

**GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON DISABILITIES
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**Legislative Committee
MINUTES**

Videoconference Host
Governor's Council
550 W. 7th Avenue, Suite 1220
Anchorage, Alaska

Meeting Date
March 22, 2023
1:00 p.m.

Committee Members:

Art Delaune, Chair
Jena Crafton
Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich
Director Duane Mayes

Staff:

Patrick Reinhart
Jamie Kokoszka
Lanny Mommsen
Rich Saville
Michael Stevenson
Robert Tasso

Prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – 1:00 p.m.
ROLL CALL – Quorum not established

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Art Delaune welcomed the attendees to the meeting.

Introductions, Announcements, or Good News

Patrick Reinhart introduced Robert Tasso, the Council's newest staff member. Robert shared that he came from SDS, where he worked for six years.

Art Delaune announced that there is an opportunity for public testimony on the budget bills HB 39 and HB 41 in House Finance.

Declarations of Conflict

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF PAST MINUTES

Approval of the agenda and meeting minutes was tabled due to a lack of quorum.

REPORTS

Chair's Report

Art Delaune reported that Jamie Kokoszka testified last week on HB 58, the adult home care bill. He noted that the Budget Committee hearings would be taking place this week.

Staff Report

There was no news to report from the staff.

BUSINESS

Continued Discussion and Prioritization of 2023 State Legislative Issues

HCBS Solutions

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Council developed a position paper that included a \$648,000 legislative ask to implement the structural changes needed at SDS as part of eradicating the wait list. The Council submitted it as a budget recommendation, and Patrick offered public testimony on behalf of the Council.

Patrick Reinhart reported that within the original ask, the missing component was SDS's internal ask, which was a request for \$16.9M for year one of ending the wait list, which equated to \$6.5M state funds and \$9.6M federal funds. Patrick Reinhart noted that the Medicaid program is a 50/50 program. Still, SDS estimated a higher level of federal funding considering those people on the wait list that might fall under tribal claiming, which is 100% federal funds. Patrick noted that he added that ask to the list of budgetary items.

Patrick Reinhart said the spring revenue forecast for the state appears bleak, with a \$220M deficit this year and \$240M next year, even with a reduced PFD, which was proposed.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children's Bill of Rights

Patrick Reinhart reported that Representative Allard created HB 111 to support the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children's Bill of Rights, and it was referred to the Education Committee. Patrick supposed that it would be a two-year process for the bill. He noted that the bill was co-sponsored by Representative Groh.

Director Mayes shared that in alignment with the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children's Bill of Rights, the Supreme Court unanimously ruled for a deaf student in an education case. He offered to send the Council the case details as it could be good information to have as the bills move forward. He noted that the ruling came down from Supreme Court for a deaf student who sued a public school system for providing an inadequate education based on lack of ASL. Patrick Reinhart noted that it would be valuable to add to public testimony.

SB 57/HB 58, Adult Home Care

Patrick Reinhart reported that HB 58 was referred to House Finance and picked up co-sponsors, including Representatives Saddler, Prax, Ruffridge, Sumner, and Carrick. He noted nothing new on the calendar this week for HB 58.

Centralized Accommodations Fund (CAF)

Patrick Reinhart reported that it appears the CAF is a budget matter, not necessarily legislation. Several legislators put forward amendments to add a CAF to the Department of Education, and they were not successful. Patrick noted that since then, Representative Coulombe's office reached out to the Council and said they are looking at bringing it to the Finance Committee for consideration as a capital proposal, which Patrick believed would work as well. Patrick shared that he did mention the CAF to the House Finance Committee when he testified.

Budget Update

Patrick Reinhart directed the members' attention to the *Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education Legislative Hearings/Budget Alert* and highlighted the public testimony opportunities as follows:

- Tuesday, March 21, 2023, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
 - Sitka, Petersburg, Dillingham, Glennallen, Valdez, Wrangell, Homer, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Seward, Tok
- Tuesday, March 21, 2023, 5-8 p.m.
 - Juneau
- Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 2-4 p.m.
 - Fairbanks, Delta Junction, Kenai, Bethel, Cordova, Kotzebue, Nome, Utqiagvik
- Wednesday, March 22, 2023, 5-8 p.m.
 - Anchorage, Mat-Su
- Thursday, March 23, 2023, 2:30-3:30
 - Additional communities/callers

Patrick Reinhart noted that the budget alert document outlined the Council's priorities and guidance on delivering compelling public testimony.

Patrick Reinhart reported that there was an addition to the Council's priorities related to expanding the Infant Learning Program (ILP). He highlighted that the ILP serves approximately 1,633 children with a medical diagnosis of a 50% developmental delay. Early intervention services provided by ILP providers across the state are often credited with success later in life for children with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. Currently, Alaska has one of the more restrictive eligibility requirements in the nation. Therefore, the Interagency Coordination Council (ICC), which is a part of the GCDSE, is asking the legislature to expand eligibility to include a diagnosis of a 40% developmental delay in one area or a 25% developmental delay in two areas. This change in eligibility and funding request will serve approximately 450 additional children annually. Patrick noted that the Council has always supported early intervention services. Robert Tasso noted that ILP has had flat funding for the past decade, and adjusted for inflation, they have had cuts in the program. He stated that this is a relatively small ask relative to the last decade of flat funding.

Director Duane Mayes shared that Representative Saddler has agreed to sponsor the Assistive Technology Loan Fund transfer bill, which transfers the funding from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA). He offered to send detailed information to the Council.

Update on Federal Issues

Disability Policy Seminar

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Council invited members to participate in the virtual Disability Policy Seminar to educate self-advocates on national-level issues. Registration scholarships are available from the Council.

Autism Speaks National Hill Day

Tabled.

Friday Trust Joint Advocacy Meeting

Art Delaune shared that joint advocacy meetings occur at the Trust every Friday during the legislative session. The next Trust Joint Advocacy

meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 24, 2023 from 12:15 – 1:15 p.m. via Zoom. Everyone is welcome to attend.

TIME AND DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next Legislative Committee meeting is scheduled for April 26, 2023 from 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.

GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT

The meeting ended at approximately 1:45 p.m.

DRAFT