

BY REP. BOUCHER

1 IN THE HOUSE

2

HOUSE BILL NO. 389

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act establishing the Commission for the Deaf and
7 Hearing Impaired."

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9 * Section 1. AS 44.21 is amended by adding new sections to read:

10 ARTICLE 6A. COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED.

11 Sec. 44.21.350. COMMISSION FOR THE DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED.

12 (a) The Commission for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired is created in
13 the Department of Administration.

14 (b) The commission consists of seven members appointed by the
15 governor. Four members shall be deaf or hearing impaired persons, one
16 member shall be a parent of a deaf or hearing impaired person, one
17 member shall be an officer or employee of a private or municipal
18 organization that provides services to deaf or hearing impaired per-
19 sons, and one member shall be an employee of a state agency that
20 provides services to deaf or hearing impaired persons. The governor
21 shall request and consider recommendations from the Alaska Association
22 of the Deaf before appointing members to the commission.

23 (c) The commission, by majority vote of the membership, shall
24 elect a chair and other officers it considers necessary from among its
25 membership to serve on a yearly basis.

26 (d) The commissioner of administration, upon request of the
27 commission's executive director, shall provide for the assignment of
28 additional temporary or permanent personnel to the commission that are
29 necessary for the commission to exercise its powers under

1 AS 44.21.350 - 44.21.365.

2 Sec. 44.21.355. TERM OF OFFICE AND COMPENSATION. (a) The term
3 of office of each member is three years.

4 (b) A vacancy occurring in the membership of the commission
5 shall be filled by appointment by the governor for the unexpired
6 portion of the term.

7 (c) Members of the commission serve without compensation, but
8 are entitled to per diem and travel expenses authorized for boards and
9 commissions under AS 39.20.180.

10 Sec. 44.21.360. POWERS OF THE COMMISSION. The commission may

11 (1) advocate, provide, and coordinate adoption of public
12 policies, regulations, and programs to advance the interests of deaf
13 and hearing impaired persons;

14 (2) ascertain the extent and availability of services to
15 deaf and hearing impaired persons within the state and work to improve
16 the accessibility and quality of those services and promote the devel-
17 opment of new services when necessary;

18 (3) promote public awareness of deaf and hearing impaired
19 persons and their contributions to society;

20 (4) adopt regulations necessary to carry out the purposes
21 of AS 44.21.350 - 44.21.365;

22 (5) work with the Department of Education, the Board of
23 Regents of the University of Alaska, local school districts, and other
24 public and private entities to ensure ongoing interpreter education
25 programs designed to increase the number of qualified and competent
26 interpreters for deaf and hearing impaired persons in the state;

27 (6) employ an executive director, who shall be a deaf or
28 hearing impaired person, and an interpreter; and

29 (7) obtain equipment, including TTY machines, and services,

1 including interpreter services, that are necessary for the commission
2 to exercise its powers under AS 44.21.350 - 44.21.365.

3 Sec. 44.21.365. DEFINITIONS. In AS 44.21.350 - 44.21.365

4 (1) "commission" means the Commission for the Deaf and
5 Hearing Impaired;

6 (2) "deaf" means subject to a loss of the ability to hear
7 and understand speech so that the primary mode of communication is
8 through American Sign Language, speech reading, gestures, or writing;

9 (3) "hearing impaired" means subject to a partial loss of
10 hearing in one or both ears that results in difficulty in hearing and
11 understanding speech in the ear.

12 * Sec. 2. AS 36.30.850(b) is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

13 (22) contracts for equipment and services for the Commission
14 for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired.

15 * Sec. 3. LEGISLATIVE INTENT. It is the intent of the legislature that
16 the Commission for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired shall obtain, within five
17 years after organization, funding from sources other than the general fund
18 to support the operation of the commission so as not to reduce the level of
19 state funds presently available for services to deaf and hearing impaired
20 persons.