

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

March 18, 2025

3:33 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. 64

"An Act relating to elections; relating to voters; relating to voting; relating to voter preregistration for minors at least 16 years of age; relating to voter registration; relating to the Alaska Public Offices Commission; relating to synthetic media in electioneering communications; relating to campaign signs; relating to public official financial disclosures; relating to the crime of unlawful interference with voting in the first degree; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 35

"An Act relating to transportation network and delivery network companies."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 34

"An Act relating to the duration of a regular session of the legislature."

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 37

"An Act relating to the Executive Budget Act; relating to strategic plans, mission statements, performance plans, and

financial plans for executive branch agencies; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 64

SHORT TITLE: ELECTIONS

SPONSOR(s): RULES

01/24/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/24/25	(S)	STA, FIN
01/30/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
01/30/25	(S)	Heard & Held
01/30/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
02/04/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/04/25	(S)	Heard & Held
02/04/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/11/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/11/25	(S)	Heard & Held
03/11/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/13/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
03/13/25	(S)	Heard & Held
03/13/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
03/18/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 35

SHORT TITLE: DELIVERY NETWORK COMPANIES

SPONSOR(s): BJORKMAN

01/10/25	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(S)	STA, L&C
03/18/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 34

SHORT TITLE: REPEAL 90 DAY SESSION LIMIT

SPONSOR(s): GIESSEL

01/10/25	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(S)	STA, FIN
03/18/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 37

SHORT TITLE: STRATEGIC PLANS FOR STATE AGENCIES

SPONSOR (s) : KAUFMAN

01/10/25	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/10/25
01/22/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/22/25	(S)	STA, FIN
03/18/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

CAROL BEECHER, Director
Division of Elections
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Spoke to the proposed amendments for SB 64.

MARY DAVID, Executive Vice President
Kawerak Inc.
Nome, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 64.

ED MARTIN, representing self
Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 64.

MARGE STONEKING, Advocacy Director
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 64.

SAVAYA BIEBER, Staff
Senator Jesse Bjorkman
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the sectional analysis for SB 35.

JOHN FINLEY, Public Policy
Uber Eats
San Francisco, California

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 35.

PATRICK FITZGERALD, Political Coordinator
Teamsters Local 959
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified by invitation on SB 35.

JESSICA LYMAN, Government Affairs
Western U.S.
Instacart

San Francisco, California

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 35.

KARI NORE, Director

External Affairs

Alaska Chamber of Commerce

Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 35.

ANNA POWELL, Senior Manager

Government Relations

Door Dash

Seattle, Washington

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 35.

SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL, District E

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 34.

PAIGE BROWN, Staff

Senator Cathy Giessel

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided the sectional analysis for SB 34.

ED MARTIN, representing self

Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in opposition to SB 34.

SENATOR JAMES KAUFMAN, District F

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 37.

EMMA TORKELSON, Staff

Senator James Kaufman

Alaska State Legislature

Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided a summary of the sectional analysis for SB 37.

ED MARTIN, representing self

Kenai, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 37.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[3:33:04 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:33 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Wielechowski, Yundt and Chair Kawasaki. Senator Gray-Jackson arrived shortly thereafter.

SB 64-ELECTIONS

[3:34:14 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 64 "An Act relating to elections; relating to voters; relating to voting; relating to voter preregistration for minors at least 16 years of age; relating to voter registration; relating to the Alaska Public Offices Commission; relating to synthetic media in electioneering communications; relating to campaign signs; relating to public official financial disclosures; relating to the crime of unlawful interference with voting in the first degree; and providing for an effective date."

[3:35:56 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked Ms. Beecher to speak on ballot tracking and related issues.

[3:36:06 PM](#)

CAROL BEECHER, Director, Division of Elections, Anchorage, Alaska, spoke to the proposed amendments for SB 64 and answered that people can access the My Voter Portal (MVP) by contacting the Division of Elections to receive a code to log in. Once logged in the voter can see if their ballot was mailed or received by the division. With no cure process the voter won't be able to see or be notified of ballot issues until after the election.

[3:37:01 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked about potential issues with using a more extensive level of ballot tracking.

[3:37:15 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER responded that the division is in contact with ballot tracking vendors, like the vendor BallotTrax used by the City of Anchorage, to decide whether vendors can help solve ballot tracking problems.

[3:37:47 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI said that Anchorage is an urban area with post offices, but rural Alaska doesn't have the same

infrastructure. He asked if she could explain the complexities that exist with ballot tracking and what other option Alaska has besides putting RFID chips in each ballot.

[3:38:15 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER answered that one of the main challenges is the lack of ability to scan postal codes in rural areas and figuring out how to track ballots coming back to the division by adding the tracking mechanisms into the ballot envelopes. She opined that a ballot tracking system would not work in the rural areas at this time.

[3:39:15 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI referenced Section 41 [AS 15.20.221 and AS 15.20.222] and stated that the committee needs to review Section 41 to adhere to best practices, including ballot tracking.

[3:40:14 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI stated that he supports ballot tracking and asked if Alaska will be able to obtain a ballot tracking system under what the current laws require.

[3:40:35 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER responded that she will know more after meeting with the vendors.

[3:41:19 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI stated that in the sectional analysis for SB Section 43 says the director will provide secure ballot drop boxes at every division office. He noted in a previous election year there were secure ballot boxes outside of each division office in Anchorage and Fairbanks. He asked whether Ms. Beecher could adopt regulations to provide drop boxes outside of each division office.

[3:42:12 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER answered that the division doesn't own its own drop boxes. In 2020 it borrowed drop boxes from the municipality. She said for this provision to work the division would need to buy the drop boxes, have a place to store them in the off-election year, have a way to move them to the correct locations, install a security monitoring system with cameras, and during election time the boxes would need to be manned and closed by 8 pm. She stated that if the legislation passes a regulation that requires the division to provide pre-paid ballot envelopes, voters could go to the USPS and there wouldn't be a need for secure ballot boxes.

[3:43:39 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI agreed that there wouldn't be a need for ballot drop boxes if the division sent out pre-paid ballot envelopes. He asked if putting a ballot box in the Division of Elections would be a large cost.

[3:44:16 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER clarified if he was referring to an actual box similar to the ones the municipality has or a box you can put on the counter.

[3:44:29 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI answered that he thinks a box at the counter would suffice.

[3:44:33 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER answered that all election offices have drop boxes that can be used on election day.

[3:44:44 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI stated that the idea of requesting ballot drop boxes is getting expensive and asked if she had an estimate for the fiscal note.

[3:45:01 PM](#)

MS. BEECHER answered that the division knows the cost of the boxes but not the freight or monitoring system that will be required in tandem with the boxes.

[3:45:33 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 64.

[3:46:17 PM](#)

MARY DAVID, Executive Vice President, Kawerak Inc., Nome, Alaska, testified in support of SB 64 and listed some challenges from last elections namely: limited polling hours, staff shortages and rejected ballots due to missing witness signatures. She said during the general elections in 2024, House District 39 only had 40.9 percent show up to vote. She suggested removing the witness signature requirement to make it more convenient for rural Alaska and military to vote. She noted that many rural Alaskans residents speak English as a second language and having staff that could translate would be helpful.

[3:48:37 PM](#)

ED MARTIN, representing self, Kenai, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 64 and stated that by law, contractors that handle ballots must be bonded. He stated his belief that the witness signature and photo ID should remain required.

[3:50:58 PM](#)

MARGE STONEKING, Advocacy Director, American Association of Retired Persons Alaska (AARP), Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 64 and stated that AARP supports election laws that maximize the opportunity for voter participation and expand voter access, by removing the witness signature requirement of absentee mail-in ballots, creating a ballot curing process for voters, providing return postage envelopes to pay for mail-in ballots and requiring a secure drop box for every 20,000 residents.

[3:53:35 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI held public testimony open for SB 64.

[3:54:13 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 64 in committee.

SB 35-DELIVERY NETWORK COMPANIES

[3:54:46 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 35 "An Act relating to transportation network and delivery network companies."

[3:55:16 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN speaking as sponsor of SB 35 introduced the legislation:

[Original punctuation provided.]

SB 35 amends statutes related to workers compensation, aligning individuals who provide delivery services through delivery network companies with individuals who provide services through Transportation Network Companies. The legislation will define these workers as independent contractors, provided they meet statutory requirements.

[3:55:48 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN continued with the introduction of SB 35:

Currently, delivery network companies are not defined in statute, which has led to confusion and litigation across the country, threatening these services that customers value and depend on.

People have built a dependence on Digital Network Companies, for food and other items. DNC's can deliver prescriptions, groceries, household supplies and even pick up prescriptions from a customer's home and get it filled at a pharmacy.

Drivers will often swap between passenger transportation and goods delivery and sometimes are even logged onto multiple apps at once, depending on the demand of customers.

Roughly 90 percent of drivers work less than 10 hours per week. These drivers usually provide delivery services to supplement their income, so they can work their full-time job, or go to school during the day, et cetera.

The vast majority of door dashers prefer to remain working as independent contractors. Thus, creating a need for a path forward that requires drivers to have the ability to work as much or as little as they want, and whenever they want.

[3:57:15 PM](#)

SAVAYA BIEBER, Staff, Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, provided the sectional analysis for SB 35:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**SB 35 Delivery Network Companies
Version A Sectional Analysis**

Section 1: Amends AS 23.30.230(a) by adding a delivery network company courier that provides delivery services or is logged onto the digital network of a delivery network company under AS 28.23.080 to the list of individuals who are not covered by the Alaska Workers' Compensation Act.

Section 2: Amends AS 28.23.080(a) to establish that delivery network companies are not an employer of

transportation network drivers or delivery network couriers under AS 23.10.699, AS 23.20.520, or AS 23.30.395. It further clarifies that an independent contractor for all purposes is not an employee of the company if the company does not propose specific working hours, does not impose restrictions on the ability of the driver to use the digital network of other companies, does not restrict a driver from engaging in any other occupation, or if the company enters into a written agreement with the driver or courier stating that the driver is an independent contractor for the company.

Section 3: Amends AS 28.23.180(1) by adding to the definition of "digital network" to include use by delivery network companies to facilitate offers for delivery services.

Section 4: Adds definitions to AS 28.23.180, to define "company", "delivery network company", "delivery network company courier" or "courier", "delivery services", and "offer".

[3:58:59 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked if there is insurance coverage for a person driving a car used for delivery services.

[3:59:11 PM](#)

MS. BIEBER answered she would have to get back to him with an answer.

[3:59:24 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI stated that delivery drivers are exempt from workers' compensation in Alaska if involved in an accident but when the driver gets sick or gets a disease from a passenger that they drove in their car, the driver may qualify for workers' compensation. He noted in Section 4, line 7, [AS 28.23.180] a company is defined as a transportation network company or a delivery network company and asked if UPS, FedEx, or the United States Postal Service be swept into that definition.

[4:00:17 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN answered that his office can check with the Department of Labor and the Division of Insurance.

[4:00:35 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked if Senator Bjorkman knows how many Alaskan customers Uber Eats, or similar delivery companies, serve on a daily or weekly basis.

[4:00:51 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN answered that he doesn't have an exact number, but Uber Eats has about 16,000 thousand customers in Alaska and DoorDash has about 14,000 thousand customers.

[4:01:19 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked if Senator Bjorkman's office knows of any states where the delivery drivers are considered employees.

[4:01:35 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN answered that he is not aware of any states that consider delivery drivers to be employees.

[4:01:43 PM](#)

MS. BIEBER added that none of the 50 states consider delivery drivers as employees.

[4:01:54 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT asked if Senator Bjorkman has asked delivery drivers whether they would continue working for the delivery network companies if the drivers were classified as employees.

[4:02:17 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN answered that the feedback from drivers indicated being classified as employees would not meet their expectations regarding the flexibility and freedom they currently experience as self-employed drivers.

[4:03:02 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced invited testimony and opened public testimony on SB 35.

[4:03:22 PM](#)

JOHN FINLEY, Public Policy, Uber Eats, San Francisco, California, testified by invitation on SB 35 and stated that SB 35 updates current law to affirm that delivery drivers have the same status as transportation network drivers. Many people use both Uber Eats and Uber rides, and this legislation ensures the drivers are treated the same under Alaska law. SB 35 protects worker independence and provides consistency. Flexibility is the top reason drivers choose platforms like Uber; the drivers set their own hours and can work across different delivery apps. He said in Alaska, the lack of clear law creates legal uncertainty,

which may affect the services many residents and businesses rely on. He noted that since launching in Anchorage in 2020, Uber Eats has boosted local economic growth, empowered small businesses, and made essential items more accessible. Uber Eats offers more than just food; you can order groceries, prescriptions, and even use government food benefits for delivery. Uber Eats help small businesses grow without the cost of running their own delivery services. According to the latest report, 85 percent of restaurants said they couldn't offer delivery without Uber Eats. This helps local shops compete and stay open, especially during economic shifts. Customers can order from local favorites just as easily as big chains. Uber Eats believes delivery platforms strengthen local economies.

[4:07:06 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if all states follow Alaska's Uber Eats model or is there a model that considers a driver an employee.

[4:07:18 PM](#)

MR. FINLEY answered that in the United States delivery drivers are all considered independent contractors and not employees. He stated that in some states there are statutes in place that give drivers certain benefits, Uber Eats calls this an independent contractor plus contract.

[4:08:28 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked what happens when a driver gets injured on the job.

[4:08:48 PM](#)

MR. FINLEY said he will need to verify occupational hazard insurance information, but Uber Eats provides a million dollars in liability coverage when a driver is in an accident.

[4:09:44 PM](#)

PATRICK FITZGERALD, Political Coordinator, Teamsters Local 959, Anchorage, Alaska, testified on SB 35 and stated that this legislation would exempt delivery network companies like DoorDash and Amazon Eats from providing workers' compensation, aligning them with transportation companies like Uber and Lyft. SB 35 reclassifies these workers as independent contractors, responsible for their own insurance, equipment, and now workers' compensation. Teamsters Local 959 opposes this because these workers generate profit for the companies, which hold no liability. Companies like DoorDash and Amazon Eats have steadily shifted responsibilities away from themselves while earning billions. He said these contractors, expected to make around

\$58,000 a year, also cover fuel, maintenance, and other costs, now adding workers' compensation is unfair, especially given Alaska's risky road conditions. SB 35 gives global companies another way to avoid responsibility for the people who power their business. Workers' compensation is a basic standard all large companies should meet. He said while his company appreciates Senator Bjorkman's efforts to create consistency, it's his belief that these companies should provide workers' compensation for their workforce.

[4:11:50 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI referenced the definition of a delivery network company courier in Section 4 [AS 28.23.180] and asked if a FedEx employees might be considered a courier.

[4:12:18 PM](#)

MR. FITZGERALD replied that Teamsters Local 959 represents UPS not FedEx. He said UPS drivers are considered employees and therefore are unaffected by SB 35.

[4:12:54 PM](#)

JESSICA LYMAN, Government Affairs, Western U.S., Instacart, San Francisco, California, testified in support of SB 35. She paraphrased the following written testimony:

[Original punctuation provided.]

On behalf of Instacart, I am writing to thank you for introducing SB 35 and express our support for the legislation, which would preserve access to the independence and flexibility that shoppers on the Instacart platform and other app-based delivery workers consistently say they want and need and that rideshare drivers are already provided within the State of Alaska.

Instacart is the leading grocery technology company in North America, and we are proud to offer access to flexible earning opportunities for the more than 1,600 Alaskans. Shoppers - the individuals who pick, pack, and deliver orders - are often caretakers, parents, students, or retirees seeking alternatives to traditional employment or ways to supplement other income. In fact, over 80 percent of shoppers say they choose to shop on Instacart because of the independence it provides. Nationally, the vast majority of people who earn through our platform -

including in Alaska – shop less than 10 hours a week on average. They have the freedom to choose when, where, and for how long they work without any set schedule, minimum commitment, or obligation.

[4:14:17 PM](#)

MS. LYMAN continued with her testimony of SB 35:

In Alaska, Instacart partners with more than 25 retail banners in more than 130 stores, with almost half of those locations accepting EBT SNAP. By supporting these retailers, Instacart has helped add over 100 brick-and-mortar grocery jobs – from cashiers to store managers – across Alaska and approximately \$5.1 million in additional revenue for Alaska’s grocers. Moreover, Instacart is happy to serve tens of thousands across the Frontier state.

Senate Bill 35 meets the needs of a modern and independent workforce by clarifying that individuals delivering essential goods on app-based platforms are properly classified as independent contractors, provided they meet the same specific criteria applied to rideshare drivers. This workforce enjoys unprecedented flexibility and many may choose to operate on multiple platforms across delivery and rideshare. This clarity will preserve parity for these workers whether they are driving on a rideshare platform or delivering food, prescriptions or other essential goods and put an end to needless uncertainty, which can undermine the flexibility and freedom that shoppers want and deserve.

Thank you again for introducing Senate Bill 35. By doing so, we can ensure a fair and equitable environment for the growing app-based workforce across Alaska. We urge the Legislature to pass this bill.

[4:15:38 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked what Instacart does if a driver (shopper) claims an injury, given that drivers do not qualify for workers' compensation.

[4:15:55 PM](#)

MS. LYMAN answered that Instacart provides occupation accidental insurance that will cover a shopper if they are injured while shopping for Instacart.

[4:16:29 PM](#)

KARI NORE, Director, External Affairs, Alaska Chamber of Commerce, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 35 and read the following testimony:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The Alaska Chamber (the Chamber) writes in support of Senate Bill 35, an act relating to transportation network and delivery network companies.

The Alaska Chamber is the state's largest statewide business advocacy organization. Our mission is to promote a healthy business environment in Alaska. The Chamber has more than 700 members and represents businesses of all sizes and industries from across the state, representing 58,000 Alaskan workers and \$4.6 billion in wages.

Delivery network companies provide convenient and affordable delivery of goods to Alaskans. They also provide economic opportunity to people who can use this avenue to garner additional income. It is estimated that one delivery network company operating in Alaska has 14,500 Alaskans working on their platform and 89 percent of those Alaskans work less than 10 hours per week. This highlights how delivery network companies provide opportunities for Alaskans to make a supplemental income on their terms.

SB 35 would establish standards that reflect the reality of app-based work -- the same standards that the state already uses for rideshare drivers -- and provide delivery network companies and delivery drivers in Alaska with greater regulatory certainty. Furthermore, this would ensure Alaska stays in line with developments in other states where marketplace platform workers across all platforms are treated uniformly.

Businesses need consistency in the laws and regulations governing them to thrive in the economy. SB 35 is a free enterprise and good-for-business bill, and we encourage swift passage.

[4:18:20 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI stated that SB 35 would extend the list of persons who are not covered by the workers compensation law. He said there are 13 different job classes that aren't covered by workers compensation law, food delivery services being one of them. He asked why the Chamber of Commerce is supportive of SB 35 when typically it wants fairness for everyone and SB 35 wouldn't give drivers workers' compensation.

[4:19:12 PM](#)

MS. NORE responded that she will have to get back to the committee with an answer.

[4:19:25 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI Senator Gray-Jackson joined the meeting.

[4:19:39 PM](#)

ANNA POWELL, Senior Manager, Government Relations, Door Dash, Seattle, Washington, testified in support of SB 35 and read the following testimony:

[Original punctuation provided.]

We are a technology company that empowers the local economy by connecting consumers with their favorite local businesses. In this state alone, we partner with more than 700 merchants and more than 14,000 couriers - or, as we call them, "Dashers" - who chose to earn supplemental income by delivering food, groceries, and other goods throughout their communities. DoorDash stands with the Dasher community who overwhelmingly prefer to remain independent contractors and offers the following comments in support of SB 35.

Dashers and the Importance of Independence and Flexibility

Alaska Dashers value the independence and flexibility that dashing provides. A Dasher never needs to commit to a schedule to be online, is free to decline any offer for work they are sent, and can leave the platform for weeks or months at a time and come back whenever a new need arises.

[4:20:49 PM](#)

MS. POWELL continued with her testimony:

Time and time again, Dashers tell us that the top motivation for using platforms like DoorDash is the ability to create their own schedule and work as much or as little as they want. Why? Because most Dashers do relatively little work on the platform: in 2023, on average, Dashers in Alaska only spent five hours per week on delivery, and almost 90% delivered less than 10 hours per week. The vast majority have other primary sources of income or responsibilities and only use the platform for supplemental work. In a survey last year, 82% of Dasher respondents say they have a full-or part-time job, are self-employed, students, stay-at-home caregivers or retired.

SB 35 Protects App-Based Delivery Worker Independence

The flexibility and independence that Dashers highly value is incompatible with traditional employment. That's why in a survey last year, more than 90% of Dasher respondents said they preferred to remain independent contractors.

SB 35 would protect the independence of Dashers and other app-based delivery workers. Many existing worker classification standards were not created with app-based work and workers in mind. SB 35 would establish a classification test for app-based delivery workers that recognizes the unique nature of this work. This standard is already used in Alaska for rideshare drivers and is similar to standards for app-based workers that have been adopted in numerous states including Arizona, California, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Utah.

DoorDash strongly supports SB 35 that would protect the flexibility this type of work provides to the thousands of Alaskan Dashers who choose it.

[4:23:00 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI closed public testimony on SB 35.

[4:23:21 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN reiterated that SB 35 aims to treat delivery network companies the same as transportation network companies, allowing people to take on delivery work freely without the added restrictions on being classified as employees.

[4:23:53 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 35 in committee.

SB 34-REPEAL 90 DAY SESSION LIMIT

[4:23:58 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 34 "An Act relating to the duration of a regular session of the legislature."

[4:24:27 PM](#)

SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL, District E, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 34. She noted that SB 34 repeals a citizens initiative passed in 2006 and discussed the following points regarding the 90 day session limit:

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Passed to limit legislative sessions to 90 days to promote efficiency and cost savings.
- Intended to streamline the legislative process and reduce extended sessions.
- Legislature has only met the 90-day limit three times since its passage.
- Two of these instances were in the early years after adoption.
- The third was during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020)—an exceptional circumstance.
- The Legislature has frequently extended sessions beyond the 121-day constitutional limit.
- More extended and special sessions raise costs rather than reducing them.
- Managing natural resources, budgeting, and major policies demand thorough discussion and debate.
- As budget challenges grow with inflation and lack of revenue, more discussion is needed for balancing the budget

[4:26:10 PM](#)

SENATOR GIESSEL continued:

- In 2020, the Legislature met for 69 days due to pandemic restrictions.
- However, in 2021, the Legislature was in session for 217 days to compensate for lost time.
- Demonstrates that artificial time constraints do not eliminate legislative needs.
- The public expects sessions to conclude within 90 days.
- The reality of extended sessions leads to public frustration.
- The 90-day rule has created more confusion than efficiency.
- Fails to ensure efficiency or cost savings as originally intended.
- Forces unnecessary special sessions that increase legislative workload.
- Complex governance requires flexibility, not rigid time constraints.

[4:28:09 PM](#)

PAIGE BROWN, Staff, Senator Cathy Giessel, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, provided the sectional analysis for SB 34:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Sectional Analysis

"An Act relating to the duration of a regular session of the legislature."

Section 1. Repeals AS 24.05.150(b). This sections repeals the statute requiring the legislature to adjourn from a regular session within 90 consecutive

calendar days, including the day the legislature first convenes in that regular session.

[4:28:47 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 34.

[4:29:03 PM](#)

ED MARTIN, representing self, Kenai, Alaska, testified in opposition to SB 34 and stated that the main flaw in SB 34 is ignoring art. III, sec. 2, Constitution of the State of Alaska, "all political power is inherent in the people." He said the people voted for a 90-day session, and everything should be accomplished in that time period, if the focus stayed on legislative priorities like budgets, appointments, and judges, not symbolic bills.

[4:31:49 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI closed public testimony on SB 34.

[4:32:29 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 34 in committee.

SB 37-STRATEGIC PLANS FOR STATE AGENCIES

[4:32:33 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 37 "An Act relating to the Executive Budget Act; relating to strategic plans, mission statements, performance plans, and financial plans for executive branch agencies; and providing for an effective date."

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SENATOR JAMES KAUFMAN, District F, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 37. He said SB 37 aims to create a better management framework for state agencies through improved planning and execution. There hasn't been much change from similar legislation from past sessions. He said the core issue is that Alaska often ranks near the bottom in state agency performance metrics. This proposal introduces four-year strategic operating plans, updated every two years, to guide annual funding and agency discussions. The goal is to shift from reactive problem-solving to long-term improvement. SB 37 offers a structure to help agencies move toward better performance. He stated that the process is simple: the governor sets priorities, agencies submit their four-year plans, and budgets are built around those plans.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI asked how the legislature decides on the best metrics to use to figure out if the state agency is doing well or not.

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SENATOR KAUFMAN responded that the most effective way to select the best metrics is to rely on the individual performing the work, as they possess the necessary understanding to identify the appropriate metrics. He said instead of locking performance standards into statute, the legislature should set goals, and agencies should figure out how to achieve them. This leads to plans and metrics being revealed and will guide annual funding discussions.

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EMMA TORKELSON, Staff, Senator James Kaufman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, provided a summary of the sectional analysis for SB 37:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Sectional Analysis for SB 37 - Bill Version A

An Act relating to the Executive Budget Act; relating to strategic plans, mission statements, performance plans, and financial plans for executive branch agencies; and providing for an effective date.

Section 1: Is a conforming change to reference the new planning structure created later in the bill.

Section 2: Are several language changes to align earlier sections of the Executive Budget Act to the new sections created later in the bill.

Section 3 & 4: Makes agencies responsible for setting their mission statements and performance measures (rather than the legislature). Adds a reference to the plan structure created later in the bill. It further directs the legislature to use the mission statements and performance measurements determine if the agencies goals are being achieved.

We believe providing agencies with the ability to write and communicate both will increase the

likelihood that agencies will make progress toward their goals.

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MS. TORKELSON continued with the sectional analysis:

Section 5: Updates language to reference strategic plans created later in the bill.

Section 6: Makes changes to clarify that the legislature is to refer to strategic plans, mission statements, and financial plans in our budgeting process.

Section 7: Makes changes to clarify that each state entity shall:

1. Allocate resources to implement multi-year plans.
2. Express program results in measurable terms
3. Measure progress towards multi-year plans and other results
4. Promote activities consistent with multi-year plans that reduce future costs.
5. Plan for both the short- and long-term
6. Require accountability at all levels for meeting multi-year plans.
7. Adds a reference to strategic planning.
8. Requires quarterly reporting to OMB on progress towards the performance plan.

Section 8: Defines "state entity" as all executive branch departments and the university of Alaska.

Section 9: Directs the Governor's to review, revise (if he or she would like to) and approve mission statements, strategic plans, performance and financial plans. It further directs the governor to use them to execute the law and achieve the desired goals.

Section 10: Is a conforming change to reference the new planning structure created by SB 37

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MS. TORKELSON continued with the sectional analysis:

Section 11: Adds the new plans created later in the bill to the list of things OMB is responsible for. It further clarifies OMB's role in the hierarchy of planning and reporting.

Section 12: Repeals and Reenacts AS 37.07.050.

1. It requires each executive branch department and the University of Alaska to develop 4-year strategic plans that are consistent with the agency's authority and the governor's statewide priorities. These plans must be updated and submitted to OMB at the beginning of each gubernatorial term and updated at least once every two years.
2. It outlines what needs to be in the plans, OMB's role in the creation of the plan, what happens if an agency doesn't submit a plan, and clarifies that all of these plans are public information.

Section 13: creates a new section for Boards and Commissions. We did not feel it was appropriate to have every board and commission create the same level of strategic plans as each department, so this section outlines what information will be required from Boards and Commissions each year.

Section 14: Amends the current section to require the governor to identify three to five statewide priorities to guide each agency's four-year strategic plan and their annual plans.

Section 15: Requires the governor to present the strategic plans and mission statements to the legislature during his regular budget address to a joint session.

Section 16: Adds reference to the new plans created in Section 12 and 13 to the list that the legislature reviews as part of the budget process.

Section 17: Adds a reference to the new plans created in Section 12 and 13 and removes old language.

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MS. TORKELSON continued with the sectional analysis:

Section 18: Clarifies that salary increases must be done in accordance with the plans.

Section 19: Requires each agency to develop (with employee participation) an annual performance and financial plan consistent with the 4 year strategic plan and submit them to the legislature with the budget by December 15.

Further outlines what should be included in the performance plan and the financial plan, outlines OMB's role, what happens if an agency doesn't prepare a plan, and clarifies that the plans are public information.

Section 20: Defines the terms "goal," "objective," "performance measure," and "strategic plan."

Section 21: Is a conforming change to include a reference to the new Boards and Commissions planning requirements created in section 13.

Section 22: Is a conforming change to remove a reference to the old method of planning.

Section 23: Sets a July 1, 2025, effective date.

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SENATOR KAUFMAN stated that his office has worked with past and present Office of Management and Budgeting (OMB) directors to refine and realign existing efforts, not create something entirely new. SB 37 builds on work already being done, modeled after successful practices from the federal government and other states, but tailored to Alaska's needs. The goal is to move beyond one-year budget cycles and work with a clear, long-term strategic vision to guide decisions and improve outcomes year after year.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI asked how the legislature ensures the governor and OMB directors comply with the reporting and requests that are defined in the legislation.

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SENATOR KAUFMAN answered that the legislature holds the power of the purse, and the strength of SB 37 is that budget discussions

will be tied to a clear, public multi-year plan. If agencies fall short of their stated goals, it will be much harder to justify because the expectations and progress will be transparent. He said this framework ensures more accountability and long-term focus on budgeting decisions.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 37.

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ED MARTIN, representing self, Kenai, Alaska, testified in support of SB 37 and stated he appreciates the thought Senator Kaufman put into the bill, it's well-crafted and promising. He said he is concerned about the fiscal note; implementing it will require time, staff, and possibly new programs, especially in already stretched departments. He said he hopes and hopes for a clear, honest assessment of the true costs involved.

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SENATOR KAUFMAN responded that he has worked with several OMB directors who confirmed SB 37 is more a realignment of current processes than a new burden. Past legislatures did not receive a fiscal note for this reason, and once the legislation is understood, it will be clear that it builds on existing efforts to produce better results. He said SB 37 can be integrated into what the executive branch already does.

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CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 37 in committee.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 4:52 p.m.