

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 10, 2025

3:31 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. 49

"An Act relating to workplace violence protective orders; relating to the crime of violating a protective order; relating to the powers of district judges and magistrates; amending Rules 4 and 65, Alaska Rules of Civil Procedure, and Rule 9, Alaska Rules of Administration; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 49(STA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 53

"An Act relating to accreditation standards for law enforcement agencies."

- HEARD & HELD

CONFIRMATION HEARING(S) :

Alaska Public Offices Commission  
Walter Monegan - Eagle River

- CONFIRMATION ADVANCED

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 49

SHORT TITLE: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PROTECTIVE ORDERS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) CLAMAN

01/17/25 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/17/25  
01/22/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/22/25 (S) STA, JUD  
03/13/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)  
03/13/25 (S) Heard & Held  
03/13/25 (S) MINUTE(STA)  
04/10/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

BILL: SB 53

SHORT TITLE: LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY ACCREDITATION

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

01/24/25 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
01/24/25 (S) STA, JUD  
04/10/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

BREANNA KAKARUK, Staff  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented the summary of changes from version N to version I of SB 49.

SENATOR MATT CLAMAN, District H  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Sponsor of SB 49.

RANDI BREAGER, Executive Director  
Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC)  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 49.

CHERYL HUMME, Advocate  
Arctic Women in Crisis  
Utqiagvik, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 49.

DEIRDRE GOINS, Staff  
Senator Gray-Jackson  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented an overview and sectional analysis for SB 53.

SEAN CASE, Chief  
Anchorage Police Department  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on SB 53.

GREG RUSSELL, Life Member  
Alaska Police Officer Association  
Soldotna, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 53.

MIKE GARVEY, Policy Director  
American Civil Liberties Union Alaska  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SB 53.

WALTER MONEGAN, Appointee  
Alaska Public Offices Commission  
Eagle River, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified as a governor's appointee to the Alaska Public Offices Commission.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[3:31:49 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI called the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Bjorkman, Wielechowski, Yundt and Chair Kawasaki. Senator Gray-Jackson arrived shortly thereafter.

#### **SB 49-WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PROTECTIVE ORDERS**

[3:33:07 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 49 "An Act relating to workplace violence protective orders; relating to the crime of violating a protective order; relating to the powers of district judges and magistrates; amending Rules 4 and 65, Alaska Rules of Civil Procedure, and Rule 9, Alaska Rules of Administration; and providing for an effective date."

[3:33:17 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced Senator Wielechowski joined the meeting.

[3:33:22 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited a motion.

[3:33:23 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for SB 49, work order 34-LS0186\I, as the working document.

[3:33:36 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI objected for purposes of discussion.

[3:33:55 PM](#)

BREANNA KAKARUK, Staff, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, explained changes from version N to version I for SB 49:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The Senate State Affairs Committee Substitute to SB 49 contains the following changes described below.

Prohibit attorney fee awards against the petitioner in:

- Domestic violence restraining order proceedings under AS 18.66.100-18.66.180
- Stalking and sexual assault protective orders under AS 18.65.850-18.65.870; and
- Ex parte protective orders under AS 13.26.450-13.26.460

[3:34:32 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked how many people are charged with attorney fees by judges for frivolous protective orders.

[3:35:01 PM](#)

SENATOR MATT CLAMAN, District H, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 49 answered that it's rare for attorney fees to be ordered in domestic violence proceedings. He noted that some individuals whose cases were assessed questioned whether they were truly frivolous, yet they were still charged attorney's fees.

[3:35:45 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI asked the intent of SB 49 regarding civil liability.

[3:36:03 PM](#)

MS. KAKARUK replied that in the first hearing on SB 49, version N, Senator Wielechowski brought up AS 18.65.897, on page 7, line 21-23, regarding civil liability. He questioned employer liability if a protective order was not obtained after threats were reported and customers were later injured. She said that legal review clarified the bill's narrow scope does not create

new grounds for suing the employer over failing to secure such an order, though customers could still pursue civil action under existing law.

[3:37:13 PM](#)

SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI focused on removing potential attorney's fees for frivolous cases and acknowledged the high volume of such cases and the scrutiny by judges. He emphasized the importance of not discouraging individuals who feel at risk from filing claims. He stressed the need to ensure that people are not put in a position where they might have to defend against frivolous claims, while recognizing the high bar for a case to be deemed frivolous.

[3:38:21 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN noted that similar laws in other states have not led to many workplace violence protective orders being requested. He emphasized that if issues arise after the legislation is enacted, a review would be appropriate, but currently, there should be no barriers preventing individuals from seeking an order when they genuinely need it.

[3:39:13 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked if a person employed at a store in a mall would be covered at the mall as their workplace or only the specific store.

[3:39:32 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN replied that it depends on who applied for the protective order. He said if the mall owner applied, the protective order would likely cover the entire mall, but if an individual shop applied, the order would apply only to that shop and not to other businesses within the mall.

[3:40:16 PM](#)

SENATOR YUNDT stated his belief that protective orders usually include distance restrictions. He hoped such an order would at least keep the individual away from the affected area of the mall, if not entirely out of the mall.

[3:40:43 PM](#)

SENATOR CLAMAN replied that SB 49 does not specify distance setbacks and argued legislation should not prescribe them, since malls vary greatly in size. He said setting rigid standards could create problems, so flexibility is preferable.

[CHAIR KAWASAKI removed his objection; found no further objection and CSSB 49 was adopted as the working document.]

[3:41:31 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 49.

[3:41:49 PM](#)

RANDI BREAGER, Executive Director, Abused Women's Aid in Crisis (AWAIC), Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 49 and emphasized that the legislation would be crucial for improving safety in domestic violence shelters and safe homes. She described barriers victims face when reporting threats, noting that one threat can endanger all residents and staff. Two recent incidents involving armed abusers that threatened shelters and attempted forced entry. Both offenders were quickly released, left victims and staff vulnerable. She said allowing organizations to petition for workplace protective orders on behalf of residents would provide a faster, more effective tool for protection, reflect the seriousness of threats in legal records, and reduce the burden on individual victims.

[3:44:27 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON joined the meeting.

[3:44:46 PM](#)

CHERYL HUMME, Advocate, Arctic Women in Crisis, Utqiagvik, Alaska, testified in support of SB 49 and described rising incidents of violence at her shelter from disgruntled community members, including people evicted from other facilities. She argued workplace protective orders would provide critical legal protection by restricting perpetrators from entering the shelter, contacting residents or staff, or engaging in threats. She said such orders would enhance safety, deter future violence through enforceable consequences, protect both people and property, and give staff greater peace of mind.

[CHAIR KAWASAKI closed public testimony on SB 49.]

[3:47:24 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[3:47:28 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN moved to report CSSB 49, work order 34-LS0186\I, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:48:08 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI found no objection and CSSB 49(STA) was reported from the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee.

[3:48:26 PM](#)

At ease.

**SB 53-LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY ACCREDITATION**

[3:51:28 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 53 "An Act relating to accreditation standards for law enforcement agencies."

[3:51:47 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON speaking as the sponsor of SB 53 introduced the legislation:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Senate Bill 53 is about ensuring that every Alaskan—no matter who they are or where they live—can feel safe in their community and have trust in those who are sworn to protect them. It is also about giving our peace officers the tools, training, and standards they need to do their jobs effectively and with pride. Our law enforcement professionals perform some of the most difficult work in our state. They walk into uncertain situations every day with courage and resolve. This bill is not an indictment of their service—it is an investment in their success and in the trust between officers and the people they serve.

The concept of this bill was brought to me by the Anchorage Police Department Chief of Police Sean Case. Chief Case suggested an accreditation standard as a way to address multiple concerns across the state with one piece of legislation. SB 53 establishes a statewide accreditation standard. These standards include clear protocols for de-escalation as well as empowering officers to use nonlethal force whenever safely possible. SB 53 also strengthens the reporting and oversight of officer misconduct. It ensures that officers who witness misconduct are required to intervene and report it. This isn't just about discipline—it's about creating a culture of integrity that lifts up the entire profession.

[3:53:26 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON continued with the introduction of SB 53:

And because Alaska is home to many rich and diverse cultures, this bill includes cultural competency training to help officers better understand and serve all Alaskans. Especially our Alaska Native communities, who have long faced systemic challenges within the justice system. The Alaska Police Standards Council will play a central role in certifying these reforms, providing training, and ensuring compliance. These are not abstract changes—they are practical steps that will lead to safer streets, stronger communities, and more confident, better-supported officers.

SB 53 is not about choosing between community safety and officer safety—it's about recognizing that the two go hand in hand. Today is just the first step. I look forward to working with all the stakeholders to ensure we can create accreditation standards that work for everyone.

[3:54:23 PM](#)

DEIRDRE GOINS, Staff, Senator Gray-Jackson, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, provided an overview and sectional analysis for SB 53. She moved to slide 2 and said SB 53 is accreditation for law enforcement agencies, not individual officers. The need for officers and public safety reform in Anchorage brought the legislation forward. She said SB 53 addresses the following:

[Original punctuation provided.]

#### Needed Reforms for Public Safety & Officer Safety

- Standards of Excellence
- Clear Policies & Procedures
- Reduced Legal Exposure
- Consistency Across Agencies
- Funding Opportunities
- Community Engagement & Confidence
- Improved Industry Culture

[3:55:45 PM](#)

MS. GOINS moved to slide 3 and discussed the minimum standards SB 53 seeks to impose and its areas of focus:

[Original punctuation provided.]

#### Minimum Standards

##### Promote:

- Consistency
- Accountability
- Professionalism
- Community Trust

##### Areas of Focus:

- Use of Force
- Cultural Competency
- DV/IPV Response
- Body-worn cameras
- Witness Identification
- Conduct Complaints
- Highspeed Pursuits
- Death & Crisis Notification

[3:57:17 PM](#)

MS. GOINS moved to slide 4 and said 25-32 states have implemented varying levels of accreditation. She mentioned some of the positive outcomes that have occurred:

[Original punctuation provided.]

#### Measurable Outcomes

- North Carolina agencies reported 25 percent decrease in Use of Force cases.
- Wisconsin's program led to fewer escalated incidents.
- Some Georgia departments saw up to a 20 percent reduction in civil litigation.
- Many states have seen improved community satisfaction surveys.
- Involved agencies are more likely to engage in community policing strategies.

[3:58:48 PM](#)

MS. GOINS summarized the sectional analysis for SB 53:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Sectional Analysis-Version A**

**Section 1- Adds a subsection to AS 09.50.250  
*Actionable claims against the state.***

(6) is for damages based on a law enforcement agency's

(A) exercise, performance, or adoption of, or failure to exercise, perform, or adopt, the minimum standards and practices required to obtain and maintain the first tier of accreditation under AS 44.41.020(1) or required under a higher accreditation tier as established in AS 18.65.228(c); or

(B) failure to obtain and maintain accreditation as required under AS 44.41.020(1).

[3:59:17 PM](#)

MS. GOINS continued with the sectional analysis for SB 53:

**Section 2- Adds a new subsection to AS 09.65.070(d)  
*Suits against incorporated units of local government.***

(d) An action for damages may not be brought against a municipality or any of its agents, officers, ore employees if the claim

(7) is based on a municipal police department's

(A) exercise, performance, or adoption of, or failure to exercise, perform, or adopt, the minimum standards and practices required to obtain and maintain the first tier of accreditation under AS 29.71.070 or required under a higher accreditation tier established in AS 18.65.228(c); or

(B) failure to obtain and maintain accreditation as required under AS 29.71.070.

**Section 3- Adds a new subsection to AS 18.65.220.  
*Powers.***

The council has the power to

(9) establish minimum standards and practices for the accreditation of law enforcement agencies in the state.

**Section 4- Adds two new sections to AS 18.65. Police Protection.**

**Establishes a new section AS 18.65.227. Law enforcement agency standards and practices.**

(a) The council shall establish minimum standards and practices for the accreditation of law enforcement agencies, including standards and practices relating to

- (1) the administration, management, and operation of law enforcement agencies;
- (2) bias-based policing;
- (3) the use of force;
- (4) an agency's response to crimes involving family violence;
- (5) the use of body-worn recording equipment;
- (6) complaints of alleged misconduct by a law enforcement officer;
- (7) the use of electronic control weapons;
- (8) eyewitness identification procedures;
- (9) notification of death and death-related events; and
- (10) pursuits conducted by police officers.

[4:00:38 PM](#)

MS. GOINS continued with the sectional analysis for SB 53:

(b) The council shall base the standards and practices on standards established by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc.

(c) The council shall establish three accreditation tiers. The standards and practices for the

(1) first tier must be designed to protect a law enforcement agency from liability, enhance delivery of services, and improve public confidence in policing;

(2) second tier must relate to the administration, management, and operation of a law enforcement agency; and

(3) third tier must consist of standards higher than the standards outlined in the second tier for the administration, management, and operation of a law enforcement agency.

**Establishes a new section AS 18.65.229. Law enforcement agency accreditation.**

(a) The council shall review a law enforcement agency's compliance with the minimum standards and practices adopted under AS 18.65.227 and issue a certificate of accreditation to the law enforcement agency at the appropriate accreditation tier.

(b) The council shall work with a law enforcement agency that has failed to obtain or maintain accreditation under this section until the law enforcement agency achieves accreditation.

(c) The council shall assist a rural law enforcement agency in securing funding for the purposes of obtaining and maintaining accreditation. In this subsection, "rural agency" means a law enforcement agency in a community with a population of 7,000 or less that is not connected by road or rail to Anchorage or Fairbanks.

(d) The Department of Public Safety may not award a grant to a law enforcement agency that is not accredited.

[4:01:50 PM](#)

MS. GOINS continued with the sectional analysis for SB 53:

**Section 5- Adds a new subsection to AS 18.65.290. Definitions.**

(10) "law enforcement agency" means a municipal police department, Alaska state trooper post, village public safety officer post, or regional public safety officer post.

**Section 6- Adds a new section to AS 29.71. General Provisions.**

**Establishes a new section AS 29.71.070. Municipal police department accreditation.**

(a) A municipality with a municipal police department shall obtain and maintain accreditation to

indicate the police department's compliance with the standards and practices established in AS 18.65.227.

**Section 7- Adds a new subsection to AS 44.41.020 *Duties of department.***

(1) The Department of Public Safety shall obtain and maintain accreditation for each Alaska state trooper post, village public safety officer post, or regional public safety officer post to indicate compliance with the standards and practices established in AS 18.65.227.

[4:02:36 PM](#)

MS. GOINS continued with the sectional analysis for SB 53:

**Section 8- The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to read:**

TRANSITION: ACCREDITATION. A law enforcement agency that, on the effective date of this Act, is required to obtain and maintain accreditation under AS 29.71.070, enacted by sec. 6 of this Act, or AS 44.41.020(1), enacted by sec. 7 of this Act, has until January 1, 2027, to obtain the first tier of accreditation. In this section, "law enforcement agency" has the meaning given in AS 18.65.290.

[4:03:28 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked whether municipal departments must create their own set of criteria and raised concern that, since the fiscal note shows high costs for state troopers, municipalities might also face those expenses.

[4:03:54 PM](#)

MS. GOINS replied that the Police Standards Council will establish one unified set of standards, so agencies and municipalities will not bear significant costs for developing them.

[4:04:26 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI asked what happens if a department lacks the funding or manpower to pay the minimums and how will a smaller agency afford the minimum requirements.

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON deferred the question to an invited testifier.

[4:05:26 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI announced invited testimony on SB 53.

[4:05:44 PM](#)

SEAN CASE, Chief, Anchorage Police Department, Anchorage, Alaska, answered questions and testified by invitation on SB 53. He explained that SB 53 aims to establish mandatory accreditation standards for all law enforcement agencies in Alaska, enhancing professionalism, accountability, and effectiveness. Accreditation ensures agencies meet consistent, nationally recognized standards covering areas like use of force, internal investigations, pursuit policies, and evidence management. He said mandatory accreditation provides a baseline of best practices, promotes regular internal and external reviews, and fosters accountability and transparency. It builds public trust by demonstrating a commitment to excellence, reduces liability risks, and strengthens service delivery. The first tier is designed to be achievable for agencies of all sizes, offering protection from liability while improving operations and community confidence. Overall, SB 53 sets a statewide framework for consistent, high-quality policing. He replied to Senator Kawasaki's previous question and said that the lowest tier of accreditation is intentionally designed with fewer requirements than national standards to accommodate small and remote Alaska agencies with limited funding and personnel. He highlighted that accreditation improves training and operational effectiveness by requiring agencies to review and strengthen programs. He said even though he supports SB 53, he acknowledged fiscal challenges and proposed a streamlined model with one program coordinator and one clerical staff to manage accreditation statewide. This approach would provide the support needed, especially for small and rural agencies. He noted some testimony may question the process rather than accreditation itself but emphasized that mandatory accreditation is a necessary and beneficial step for Alaska.

[4:11:06 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI noted that when Fairbanks built a new department a significant amount of money and space were invested to adhere to evidence and records storage standards. He asked how standardized requirements would apply to remote Alaska locations that may have limited space or other constraints.

[4:11:52 PM](#)

CHIEF CASE replied that the question gets to the heart of the challenges faced by law enforcement. Improperly stored records

or evidence can hinder prosecutions, particularly in rural areas. He acknowledged financial and logistical hurdles, but emphasized that implementing accreditation standards represents a long-term commitment to improving police services, ensuring effective prosecution, and investing in agencies to provide the law enforcement quality all Alaskan communities deserve.

[CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on SB 53.]

[4:14:07 PM](#)

GREG RUSSELL, Life Member, Alaska Police Officer Association, Soldotna, Alaska, testified in support of SB 53 and emphasized that mandatory police accreditation is a key step toward accountability, transparency, professionalism, and public trust in law enforcement. Accreditation sets uniform standards across agencies, covering policies, training, accountability, and continuous improvement, which helps ensure equitable and effective policing statewide. He said benefits include improved officer skills, better community relations, reduced misconduct, and consistent operational practices. He acknowledged challenges, particularly for smaller agencies, and stressed the need for support such as funding or grants. While supporting the goals of SB 53, he suggested revisions to make the process more attainable and encouraged collaboration with agencies already pursuing accreditation to enhance professional development across Alaska.

[4:20:31 PM](#)

MIKE GARVEY, Policy Director, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska, testified in support of SB 53 and emphasized that law enforcement wields significant state authority and must uphold constitutional rights, including equal protection, free speech, privacy, and due process. He cited past failures, including deadly incidents and uninvestigated sexual assaults, to illustrate the harm caused when standards are not met. SB 53 aims to establish strong statewide standards—covering use of force, bias, misconduct complaints, escalation practices, cultural competency, and accessible services, to ensure professional, transparent, and trustworthy policing that builds public confidence and protects individual rights.

[4:23:41 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI held SB 53 in committee.

[4:23:46 PM](#)

At ease.

**CONFIRMATION HEARING ALASKA PUBLIC OFFICES COMMISSION**

[4:33:27 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI reconvened the meeting and announced the consideration of the governor's appointee to the Alaska Public Office Commission.

[4:34:21 PM](#)

WALTER MONEGAN, Appointee, Alaska Public Offices Commission, Eagle River, Alaska, testified as a governor's appointee to the Alaska Public Offices Commission and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to contribute. He noted his experience working with the legislature and enjoyment in supporting efforts to improve Alaska.

[4:35:32 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI opened public testimony on the appointment; finding none, he closed public testimony.

[4:36:32 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI solicited the will of the committee.

[4:36:35 PM](#)

SENATOR BJORKMAN moved Walter Monegan, appointee to the Alaska Public Offices Commission, be advanced to a joint session of the legislature for consideration.

He 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.

[4:37:00 PM](#)

CHAIR KAWASAKI stated that in accordance with AS 39.05.080, the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee reviewed the following and recommends the appointments be advanced to a joint session for consideration:

Alaska Public Offices Commission  
Walter Monegan - Eagle River

[4:38:10 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kawasaki adjourned the Senate State Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 4:38 p.m.