIDMORE emphasized that it is cause for concern that there are 376 post conviction relief cases and the length of time they have remained active. He stated that these cases tend to languish for extended periods. He noted that the matter has been raised during the budget process and that the Division has requested resources to help address it. He stated that he included this information at the committee's request.

[2:30:14 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to slide 12, Time to Disposition:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Time to Disposition (Determined by the mean)**

Felonies 2-3 years

Misdemeanors 1-1.5 years

Appeals 3-5 years

MR. SKIDMORE explained that the Division's figures were calculated using the mean, or the average length of time required to resolve a trial case. He said the court system presented its data to the committee using the median, which reflects how long it took to dispose of a typical case and does not account for all the pretrial activity the Division undertakes to prepare cases for trial. He reiterated that the Division used the mean to determine its timeframes, emphasizing that the mean incorporates data from all cases and captures both the time to reach trial and the time to dispose of each case.

MR. SKIDMORE said that using the mean provides a more comprehensive picture, as it accounts for how long it takes a case to reach trial as well as how long it takes to reach final disposition. He emphasized that this broader measure aligns with the concerns most often raised by citizens and reported in the media regarding delays in case resolution. He said this is why the Division relies on the mean rather than the median when presenting its figures.

MR. SKIDMORE said the numbers on the slide were taken from research conducted by the Alaska Criminal Justice Data Analysis Commission and not merely numbers the Department calculated. He noted that the court system provided the data on how long it takes a case to get through the appellate process in the Court of Appeals, shown as 3 - 5 years.

[2:32:40 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to a bar graph on slide 13, Prosecutor Vacancy, which compared the following prosecutor vacancy rates for FY23 - FY25:

**Prosecutor Vacancy Rates Comparison  
FY23 - FY25**

	<u>Lacking a Body</u>	<u>Still Recruiting</u>
FY23	15 percent	7 percent
FY24	11 percent	7 percent
FY25	11 percent	6 percent

MR. SKIDMORE said on this particular slide, the vacancy rate for prosecutors in FY23 was 15 percent and in FY25 declined to 11 percent, a level of improvement the Division is very proud of. The next column over represents the total number of positions the Division is "still recruiting" for at a particular time. He explained that in FY23, there were 21 position control numbers (PCNs) where nobody physically sat at the desk and performed work. However, of that 15 percent vacancy rate, only about 7 percent represented positions where no one had yet accepted an offer. For example, if a law student accepts a position but cannot begin for six months, that PCN is still listed in the "Lacking a Body" column because the individual is not yet physically in the seat, even though the position is technically filled. He said the data therefore provide two perspectives: the number of positions that are vacant at a specific moment and the number of those vacancies for which recruitment is still ongoing. This distinction helps illustrate both the current staffing status and the Division's progress in filling open positions.

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SENATOR KIEHL asked at what point in time the vacancy data represents in each of these year.

MR. SKIDMORE replied January.

SENATOR KIEHL asked how the data might compare if viewed as a weighted number over the course of an entire year.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he does not know the answer to that.

SENATOR KIEHL asked if January is a particularly high vacancy month. He expressed uncertainty about graduate timelines for taking the bar, accepting job offers, and completing clerkships and asked whether January tends to be a period of particularly high vacancies.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he did not pick January because it represented a particularly high or low vacancy month. The Division picked January because it is right before session begins, when the legislature requested the numbers. Thus, it represent the most recent information at the time of the request.

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CHAIR CLAMAN offered an observation about the timing of new hires and recent law graduates. He noted that within the Alaska Court System, judicial clerkships for new graduates typically end in August or September. He said many of those clerks later accept positions with State agencies after taking some personal time. As a result, the month of January is a likely month for graduates to start work following their clerkships.

MR. SKIDMORE said in January, the Division has a number of third-year law students who accept positions but delay their start date until June or July because they are still completing their studies. He explained that this accounts for some of the difference on the chart between vacancies and accepted offers. He reiterated that January was chosen as the reporting point simply because it aligns with the timing of legislative requests for data.

MR. SKIDMORE highlighted another important point, stating that in 2023 the Division had a total of 141 prosecutor positions, compared to 146 in 2025. He said not only has the vacancy rate decreased, but the total number of authorized positions has increased, representing another positive factor to consider when reviewing these numbers.

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MR. SKIDMORE moved to the bar graph on slide 14, Paralegal Vacancy, which compared the following paralegal vacancy rates for FY23 - FY25:

**Paralegal Vacancy Rates Comparison  
FY23 - FY25**

	<u>Lacking a Body</u>	<u>Still Recruiting</u>
FY23	12 percent	8 percent
FY24	7 percent	8 percent
FY25	7 percent	5 percent

MR. SKIDMORE stated that the same analysis was conducted for paralegal positions, showing a significant improvement in vacancy rates. He pointed out an interesting detail in his 2024 data, where the number of vacant positions was lower than the number of positions under active recruitment. He explained that this occurs because the Division can notice upcoming departures and begin recruiting for those positions before the current employees have actually left.

[2:37:19 PM](#)

MR. SKIDMORE moved to the bar graph on slide 15, Support Staff Vacancy, which compared the following support staff vacancy rates for FY23 - FY25:

**Support Staff Vacancy Rates Comparison  
FY23 - FY25**

	<u>Lacking a Body</u>	<u>Still Recruiting</u>
FY23	14 percent	8 percent
FY24	7 percent	8 percent
FY25	12 percent	10 percent

MR. SKIDMORE stated that the same analysis was conducted for support staff and law office assistants. He reported that there was a significant decrease in vacancy rates from 2023 to 2024, followed by a slight uptick in 2025; however, the 2025 rate remains lower than in 2023. He noted, by way of explanation, that the Division added positions during this period—six additional paralegal positions between 2022 and 2025, and nine

additional law office assistant positions over the same timeframe. He said it is encouraging that vacancy rates have continued to decline even as the total number of positions has grown, describing these trends as very positive developments for the Division.

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MR. SKIDMORE moved to pie charts on slide 16, Prosecutor Experience. The committee specifically requested this topic for discussion. He said the vacancy rate is declining, meaning job recruitment and retention have improved. He pointed out that not every range has the same number of years, so the amount of experience is not always an exact "apples-to-apples" or direct comparisons. He compared Division's 2022 and 2025 experience and retention figures as follows:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>PERCENTAGES/ PROSECUTORS</u>	<u>YEARS OF EXPERIENCE RANGES</u>	<u>MR. SKIDMORE'S COMPARISON COMMENTS ON THE 2022 &amp; 2025 DATA</u>
2022	22 percent/ 26 prosecutors	15+	The percentage increased and the raw number of years of experience has risen substantially.
2025	27 percent/ 34 prosecutors	15+	
2022	14 percent/ 16 prosecutors	10 to 15	Although not an exact apples-to-apples range comparison, retention increased substantially.
2025	22 percent/ 28 prosecutors	8 to 15	
2022	19 percent/ 22 prosecutors	5 to 10	Again, not an apples-to-apples comparison, but the years of experience increased.
2025	22 percent/ 28 prosecutors	4 to 8	
2022	21 percent/ 25 prosecutors	2 to 5	Retention in this range declined by nearly 50 percent
2025	11 percent/ 13 prosecutors	2 to 4	
2022	24 percent/ 28 prosecutors	0 to 2	Retention in this range declined.
2025	18 percent/ 23 prosecutors	0 to 2	

MR. SKIDMORE summarized the discussion, stating the Division has done a much better job with retention overall. He attributed

much of this progress to legislative support for increased pay and expanded training opportunities and expressed his appreciation for that support.

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SENATOR MYERS sought clarification on whether years of experience only includes time spent with the Department of Law or does it include time transferred from other agencies as well.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that the totals include experience from other agencies as well. He said the Division considers an attorney's overall years of experience, not just time served within the Department of Law. He emphasized that lateral hires—those joining from other offices with prior prosecutorial experience—are highly valued, as they bring significant benefit to the Division. That experience is included in the figures shown in the pie charts.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked why the ranges for years of experience were setup without data that allowed for an exact, apples-to-apples comparison.

MR. SKIDMORE apologized and explained that the data were produced in that format and once he realized the ranges were structured differently, there was not enough time to have them redone before the presentation. He said despite the differences, the charts are still illustrative of the improvements that have been made in retention, even if it's not exact.

CHAIR CLAMAN asked whether revising the numbers to create exact apples-to-apples comparisons would be a major undertaking.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that it would probably take about one to two weeks to complete but said it could be done.

CHAIR CLAMAN responded that he would appreciate receiving that information.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he would revise data to ensure a direct comparison.

[2:42:36 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN observed that one of the biggest challenges in the past had been the shortage of prosecutors with five to fifteen years of experience. He said it appears there has been significant progress in strengthening that mid-level group. He

inquired about the factors that have contributed to the retention success of this group.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that there has been a substantial increase in prosecutors with five to fifteen years of experience. He said the pie chart shows those categories expanding, reflecting growth not only among the most senior prosecutors but also within the mid-level ranks, the "yeomen" who are steadily advancing through the Division. He stated that this is a point of pride for the Division and attributed much of the improvement to pay increases, which he said made a significant difference. He said that another factor contributing to retention success were training opportunities, which he covers on the next slide.

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MR. SKIDMORE moved to slide 17, Training. He stated that over the past four to five years, the Division has made substantial efforts to expand and strengthen its training programs for prosecutors. He said this initiative stemmed from internal surveys showing that staff wanted more training opportunities. He explained that the Division reviewed research on the subject, including an article titled Crisis and Prosecution, which was presented to the committee about two years earlier. That study examined strategies for improving retention and found that offices with strong training programs tended to retain staff more effectively, even without increases in pay or other benefits. He said Manhattan has one of those offices that is cited in research for having a phenomenal training program. It has maintained significantly higher retention rates than other offices in New York despite not having implemented major salary increases. He stated that the Division keyed in on training as an essential component needed for staff retention.

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MR. SKIDMORE said the Division now has two positions that are dedicated just to training. He listed the Division's training components:

- Onboarding for all new hires.
- A mentoring program.
- A week-long trial training academy focused on trial advocacy for beginners.
- An intermediate trial advocacy program that will launch this year.

- A week-long substantive law training for newer attorneys.
- The annual conference.
- Appellate update training offered throughout the year.
- Training related to sexual assault response teams and other sex-offense topics.

MR. SKIDMORE said that all of these training components are internal, except for the sex-crime training, which involves participation in external training programs.

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SENATOR STEVENS said he would like to know how Alaska's prosecutor salaries compare to those in other agencies, other states, or other organizations within the state that employ prosecutors.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that he did not have recent information available but would look into it and provide updated information to the committee.

SENATOR STEVENS asked with whom the Division competes for attorneys, suggesting the City of Anchorage as a possibility.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that the Division competes not only with the Municipality of Anchorage but also with prosecutors' offices nationwide. He said the Division compares itself to a range of jurisdictions, large cities, mid-sized areas, and smaller communities, to assess competitiveness. He cited King County, Washington, as one benchmark. He emphasized that the Division faces a broader national challenge because the number of law school graduates has declined over the past decade, and bar passage rates have dropped. This combination results in a smaller pool of available attorneys, meaning the Division must compete with nearly every jurisdiction for talent.

MR. SKIDMORE stated that the most appropriate comparison remains with other prosecutors' offices, as those represent the fairest measure of competitiveness. He said the Division continues to face challenges in recruitment and retention but expressed appreciation for the progress made. He said the Division intends to maintain its efforts and not "take its foot off the gas," in order to retain its prosecutors.

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SENATOR STEVENS commented that it is important to keep up with compensation trends and that any comparative salary information would be helpful.

MR. SKIDMORE said he would make every effort to gather and provide that information.

[2:49:32 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN shared that in a Judiciary Finance Subcommittee hearing, members examined specific pay rates for prosecutors in Washington State, including those in King County and Oregon, as well as the county encompassing Portland. The committee concentrated on comparisons within the Pacific Northwest, recognizing that the issue has both national and regional elements. He mentioned that California was not considered a major focus.

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MR. SKIDMORE continued the discussion on slide 17, highlighting the value of the expanded training program. He emphasized the program's importance and that it is yielding strong results. He said the Division is extremely proud of its progress.

[2:50:35 PM](#)

SENATOR MYERS observed that violent crimes appear to have more trial delays and are generally higher-level offenses than property crimes. He noted that while property crimes have been decreasing, violent crimes have remained relatively stable or have increased slightly. He inquired about delays in prosecuting higher-level offenses and asked whether trial delays in those cases might affect crime rates and incident reporting.

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MR. SKIDMORE affirmed that the reduction in the crime rate has been more dramatic for property offenses than for violent crimes, although violent crimes have also trended downward over the last several years. He said he could not provide percentages without reviewing the data but recalled that while some categories of violent crimes ticked up, violent crimes as a whole declined by a few percentage points in those years.

MR. SKIDMORE stated that trial delays, particularly those resulting in dismissals or lower resolutions than prosecutors would have preferred, have a direct impact on the victims involved. He said he does not know if there is a correlation between delayed case resolution and overall crime rates,

underscoring that he has not studied the issue and has seen no clear data confirming that relationship.

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MR. SKIDMORE said the more immediate concern is the lack of justice provided to victims when delays occur. He said there is also concern that this lack of justice may affect whether people choose to report crimes. He explained that the Uniform Crime [Report] shows about a 15 percent decrease in reported sexual assaults, which could indicate either a positive reduction in offenses or, alternatively, fewer victims coming forward and reporting. He stressed that it is not yet known which explanation is correct, but if court delays were contributing to underreporting, that would be troubling. He emphasized that these are unknowns, and that the criminal justice system must continue to study to get answers.

MR. SKIDMORE informed the committee that the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault has reauthorized another Alaska Victimization Study, scheduled for 2026. He said the goal is to compare reductions in reported crimes with the new victimization data to determine whether the decline reflects fewer actual offenses or simply fewer reports. He concluded that those in the criminal justice system are watching these trends closely to understand what is truly occurring.

[2:55:16 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN informed the committee that, regarding trial delays in the world of three separate branches of government, the Supreme Court recently issued a new Supreme Court order on pretrial procedures. He said this indicates that, beyond the discussions occurring in the Capitol, the judicial branch has taken action by adopting a new order that addresses some of the same concerns raised in this hearing.

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SENATOR MYERS said that is good news and he is interested in seeing the Supreme Court order.

CHAIR CLAMAN replied that he would provide it to him.

SENATOR MYERS said that he obtained his crime rate figures from an Alaska Beacon article published about a month ago, which referenced the National Crime Victimization Survey. He noted that survey is updated annually. He said he is interested in comparing Alaska's numbers to national trends. The National Crime Victimization Survey indicates only about half of violent

crimes are reported, which is troubling if Alaska's rates are on par.

MR. SKIDMORE pointed out that the Alaska Victimization Study focuses specifically on sex offenses, not all violent crime. He explained that because sexual offenses have been such a significant issue in the state, available funding and research has been directed toward that area. The Alaska Victimization Survey is conducted about every five years due to limited funding.

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SENATOR STEVENS said that as a former educator, he is interested in the Department's training academy. He asked whether it is Alaska-centric and department-run or whether the university and outside experts are involved. He asked him to elaborate on the mentorship program as well.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that department staff operate the academy internally. He said the department employs its own trainers, and other prosecutors also assist with instruction. He explained that the training is Alaska-specific and focused on Alaska law, which is the central concept behind the program. He stated that the university is not typically involved in instruction because its faculty do not necessarily have the expertise to teach Alaska law or trial practice. However, the Department has collaborated with the University of Alaska Anchorage, including the recent remodeling of one of its courtrooms into a shared training facility for use by both the Department and the university. He emphasized that while partnerships exist, the training is conducted within the department for Alaska prosecutors.

SENATOR STEVENS asked about the mentorship program.

MR. SKIDMORE said the general concept is to pair new prosecutors with more experienced prosecutors.

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CHAIR CLAMAN asked whether, as part of the training, the department ever brings in prosecutors from outside the state as guest lecturers or if all instruction is conducted in-state.

MR. SKIDMORE replied that all training has been conducted in-state with individuals who are well-versed in Alaska-specific laws. He said outside experts could teach general trial advocacy, but substantive law and Alaska's legal framework is

different enough from other states that the Department's focus remains on in-state instruction.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Claman adjourned the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting at 2:59 p.m.