

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

February 18, 2025

3:29 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki, Chair
Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Vice Chair
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson
Senator Robert Yundt

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 31

"An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Administration; creating an address confidentiality program; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 31(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 43

"An Act establishing the month of March as Women's History Month."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 31

SHORT TITLE: ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) KIEHL

01/10/25	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(S)	STA, FIN
01/28/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
01/28/25	(S)	Heard & Held
01/28/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
02/18/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 43

SHORT TITLE: WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) GRAY-JACKSON

01/17/25 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/17/25
01/22/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25 (S) STA
02/18/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR JESSE KIEHL, District B
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 31.

LAUREE MORTON, Deputy Director
Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 31.

DEIRDRE GOINS, Staff
Senator Gray-Jackson
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the sectional analysis on SB 43.

JESSIE LAVOIE, CEO
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 43.

TERESA JACOBSSON, Founder
Alaska Women's Leadership Forum
Anchorage, Alaska
POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 43.

ACTION NARRATIVE

3:29:44 PM

CHAIR KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:29 p.m. Present at the called to order were Senators Gray-Jackson, Yundt and Chair Kawasaki. Senators Wielechowski and Bjorkman arrived shortly after.

SB 31-ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM

[3:30:55 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 31 "An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Administration; creating an address confidentiality program; and providing for an effective date."

[3:31:13 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited a motion.

[3:31:21 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for SB 31, work order 34-LS0306\N, as the working document.

[3:31:34 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI objected for purposes of discussion.

[3:31:45 PM](#)

SENATOR JESSE KIEHL, District B, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, as sponsor of SB 31 he explained the summary of changes as follows:

The committee substitute before the State Affairs Committee makes just one change. It tightens the title. It removes the broad phrase relating to the duties of the Department of Administration. And in that way, it gets much more specific to the actual contents of the bill, the address confidentiality program, and its effective date.

[3:32:38 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI removed his objection.

[3:32:45 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no further objection and CSSB 31 was adopted as the working document.

[3:33:10 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 31.

[3:33:28 PM](#)

LAUREE MORTON, Deputy Director, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Juneau, Alaska, testified in support of SB 31 as follows:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Most address confidentiality programs are one tool in part of a larger safety plan. Violence frequently escalates when people who choose to cause harm believe they are losing control of the victim. One of the most dangerous times for victims is when they attempt to leave. If victims are successful in escaping, the person causing harm will usually focus their energy on finding the victim; often searching public records including voter registration and driver's license rolls. The address confidentiality program will provide enhanced safety options for survivors.

Will the program be used frequently? I think it will be used occasionally when the circumstances are extreme, the danger real, and secrecy is critical to a victim's survival. It isn't a safety measure to be taken lightly—all first-class mail delivery will be delayed which of course is never optimal, but in these cases necessary. Safety planning will explore the necessity of subscribing to the program and afford the victim an opportunity to balance the potential gains in participating, against any detriments.

We appreciate the ability given to the department to set standards in addition to protective orders when making enrollment decisions. There are times and situations where protective orders are not in the best interest of the victim, when lethality is particularly high and providing information through the protective order is considered placing the victim at greater risk. In such situations it will be even more beneficial to allow the victim to enroll in the address confidentiality program.

One life lost to domestic violence is one too many. For survivors who are in danger, an address confidentiality program could be lifesaving.

[3:36:09 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI closed public testimony on SB 31.

[3:37:04 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[3:37:09 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN moved to report CSSB 31, work order 34-LS0306\N, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:37:29 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and CSSB 31(STA) was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

[3:37:41 PM](#)

At ease.

SB 43-WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

[3:39:01 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 43 "An Act establishing the month of March as Women's History Month."

[3:39:26 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON, speaking as the sponsor of SB 43 provided the following introduction:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Alaska's history is a story of resilience, strength, and leadership—qualities that are exemplified by the many women who have shaped our past and continue to guide our future. Yet, too often, the contributions of women are overlooked or relegated to the margins of our history books. That is why I am proud to stand before you in support of Senate Bill 43, which would officially designate March as Women's History Month in Alaska.

This recognition is long overdue. Women have been at the heart of Alaska's history—from the Indigenous women who have safeguarded cultural traditions for generations, to the pioneers who braved the harshest conditions to build our communities, to the educators, scientists, and public servants who have shaped policy and progress in our state.

Today, we are witnessing an inspiring shift. In 2025, Alaska's Legislature is home to **26 female legislators—the highest number in our history**. This milestone is not just a number; it is a testament to the progress we have made in ensuring women's voices are heard in

the halls of power. The formation of the first Women in Alaska Legislature Group underscores our collective commitment to elevating and supporting women's leadership.

By designating March as Women's History Month, we create an opportunity to formally recognize and celebrate these achievements. It will be a time for schools, community organizations, and individuals across our state to engage in meaningful conversations, learn about the remarkable women who have come before us, and inspire future generations of Alaskan women to lead in every sector of our society.

Honoring women's history is not just about the past; it is about shaping the future. When we uplift women's contributions, we reaffirm our commitment to equity, progress, and the enduring strength of our state.

I urge this committee to advance Senate Bill 43 so that we can ensure the stories of Alaska's women—past, present, and future—are told, honored, and celebrated.

[3:42:26 PM](#)

DEIRDRE GOINS, Staff, Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, provided the sectional analysis for SB 43:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Sectional Analysis-Version A

Section 1- Adds a new section to AS 44.12

Section 44.12.088. Women's History Month. The month of March each year is established as Women's History Month. Women's History Month may be observed by schools, community groups, and other public and private agencies and individuals with appropriate activities to honor and recognize the contribution that women have made in the history of the state and the nation.

[3:43:06 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced invited testimony on SB 43.

[3:43:40 PM](#)

JESSIE LAVOIE, CEO, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Anchorage, Alaska, testified by invitation in support of SB 43. She paraphrased the following statement:

[Original punctuation provided.]

YWCA Alaska has a long history of supporting Women leaders in our community. Since 1990, we have honored women and allies at an annual celebration, sharing their successes, and uplifting them through our Women of Achievement event. This long-standing tradition has recognized over 350 women, all of whom have left indelible marks on Alaska's history. We are forever grateful for the paths they walked and paved, so that younger generations of women know that they too can be a doctor, lawyer, community advocate, and more.

We are delighted to hear that Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson and her office are proposing SB43: An Act establishing the month of March as Women's History Month." We fully support this bill and her efforts, especially in these trying times when public support like this is so desperately needed. Over 60 percent of women 16 and older are in Alaska's workforce, from STEM fields to the medical field, small business owners to industry leaders. Women make up almost half of Alaska's workforce at 45.2 percent. Despite the near 50/50 split, women are still paid only 80.5 percent of men in the same position. While this has trended upward, it is still a noticeable gap.

Despite this, women persist and celebrating them in the month of March just makes sense. From our own pioneers like Elizabeth Peratrovich to our friends in the 34th Alaska State Legislature - Senate like Elvi Gray-Jackson, Loki Gale-Tobin, Cathy Giessel, Shelley Hughes, Kelly Merrick, and all our friends in the House of Representatives, these women have continued to pave the path that their predecessors started and to ensure it's there for women leaders to come.

YWCA Alaska stands with Senator Gray-Jackson, and all women in Alaska, and fully support this bill.

[3:46:06 PM](#)

TERESA JACOBSSON, Founder, Alaska Women's Leadership Forum, Anchorage, Alaska, testified by invitation on SB 43. She paraphrased the following:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Alaska's history is rich with the stories of resilient, courageous, and visionary women who have shaped our communities, our industries, and our government. From leaders preserving and advocating for their cultural heritage to women pioneering advancements in business, science, and public service – Alaskan women have played a pivotal role in our state's progress. Unfortunately, their contributions are often overlooked or underrepresented in our history.

By establishing March as Alaska Women's History Month, we create a meaningful opportunity for our government, schools, communities, and organizations to recognize and celebrate these contributions. This designation is not simply about reflection – it is about inspiration. It encourages the next generation of female leaders to see themselves in these stories and to know that their voices, ideas, and ambitions are part of Alaska's future.

Alaska has long been home to strong women who have defied odds, broken barriers, and led with strength. From Elizabeth Peratrovich, or the thousands of unsung women entrepreneurs, caregivers, educators, and leaders—their legacies deserve to be uplifted and recognized.

This bill is an opportunity to unify Alaskans in honoring the past, celebrating the present, and investing in the future of women in our state. The Alaska Women's Leadership Forum strongly supports this initiative and urges the passage of this bill.

Thank you again for your time and for your commitment to recognizing the impact of women in Alaska's history.

[3:48:14 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 43; finding none, he closed public testimony.

3:49:37 PM

CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 43 in committee.

3:50:44 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 3:50 p.m.