

**SB**

**103**

## **SB 103 - Human Rights Commission Amendments**

- Bill is essential part of the agency's efforts to improve productivity and more appropriately allocate resources to meet Alaskan's increasing demand for civil rights enforcement.
  - Commission's current caseload is at its highest in its 33 year history with a backlog of some 376 cases yet to be assigned.
- Would allow Commission to hold hearings telephonically from its Anchorage office, rather than where the alleged discrimination occurred.
  - This will save time and money in travel costs -- allowing Commission to redirect those costs to the investigative unit.
  - Commission would continue to ensure that complainants may participate in the hearings.
- Would allow Commission to charge fees to cover the costs of its information and education services, such as human rights training and materials.
- Would allow Commission to provide tapes rather than transcriptions of the hearings, which would save costs.

**TONY KNOWLES**  
GOVERNOR

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**STATE OF ALASKA**  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JUNEAU

February 24, 1997

The Honorable Mike Miller  
President of the Senate  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Miller:

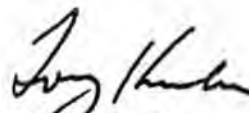
In our efforts to reduce budgets, some actions that save money also create efficiencies which better meet public service goals. That is the case with this bill regarding the Human Rights Commission. This proposal provides the Commission more flexibility in its operations and helps the body perform its essential work for the state.

The bill would allow the Human Rights Commission to hold hearings at its office in Anchorage rather than where the alleged discrimination occurred, as is required under current law. This will save time and money in travel costs. The Commission would continue to ensure that complainants may participate in the hearings.

This bill would also allow the Commission to charge fees to cover the costs of services, information and materials and to provide tapes rather than transcriptions of the hearings, as currently required.

These changes would reduce the cost and time involved in resolving cases, helping the Commission to work through its tremendous backlog of cases, and better respond to the public's increased requests for its services. The result will be better human rights protection for Alaskans.

Sincerely,



Tony Knowles  
Governor

# MEMORANDUM

Post-It™ brand fax transmittal memo 7571		# of pages	3
To	(Lindy Smith)	From	Bamberger
Co.		Co.	
Dept.		Phone #	274-4004
Fax #	465-3632	Fax #	274-4004

TO: Commissioners

FROM: Paula M. Haley *[Signature]*  
Executive Director

DATE: November 13, 1996

RE: FY98 Budget Request

### INTRODUCTION

At the Fairbanks meeting, you unanimously agreed to seek support for additional resources from the Governor's office and the Legislature. Commissioner Bamberger contacted Annalee McConnell the Director of the Office of Management & Budget, and we have an appointment with her on November 21, 1996 at 4:00 P. M. in the Commission offices. It would be most helpful for as many Commissioners as possible to attend. If you are available to meet with Ms. McConnell, please contact Sharon Avery or me to let us know by November 19, 1996.

The following may be of some assistance to you as you seek support for adequate resources for civil rights enforcement in Alaska.

### BACKGROUND

In 1995, 664 Alaskans filed with the Commission, more than in all years except 1976 during the wind down of work on the trans-Alaskan pipeline. For comparison, in 1981, the Commission had 26 staff and completed 261 investigations with a year end inventory of 401 cases. In dramatic contrast, in 1995, the Commission had 17 staff, completed 455 investigations and had a year end inventory of 721 cases. Despite completing 74% more cases with 35% fewer staff, the agency's inventory has soared.

### CURRENT WORKLOAD

The Commission's inventory is at its highest in its 33 year history. The agency currently has 376 unassigned cases.

Currently there are seven (7) investigators on staff. If all cases filed with the agency were assigned each investigator would have a caseload of approximately 100 cases. A caseload of 60-70 has already proved unmanageable and the investigators caseloads have been capped at 40. Therefore, in order to assign these cases for prompt investigation, the agency needs more investigators.

### IMPACT

The public is growing more and more impatient with the length of time it is taking for their cases to be investigated. Individuals and advocacy groups have directed their frustrations to the staff, Commissioners, Legislators, the Governor, and the Office of the Ombudsman. Staff spends a considerable amount of time responding to these complaints.

Commissioners

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SOLUTIONS

To improve agency productivity the Commission has reviewed and revised procedures, amended its regulations and proposed legislation to allow for cost saving measures and the authority to charge fees for certain services. These increased efficiencies have not been sufficient to meet the current demand for services. Therefore, the Commission has also been obliged to seek additional resources.

During the last Legislative Session, Representative Kay Brown introduced an amendment to the budget which would have provided the Commission with an additional \$89.0 to help meet the increased demand for services (please see attached letter to the Budget Sub-Committee dated March 19, 1996). The House approved a budget for Fiscal Year 1997 which included the \$89.0 increment for the Commission. Unfortunately, the Senate did not include the increment and this came out of the budget during Conference Committee.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

In keeping with your decision in Fairbanks, your budget proposal is outlined below. This year we are seeking the following:

An operating increase of 312.5<sup>1</sup> GF in FY98 and again in FY99. This temporary increase in operating funds will allow the Commission to hire five (5) additional investigators to reduce the existing case backlog of 376, and facilitate prompt investigation of the approximately 515 complaints filed each year.

The Commission estimates that it will take approximately two (2) years with additional investigative staff to eliminate the current unacceptable level of case backlog. Once this goal has been realized, the Commission proposes to reduce the increased operating level to approximately 117.7 above our FY97 authorization. This remaining level of increased GF would be permanently incorporated into our operating budget to preclude a future build-up of case backlog. The funds would provide for the retention of two (2) of the additional investigators and associated overhead costs: 112.0 salaries, 3.5 lease space, 1.5 travel, .2 supplies and .5 equipment.

DETAILS

Below is a chart that outlines the current FY97 authorization, the requested increment, the total of both and the number of positions

	FY97	FY98 (Increment)	Total	PFT/PPT
Personnel Services	1031.9	280.0	1311.9	17/1 5/0
Travel	33.5	3.5	37.0	
Contractual	125.1	14.1	139.2	
Supplies	10.9	1.0	11.9	
Equipment	0.0	13.9	13.9	
Totals	1201.4	312.5	1513.9	22/1

<sup>1</sup>Please note that the figure of \$280,000 for investigators given at this meeting did not include office space, travel, equipment, supplies and computers, with these additions, the number is now \$312,500.

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**PERSONNEL SERVICES:**

This increment is for five (5) Permanent Full Time Human Rights Field Representatives III (Range 18A), (for a period of two years) at a cost of \$56.0 per investigator.

**TRAVEL:**

This increment would increase the travel authorization by \$3.5 for on site investigations to areas outside of Anchorage where the ASCHR office is located.

**CONTRACTUAL:**

This increment would cover the cost of computer and telephone connections for the new employees at a cost of an estimated \$2.5. An additional \$2.0 will be needed to cover costs of telephone calls, postage, and other contractual items which will increase with the additional personnel. Additional space to house the new employees will be needed. The Commission is paying \$1.14 per sq. ft for recently acquired office space. According to the space specifications, each investigator is allowed 140 sq. ft. of working space. Therefore, the cost would be approximately \$9576.00 per year.

**SUPPLIES:**

This increment would cover the cost of additional supplies estimated at \$1.0.

**EQUIPMENT:**

This increment is for computers, printers, desks, chairs, and telephones for new employees at a cost of \$13.9.

**CONCLUSION:**

Many of the above costs will be one-time items, eg equipment and hook-up costs in the contractual line item.

It is the agency's intention to maintain the an operation with five (5) additional investigators for a period of two years. After the two year period the number of investigators would be reduced by three.

We agree that without additional support, redress for Alaskans under the Human Rights Law may be delayed or even denied. It is for this reason we are requesting the Governor and Legislature's support to allow us to better serve all Alaskans and send the message that Alaska does not tolerate discrimination.

# FISCAL NOTE

No. 2

Bill Version: CS SB 103(STA)

(S) Publish Date: 4/29/97

## STATE OF ALASKA 1997 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Revision Date: April 29, 1997 Dept. Affected: Office of the Governor  
 Title: An Act relating to hearings and BRU: Commissions/Special Offices  
 authorizing: fees for the State Comm. on Human Rights Component: Human Rights Commission  
 Sponsor: Senate Rules  
 Requester: Senate Finance Component Serial No. 1

Expenditures/Revenues		(Thousands of Dollars)				
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 88	FY 89	FY 00	FY 01	FY 02	FY 03
Personal Services	22.2	24.7	24.7	27.2	27.2	27.2
Travel	(18.4)	(18.4)	(18.4)	(18.4)	(18.4)	(18.4)
Contractual	( 3.8)	( 3.8)	( 3.8)	( 3.8)	( 3.8)	( 3.8)
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES</b>						
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FUND SOURCE		(Thousands of Dollars)				
1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GI						
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	2.5	2.5	5.0	5.0	5.0
1037 GI/Mental Health						
All other funds						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>5.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY97) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)  
 SB103 would reduce the Commission's travel and contractual costs associated with conducting public hearings. Funds currently required for the HRC advocate and hearing examiner to travel to the site of alleged discrimination and for transcription costs would be transferred to the personal services line to allow for investigator overtime costs and potential temporary help to work on the Commission's substantial case back-log. Fees that may be generated for educational services and training would also be utilized to provide additional resources to the investigative unit. These changes are being pursued to assist the Commission in meeting the public demand with their current budgetary resources.

The figures above are estimates based on the existing hearing schedule from July 1, 1997 through May 1998. Future hearings are not possible to estimate and are directly impacted by the investigative unit production, settlements prior to hearings, etc. FY97 costs for hearing travel/transcriptions est. 18.0. Investigator OT average cost is \$44/hr.

Prepared by: Paula M. Haley, Executive Director Phone: 276-7474  
 Division: Human Rights Commission Date: 4/28/97  
 Approved by: Jim Ayers, Chief of Staff Date: 4/29/97  
 Agency: Office of the Governor

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