

**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
Wednesday, November 8, 2023
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Caitlin Poindexter, Chair
Art Delaune
Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus
Corey Gilmore
Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich
Jena Crafton
Chelsea Burke
Margaret Evans
Michael Christian
Amanda Coelho
Anna Williams

Staff:

Patrick Reinhart
Jamie Kokoszka
Richard Saville
Samantha Vetter
Lanny Mommsen

CALL TO ORDER – 1:02 p.m.
ROLL CALL – Quorum established

WELCOME FROM THE CHAIR

Introductions, Announcements, or Good News

Caitlin Poindexter welcomed attendees to the meeting.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST DECLARATIONS

No conflicts of interest were declared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA and MINUTES

Jena Crafton **MOVED** to approve the November 8, 2023 meeting agenda as amended, **SECONDED** by Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Chelsea Burke **MOVED** to approve the September 20, 2023 meeting minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Corey Gilmore. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

REPORTS

Chair Report

No report

GCDSE Staff Report

The Council staff reported the following information:

- The Council supported and participated in the Disability Pride celebrations over the summer.
- The Council recently got approved to partner in the Department of Education and Early Development's new grant. Samantha Vetter will be taking the lead on the project. The grant is focused on employment and youth-related activities for individuals with developmental disabilities and others.
- The Aging and Disability Summit took place October 11-12, 2023.
- The Employment Fair and Symposium took place on October 13, 2023. There was a good turnout.
- The Reducing Recidivism Conference is scheduled for November 30 – December 1, 2023 at the Marriot in Anchorage. Council members are free to attend. An e-mail with instructions was sent to Council members to register. The Council plans to have a resource table at the conference.
- The Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation 2024 Public Policy Fellowship Program seeks an exemplary professional, a person with a disability, or a family member of an individual with intellectual or developmental disabilities to serve as a 2024

Public Policy Fellow in Washington, D.C. It is a one-year, full-time, intensive immersion experience. The fellows are assigned to actively participate in public policy development in the offices of a member of Congress, a congressional committee, or, more rarely, a federal agency. The fellowship aims to prepare emerging and established leaders to assume new public policy leadership roles at the state or national levels. Council members can contact Jamie Kokoszka at the Council office if they are interested. The application deadline is December 10, 2023.

- The National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD), the National Disability Rights Network (NDRN), and the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) honor the 60th Anniversary of the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights (DD Act).

Patrick Reinhart reported that he attended the NACDD Executive Director Retreat in October. There was a discussion related to opening up the DD Act to create a potential technical amendment to the act primarily to fix the inequities that occur in the distribution of formula funds for councils, University Centers on Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), and the Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities Agencies (P&A).

BUSINESS

2023 State Legislative Updates and Discussion

Jamie Kokoszka shared the Council's position papers related to outstanding legislation from the last session as follows:

- HB 111 (Deaf and Hard of Hearing – Children's Bill of Rights)
 - Sits in House Finance awaiting hearing
 - Companion Bill SB 143 was introduced
 - The Deaf Education Board identified edits to the language of the proposed legislation as follows:
 - Add ASL as a method of communication as an option
 - Remove "cued speech" and "total communication" as options, as they do not apply to Alaska and are outdated methods of communication
 - Change the definitions of "deaf" and "hard of hearing" in the bill, as they are deficit-focused.
 - Update:
 - Rich Saville is engaged with the Deaf Education Board (DEB) on proposed language amendments. The DEB is making good progress. Rich will send the proposed draft amendments to Legislative Committee members when it is finalized.
- Centralized Accommodation Fund (CAF)
 - A budgetary item that got vetoed in the Governor's final budget
 - Trust included it in its recommendations to the administration

- One of the top recommendations in the AWMTF report
- The CAF will be brought forward again next session
- The Council will consider whether or not to present it as a capital project
- Update:
 - The Employment Committee will take the lead on the CAF
 - The Trust has put the CAF on its legislative agenda as a budget item.

- SB 104/HB 161 (Civil Legal Services Fund)
 - A Council bill in 2018
 - Alaska Legal Services (ALS) is in dire need of appropriate funding
 - The bill promotes moving back to 25% of legal fees collected by the state going to ALS
 - Update:
 - There is bipartisan sponsorship in both the House and Senate.

- HCBS Efficiencies
 - Update:
 - There are five points in the Governor's Council's HCBS efficiencies position paper:
 1. Increase savings and self-determination by offering an option for some people with I/DD to direct their services in a more independent and flexible way.
 2. Better facilitate environmental modifications (EMods) such as smart home technology, physical accessibility, and remote monitoring to ensure greater independence for HCBS recipients.
 3. Initiate Adult Companion Services.
 4. Consider softening or removing other regulatory barriers to HCBS Services.
 5. HCBS Medicaid rate structure is flawed, outdated, and needs an objective overhaul. Ask: Give the Department of Health the direction and tools necessary to address our DD system Crisis.
 - With regard to No. 2, Environmental Modifications (EMods), Anna Williams from SDS, working with the Council under the Living Well Grant, facilitated a presentation related to remote monitoring at the June Council meeting.
 - Anna Williams has been tasked to write a white paper on the EMod Program and how it can be improved. She requested input on areas of research from the Legislative Committee members.
 - Patrick Reinhart noted that the SILC is involved with improving the EMod program. Michael Christian stated he would e-mail the SILC's comments on the matter.
 - Corey Gilmore noted that EMods are potentially a good fit for the waiver system.

- Jamie Kokoszka suggested bringing the discussion on HCBS efficiencies to the CISS Committee.
- Discussion of potential Council-supported/initiated bills
 - Move ACL funding for assistive technology (AT) loan program from DVR to another entity (Assistive Technology of Alaska, CHD, Centers for Independent Living, other entity with direct connection to consumers in need of AT)
 - Update:
 - No update.

Jamie Kokoszka shared a master spreadsheet that outlined legislation of interest to the Trust and partner advisory boards. Caitlin Poindexter noted that it is a valuable document that helps people to track activity during the session. Patrick Reinhart shared that individuals can call into the Trust's Friday meetings during the legislative session for an update on legislative activity.

Update on Federal Issues

NACDD Federal Updates:

- TASH Resource
 - <https://tash.org/about/public-policy/>
 - TASH advances equity, opportunity, and inclusion for people with disabilities, with a focus on those with the most significant support needs in the areas of education, employment, and community living through advocacy, research, and practice.

Patrick Reinhart reported that the Disability Policy Seminar (DPS) is scheduled for April 2024 in Washington, D.C. Several Council members participated in the virtual event last year.

OTHER

Patrick Reinhart noted that the Full Lives Conference is scheduled for April 10-11, 2024 in Anchorage.

Patrick Reinhart reminded the members that there was a discussion at the Council meeting related to working in partnership with the SILC on joint legislative advocacy issues. The SILC will have representatives join the Council's advocacy planning meetings over the next few months. Art Delaune commented that when doing joint advocacy, it will be important to be clear about what is being relayed in meetings with lawmakers and their staff. Jena Crafton agreed with Art. Michael Christian pointed out that they are a small organization, and it is not likely that there would be over-participation by the SILC. He believes that the Council and the SILC could be 100 percent unified on common issues.

DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

- Wednesday, December 6, 2023, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 10, 2024, 1:00 – 2:30 p.m. (tentative)

GOOD OF THE ORDER AND ADJOURNMENT

Chelsea Burke **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Shelly Vendetti-Vuckovich. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

DRAFT