

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE

March 26, 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)

State Board of Parole
Leitoni Tupou - Juneau

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar
Donald Handeland - Eagle River

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

SENATE BILL NO. 78

"An Act relating to disclosure of information regarding employee compensation by employers, employees, and applicants for employment."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 78

SHORT TITLE: DISCLOSURE OF WAGE INFORMATION

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) DUNBAR

01/29/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/29/25	(S)	JUD, L&C

03/26/25

(S)

JUD AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

LEITONI TUPOU, Appointee
State Board of Parole
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as a governor's appointee to the State Board of Parole.

DONALD HANDELAND, Appointee
Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar
Eagle River, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified as a governor's appointee to the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar.

ARIELLE WIGGIN, Staff
Senator Forrest Dunbar
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Introduced SB 78 on behalf of the sponsor and presented the sectional analysis.

SENATOR FORREST DUNBAR, District J
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 78.

MIKE WALSH, Vice President of Public Policy
Foraker Group
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 78.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:30:20 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, Myers, Kiehl, Tobin, and Chair Claman.

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S)

STATE BOARD OF PAROLE

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE ALASKA BAR

[1:31:05 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN announced the consideration of a governor's appointee to the State Board of Parole.

CHAIR CLAMAN invited the Mr. Tupou, nominee to the State Board of Parole, to put himself on record and begin his testimony.

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LEITONI TUPOU, Appointee, State Board of Parole, Juneau, Alaska, provided a brief history of his experience and background. He said he served one term on the State Board of Parole and that this is his second appointment. He stated that the governor appointed him as chair of the Board in 2022. He served in various roles with the State of Alaska, including corrections officer, probation officer, and parole officer. He noted that he also served as director of the Division of Institutions during the Murkowski administration and as deputy commissioner of the Department of Corrections during the first term of the Dunleavy administration.

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SENATOR TOBIN asked for his insight on why the Board removed demographic data from public websites and why information about parole practices have become opaque. She said she would like to understand the factors that lead to a decline in discretionary parole.

MR. TUPOU addressed the question regarding the removal of demographic data, stating that the Board made the decision. He explained that for many years, the Board had little involvement in determining what data appeared on the State Board of Parole website. After he became chair, the Board reviewed statutes to determine what the law allowed it to do with data on the website. He said that upon review, members found that much of the posted data did not appear to serve a clear purpose. For historical continuity, the website retains some data. However, the law did not require the Board to make demographic data publicly available on its website. He stated that was the reason the Board decided to remove it from the website.

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SENATOR TOBIN emphasized that she is an advocate for transparency and noted that public access to information does not need to be legally required to be valuable. She said that sharing data helps the public better understand emerging trends.

SENATOR TOBIN inquired about reasons the Board is granting significantly fewer discretionary paroles. She observed that while the Department of Corrections continues to experience growth in its prison population and associated cost pressures,

the Board has granted fewer discretionary paroles. She stated that parole can serve as an important tool for reducing costs to the State, particularly when individuals are prepared for and capable of succeeding under parole supervision.

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MR. TUPOU sought clarification, asking whether she was comparing data from before the enactment of Senate Bill 91.

SENATOR TOBIN replied yes, explaining that prior to Senate Bill 91, approximately 50 percent of parole hearings resulted in the granting of discretionary parole, whereas during his tenure that number has declined to 27 percent.

MR. TUPOU offered to review the data in more detail, noting that those percentages do not accurately reflect the situation. He explained that in 2024 the Board conducted 181 individual parole hearings for 181 applicants. He stated that, to accurately interpret the data, it is important to note that in 2024 the Board granted discretionary parole to:

- 64 percent of applicants with drug-related offenses
- 57 percent of applicants with homicide-related offenses
- 46 percent of applicants with property crime-related offenses

MR. TUPOU referenced a Legislative Audit report conducted on this issue and pointed out that Exhibit 5 of the report showed an overall discretionary grant rate of only 25 percent, which he found inconsistent with the Board's data. He emphasized that the Board conducts hearings on an individual basis rather than in collective groups, which may account for differences in how the data were reported.

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SENATOR TOBIN said additional discussion may help clarify differences between the Board's perspective, the auditor's findings, and the historical record. She noted his earlier comments, in which he mentioned granting discretionary parole for specific types of crimes. She expressed her belief that parole decisions should not be based solely on the offense committed, but rather on individual accomplishments made while incarcerated to restore and repair harm. As well as a demonstration of readiness to reenter the community through systems of support. She asked for his perspective on whether deficiencies exist within the Department of Corrections that

should be addressed to increase successful discretionary parole opportunities, or whether parole decisions are primarily based on the nature of the crime committed.

MR. TUPOU discussed substance abuse, stating that it is a big issue statewide. He said that, from his perspective, assisting individuals who appear before the Board seeking early release depends heavily on the availability and quality of rehabilitative programs. He noted that while Alaska has programs, there is not enough capacity to accommodate everyone who wishes to participate. He acknowledged that such programs are costly and that finding providers can be difficult. However, he emphasized his belief that, for the Board to consider early parole effectively, the State must prioritize programs and service providers not only in quantity but also in quality to support individuals seeking rehabilitation and reintegration.

1:42:00 PM

SENATOR TOBIN said that it is helpful to understand that the State must improve both the quantity and quality of its drug treatment programs to support successful parole applications. She inquired about the decline in successful medical and geriatric parole cases. She observed that, as a member of the Department of Corrections Senate Finance Subcommittee, she has seen incarceration costs, including the cost for geriatric inmates, increase substantially. She asked for his recommendations on how to improve the rate of successful medical and geriatric parole applications, both to assist with cost containment and to ensure that those individuals are released with the resources necessary to reintegrate successfully into the community.

MR. TUPOU stated that, from his perspective, two principles guide parole decisions: the law of justice and the law of mercy. He said the law of justice applies to medical parole. He explained that, at times, the Board would like to release certain individuals. However, the Board's hands are tied because these individuals do not meet the statutory criteria for medical release. He recommended that the Legislature review statutes governing medical parole. He noted that just last month the Board reviewed the case of a 92-year-old offender. He said while it is important to bear in mind that the State bears significant costs to care for such an individual, the Board must also consider the seriousness of that individual's offense. The applicant committed a particularly heinous crime. He explained that under current law, the individual does not qualify for release. He expressed his belief that lawmakers should review

applicable statutes to determine whether situations like this warrant the application of the law of mercy rather than the law of justice.

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CHAIR CLAMAN recalled that, at one point—possibly before the appointee’s tenure—the State Board of Parole routinely denied parole to nearly all applicants. He said that this practice raises concerns both from a cost perspective and from the standpoint of incentives for inmates. He explained that custody expenses rise as capacity rises. He further stated that if incarcerated individuals believe they have no realistic chance of being granted parole, it undermines the rehabilitative purpose that the system is intended to promote. He asked whether the Board has identified ways the Legislature could help make it more comfortable granting parole. He expressed his belief that the numbers have improved since the early part of Governor Dunleavy’s administration and asked for suggestions on how to further increase the Board’s willingness to grant parole.

MR. TUPOU replied that there are times when applicants want to participate in required programs, and the Board would like to approve their release, but no treatment beds are available. He said the Board faces this challenge frequently and sometimes continues hearings while waiting for a program opening. He explained that the Board releases some individuals to programs, not directly into the community. He explained that while parole officer supervision and employment opportunities are valuable, reducing recidivism requires supervision through structured programs such as substance abuse treatment, sex offender treatment, and mental health services.

[1:47:24 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN announced consideration of a governor’s appointee to the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar.

CHAIR CLAMAN invited Mr. Handeland, nominee to the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar, to put himself on record and begin his testimony.

[1:47:50 PM](#)

DONALD HANDELAND, Appointee, Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar, Eagle River, Alaska, gave a brief history of his experience and background. He said he is a lifelong Alaskan, born and raised in Nome, and has always had a deep appreciation for the law and the practice of law. He stated that he earned a degree in civil engineering and finance from Oregon State University

and later moved to Eagle River, where he has worked on various engineering projects throughout the state. He said he is currently employed as a transportation engineer with HDR in Anchorage, focusing primarily on projects in Southcentral Alaska. He said he maintains a strong interest in business and construction law as it relates to his engineering career and has a deep passion for the legal profession. He noted that he has served on several state boards, including the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education and the Alaska State Personnel Board. He said his involvement in state boards began when he was 16 years old, serving as the student member on the State Board of Education and Early Development. He expressed that he enjoys public service and values the role of professional boards. He commended Alaska's commitment to including public members on such boards and said that, as an engineer, he particularly appreciates public participation on the Alaska Board of Engineers and Architects. He stated that he would be honored to contribute an outside perspective to the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar.

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SENATOR TOBIN asked about a 20-day public notice requirement that the appointee disregarded while serving as chair of the Alaska State Officers Compensation Commission. She invited him to talk about what occurred on the record.

MR. HANDELAND replied that the compressed timeline—triggered by the legislature's rejection of the commission's recommendation, the governor's veto, and the subsequent window for a legislative override—dictated the urgency of the commission's actions. He explained that the override of the 20-day notice applied to commission members rather than to the public. If a member had objected to calling the meeting on short notice, that member could have objected and requested the meeting be postponed. He stated that the commission acted in consultation with and under the guidance of the Department of Law, who advised that the public comment had already occurred for its prior recommendations. He said he is not an attorney and therefore deferred to the Department of Law for its legal judgment and advice. He said that, to the best of his knowledge, the commission followed the appropriate process. He acknowledged that members of the public felt that it was not that clean and sympathized. However, the commission was up against timelines and acted with the Department of Law's advice.

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SENATOR TOBIN noted that the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar makes recommendations to the Alaska Supreme Court regarding legal determinations and educational matters. She asked how the appointee would ensure and uphold his responsibility to maintain public trust and transparency in the process

MR. HANDELAND affirmed that public trust is an essential part of the process and of serving the public. He acknowledged that actions taken by the Alaska State Officers Compensation Commission had been subject to public criticism. He said that, as a public member on the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar, he does not have an agenda or any predetermined outcomes he wishes to advance. He stated that he represents the perspective of non-lawyers, and his intent is to provide a public viewpoint to the Board's actions and recommendations.

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SENATOR KIEHL observed that the licensing of attorneys has undergone more changes than many other professions in recent years, including adjustments to bar exam cut scores and continuing legal education requirements. He asked what his priorities are for the work as a member of the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association.

MR. HANDELAND replied that one major change involves the transition to a different bar examination and ensuring that Alaska continues to attract high-quality attorneys. He said the state is experiencing a form of brain drain, with individuals leaving Alaska. He stated that one of his priorities is maintaining standards that draw capable and committed professionals to practice law in Alaska. He noted that some of the recent changes occurred before his appointment to the Board, so he was not involved in those decisions. He reviewed the meeting minutes to familiarize himself with the Board's recent actions and priorities.

1:57:34 PM

CHAIR CLAMAN noted that his appointment appeared to have occurred in 2024 and asked whether he had been confirmed by the legislature during a joint session.

MR. HANDELAND replied that the governor appointed him after the legislature conducted its joint session for the confirmation of appointments.

CHAIR CLAMAN asked how many meetings of the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar he had attended since his appointment.

MR. HANDELAND replied that he attended three.

CHAIR CLAMAN commented that the Alaska Bar Association has a long history of collaboration with the public members on the Board. Sometimes they work together and to identify areas where public concerns may not have been fully addressed, and through that collaboration, public members have often been able to play an influential role. He asked whether the appointee had observed or experienced that thus far.

MR. HANDELAND replied that everyone on the Board has been very welcoming and friendly. He said the Board recently addressed matters related to escrow accounts for defense attorneys, which was somewhat confusing for someone outside the legal profession. He expressed his belief that involving public members in discussions provides valuable opportunities to consider alternative perspectives and explore new approaches to long-standing practices that might benefit from review or change.

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CHAIR CLAMAN opened public testimony on the governor's appointees to the State Board of Parole and Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar; finding none, he closed public testimony.

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CHAIR CLAMAN solicited a motion.

[2:01:32 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL stated [that in accordance with AS 39.05.080,] the Senate Judiciary Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointments be advanced to a joint session for consideration:

State Board of Parole
Leitoni Tupou - Juneau

Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar
Donald Handeland - Eagle River

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.

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CHAIR CLAMAN stated the appointee's names will be advanced to a joint session for consideration.

[2:02:01 PM](#)

At ease.

SB 78-DISCLOSURE OF WAGE INFORMATION

[2:03:54 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 78 "An Act relating to disclosure of information regarding employee compensation by employers, employees, and applicants for employment."

CHAIR CLAMAN said that this is the first hearing of SB 78 in the Senate Judiciary Committee. He invited the bill sponsor to put himself on record and begin.

[2:04:28 PM](#)

SENATOR FORREST DUNBAR, District J, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, introduced himself.

[2:04:52 PM](#)

ARIELLE WIGGIN, Staff, Senator Forrest Dunbar, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, introduced SB 78 on behalf of the sponsor and presented the sectional analysis. She introduced SB 78, as paraphrased below:

SB 78 does four key things: it prohibits employers from asking about an applicant's salary history; job postings must include salary or salary range disclosures; protects a worker's right to discuss wages; and bars retaliation for doing so. The bill addresses a well-documented issue called wage scarring. After mass layoffs or other events that are uncontrollable in employees' lives, displaced workers earned significantly less in their first year coming back from a recession. The 2008 recession, for example, resulted in displaced earners earning 27 percent less in their first year and 10 percent less after a decade. Much of this is due to accepting unstable or lower-quality employment post layoff or post illness. Removing salary history from the application cycle helps break the cycle by ensuring returning workers aren't anchored to lower past wages outside of their control.

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MS. WIGGIN continued the introduction of SB 78:

Coincidentally, yesterday was Equal Pay Day, which was observed on March 25. Equal Pay Day is a reminder that in 2024, women earned 85 percent of what their male counterparts earned, indicating that they are paid significantly less than men. It took until March 25 for women to catch up to the salaries earned by their counterparts the previous year. It takes much longer for those in other demographics who are paid much less. It may take Alaska Native individuals a full year to catch up to their previous salaries, as they earned 53 percent on the dollar in 2024.

Salary transparency is a proven step forward to closing these gaps. Federal law already protects wage discussions, but this bill reinforces that protection in State law and makes compensation expectations clear from the start. This bill has an incompatibility measure allowing enforcement through fines, and also ensures pay is based on current skills, not outdated or inequitable past wages. It streamlines hiring by reducing the time spent on interviews that fall apart over salary discussions.

Alaska's workforce deserves clarity, fairness, and respect. This bill is a practical next step. Thank you for your support.

[2:07:21 PM](#)

MS. WIGGIN presented the sectional analysis for SB 78:

[Original punctuation provided.]

SECTIONAL ANALYSIS

SB 78: DISCLOSURE OF WAGE INFORMATION

Sec. 1: Amends AS 23.10 *Employment Practices and Working Conditions* by adding **Article 9. Disclosure of Employee Compensation** and the following sections:

- **Sec. 23.10.700. Disclosure of Discussion Wages:**
 - (a) Requires job postings to include a salary or salary range.
 - (b) Allows applicants and employees to discuss current wage, prohibits employers from asking

applicants about their salary history with another employer

(c) Clarifies that nothing in this section obligates an employee or applicant to disclose their compensation, prohibits an employee or applicant from voluntarily disclosing, or prohibits an employer from using information that is voluntarily disclosed under this subsection when determining the salary of an employee or applicant.

- **Sec. 23.10.705 Posting Summary Required** requires an employer to post information summarizing the bill's provisions.
- **Sec. 23.10.710 Retaliation Prohibited** prohibits an employer from retaliating against an employee for exercising a right under the bill.
- **Sec. 23.10.715 Damages for Retaliation** allows an employee to file a civil claim against an employer if the employer retaliates.

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MS. WIGGIN continued her presentation of the sectional analysis for SB 78:

- **Sec. 23.10.720 Statute of Limitations** gives an employee no more than 3 years after a violation to file a civil claim.
- **Sec. 23.10.725 Penalty** creates a fine between \$100-\$2000 for violations and directs the Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner to determine the amount. An employer may, at the discretion of the Commissioner, reduce the fine or correct the violation by conducting an audit.
- **Sec. 23.10.735 Regulations** adds language directing the Department of Labor and Workforce Development Commissioner to implement and interpret this bill and adopt regulations accordingly.
- **Sec. 23.10.790 Definitions** exempts independent contractors from the definition of "employee." Defines an "employer" as the state, the University

of Alaska, the Alaska Railroad Corporation, a political subdivision of the state, and a person who employs one or more employees.

- **Sec. 2:** Amends the uncodified law of the State of Alaska by adding a new section specifying that this Act applies to compensation for services performed on or after the effective date of this Act.

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SENATOR MYERS observed that the definition section mentions the University of Alaska and the Alaska Railroad Corporation, but does not mention other state-owned corporations, such as the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, and the Alaska Energy Authority. He asked why the bill does not include other entities.

MS. WIGGIN expressed her understanding that those other subdivisions are, by default, included in this law because they are considered employers under the State of Alaska. In contrast, the University of Alaska is sometimes considered an independent employer, as is the Alaska Railroad Corporation, because it is largely governed by federal law. She explained that those two entities are specifically included in the definitions section because they are not, by default, subject to this law. She said she will verify with Legislative Legal Services and respond in writing.

[2:10:31 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL stated that the legislation requires an employer to describe the compensation for a job with either a specific salary or a range of salaries. He asked what a reasonable goal is for a "range of salaries" description, wondering whether it could be as broad as between \$35,000 and \$185,000.

MS. WIGGIN replied that the bill does not detail this, and the sponsor would like to consider the question and respond in writing. She expressed that the hope is the department would review information from one of the other twenty-two states that have enacted similar laws and use that to inform the regulations Alaska creates. She said if the bill sponsor finds it is necessary to define the range, he would consider the change.

SENATOR KIEHL said that he is interested in how other states approached the subject of "range of salaries," so that it is meaningful, but also, not always a requirement that the employer post the precise salary.

SENATOR KIEHL said SB 78 requires some speech, such as posting salary and benefit ranges, and also prohibits some speech by preventing an employer from asking about an applicant's previous job salaries. He asked whether the sponsor foresees the potential for First Amendment concerns or challenges from employers.

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SENATOR DUNBAR replied that he did not believe this would constitute an actionable First Amendment issue. He explained that other states enacted similar laws, and it is his understanding that those laws have not been challenged. He stated that if those laws were challenged, they survived. He said that established employment law already places limits on what may be included in job postings, noting that employers cannot state, for example, that only certain races may apply. He said the bill fits within existing examples of what is considered proper or improper to include in a job listing.

SENATOR KIEHL remarked that was a fair response.

[2:13:23 PM](#)

SENATOR MYERS referred to page 1, line 14 through page 2, line 1, which states that an employer may not "ask an applicant for employment about compensation the applicant may have received from another employer...". He asked whether this includes not only compensation received from previous employers, but also compensation offered by potential employers with whom the applicant interviewed but did not accept a job offer.

MS. WIGGIN replied that the intent of the legislation pertains to salaries that were actually received. She said she would verify her response with Legislative Legal Services.

SENATOR MYERS recalled a personal example, stating that a coworker and he had both started working at the same company. The coworker shared that he had interviewed with another employer for a similar position, but the pay was too low, and the two ultimately ended up working together at the higher-paying job. The coworker relayed that information back to the first employer, explaining why he declined the offer. He said the other employer later contacted the coworker and reported that as a result of their conversation, the company increased its wages.

SENATOR MYERS said he understood that the goal of the legislation is to empower workers. He said the ability to compare wages empowers not only individual workers but can also prompt employers to adjust their wages. He noted that if the goal of SB 78 is transparency, this raises a concern about the prohibition. He expressed hesitancy about the restriction and requested further explanation for the rationale behind blocking questions about previous salary history.

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MS. WIGGIN replied that the intention of SB 78 is to disallow employers from asking about past wage history and other artifacts of a person's life, such as periods of illness, accepting lower-paid work due to childcare needs, performing childcare, or caring for an ill relative. She said those circumstances can create a wage record that does not reflect an applicant's true value. She stated that many studies show people's wages are artificially affected negatively by factors outside their control. She noted that recession scarring may include accepting lower-paying jobs, but the bill's intent is to prevent workers from being penalized because of the circumstances of life. She said she could return with several studies related to this issue.

[2:18:06 PM](#)

SENATOR MYERS said he is interested in reviewing some of the material at some point.

[2:18:11 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN noted that the legislation attempts to strike an interesting balance. He explained that while the bill prohibits an employer from asking about previous wages, an employee is free to disclose that information voluntarily. He said the bill allows an employer to express interest in knowing an applicant's prior wages, provided the employer does not compel the disclosure. Many applicants may choose to provide that information, and there is nothing improper about that. He said the balance the bill seeks to create—allowing an employee to disclose if they wish while preventing an employer from forcing the issue during the application process—is a subtle distinction.

[2:18:56 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN said that she served on the Association of Fundraising Professionals Women's Impact Initiative prior to serving with the legislature. The organization advocated for pay equity for all fundraising professionals within its membership

of forty-nine thousand individuals, predominantly women. She emphasized that people are paid not for the work they have done, but for the work they will do. Employers pay for an individual's potential, not solely for past experience. She said an employer may be interested in a person's background, but the individual will be asked to perform tasks beyond the scope of that background, and it is that potential in which the employer invests.

SENATOR TOBIN shared a story involving a close friend to illustrate her point. Her friend took a ten-year hiatus to raise her children and prepare them for school. When her friend reentered the workforce, her previous salary as a chief executive officer of a company was no longer competitive to present day salaries. She said that if her friend could be compelled to disclose her past salary and a potential employer based a new salary on that figure, the result would be inadequate given her experience and the value she would bring to any new position. She expressed her belief that the bill prudently ensures that individuals are protected from the wage impacts created by the various circumstances life may present.

[2:20:35 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN announced invited testimony on SB 78.

[2:21:01 PM](#)

MIKE WALSH, Vice President of Public Policy, The Foraker Group, Anchorage, Alaska, offered the following testimony in support of SB 78:

The Foraker Group serves as the state's nonprofit association and capacity builder for Alaska nonprofits. As the committed voice for Alaska's nonprofit sector, Foraker appreciates the opportunity to speak before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Senator Dunbar's SB 78: Disclosure of Wage Information. Our interest in this bill relates to the data that might emerge that helps us in our work related to gender pay equity. That's a topic we are generally genuinely dedicated to in our daily work and for the long haul.

For context, part of our commitment to Alaska's nonprofit sector is to be a source of research that can be translated into policy action focused on improving the lives of Alaskans and the communities where we live. For more than two decades, Foraker has

been gathering data and sharing information about the economic impact of nonprofits on Alaska's economy. We have gathered data on Alaska's nonprofit employment generally and specifically about Alaska's gender pay gap. While we recently released the most up-to-date information on nonprofit employment generally, we're also on the verge of publicly releasing our latest data on the persistent existence of that gender pay gap in Alaska. We understand that SB 78 is focused on pay transparency as it relates to the larger issue of workforce development, and not on ending the gender pay gap specifically. That being said, we know from our extensive research that one goes hand in hand with the other. In other words, pay transparency is a critical tool in addressing gender pay equity.

2:23:09 PM

MR. WALSH continued his invited testimony on SB 78:

In my limited time today, I simply want to reiterate that The Foraker Group supports SB 78, which will help with recruiting and retaining Alaska workers across all sectors of our economy, including the 34,000 jobs currently in the state's nonprofit workforce. Foraker has been committed to advancing pay transparency for more than a decade. We proudly model this commitment on our free job board, which is heavily utilized across the state as a trusted source of information on nonprofit employment opportunities. As part of that commitment, Foraker requires each organization that posts on the job board to list the pay range, and we explain why that's important. Beyond our own internal efforts, we know there is considerable documented research showing that pay transparency laws support all workers in their job searches. We know that filling vacant positions is time-consuming and expensive, and maximizing both the employees' time and the job seekers' time is in everybody's best interest.

Alaska will not be the first state to incorporate pay transparency, and we certainly don't want to be the last to adopt this commonsense solution for our workforce. Thank you, Senator Dunbar, for introducing SB 78, and we look forward to sharing more ways we can all promote a healthy and vibrant Alaska workforce. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

[2:25:04 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN opened public testimony on SB 78; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[2:25:29 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN cited statistics from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's publication, Alaska Economic Trends. She noted that the publication has long tracked the gender pay gap in Alaska and reported that Alaskan women earned seventy-six cents for every dollar earned by men in 2019. She emphasized that this disparity is not explained by differences in educational attainment, experience, or ability. She said it reflects a lack of adequate protections and transparency; factors known to influence whether women receive equitable pay.

SENATOR TOBIN said the approach proposed in SB 78 aligns with the pay-transparency laws adopted in ten other states. She stated that such laws are known to help close the gender pay gap in a significant way. She noted that over a lifetime, women collectively lose an estimated \$1.6 trillion in wage opportunity, which she said represents money that does not circulate through the economy, does not support gross domestic product growth, and does not help communities thrive. She stated that research shows 76 percent of women support closing the gender pay gap, with even higher levels of support among Black women and Alaska Native women. She expressed her belief that SB 78 is a prudent measure and said she hopes it advances during the legislative session.

[2:27:14 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN held SB 78 in committee.

[2:27:49 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Claman adjourned the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting at 2:27 p.m.