

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

**Legislative Committee**

**LOCATION**

**Governor's Council Conference Room  
3601 C Street  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Teleconference**

**Meeting Date**

**April 9, 2015  
12:00 p.m.**

**Attendees:**

Anthony Cravalho  
Banarsi Lal  
Dean Gates – Chair  
Alex Gimarc  
Terese Kashi  
Ric Nelson  
Steve Lesko  
Grace Abbott for Rep. Millett

**Staff:**

Patrick Reinhart  
Rich Sanders  
Brittney Howell  
Johanna Richter



## **REPORTS**

### ***Report from the Chair***

Dean Gates stated that he has nothing new to report at this time.

### ***Report from Staff***

Patrick Reinhart reported that he and Johanna Richter spend much of their time listening to legislative hearings, particularly about Medicaid expansion and reform. He has testified on behalf of the issue related to durable medical equipment reuse and recycling. He stated that there is a House bill on durable medical equipment reuse and recycling that may go to a floor vote this weekend; and if that happens, the Senate will then have to vote on it. Patrick noted that the Senate also has a companion bill. He noted that there was no opposition to the House bill, and it contained a lot of the information the Council had put into their proposal for reuse and recycle of durable medical equipment.

Patrick Reinhart stated that Council staff have been preparing a group of LEND fellows to attend the National Disability Policy Seminar in Washington, D.C. Patrick will also be sending a package of information to the Congressional staffers to the Alaska delegation.

Patrick Reinhart stated that the Senate HELP Committee is looking to do a markup of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act reauthorization. They developed a new draft two days ago, and Senator Murkowski's office has asked the Council for a very quick turnaround on comments on the draft. Patrick is working with Christie Reinhardt to develop some points to make to the Senator's staff.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### ***Denali Deaf Community Center (DDCC)***

Dean Gates reported that there were some supporters of the DDCC that called into the Senate Finance Committee's public testimony for the capital budget. He noted that the Alaska Deaf Council has a letter in support of

the DDCC that should be sent to the Finance Committee quickly. Dean stated that the prospects of receiving the funding don't look very good in light of the other capital budget cuts that have been reported recently for other agencies. Patrick Reinhart reminded Dean Gates that the DDCC will have to find a senator willing to offer an amendment in the capital budget process. Dean stated that he has tried to contact Senator McGuire but was unsuccessful. Alex Gimarc noted that another person to contact may be Akis Gialopsos with Senator Giessel's office.

Dean Gates reported that the DDCC is looking at other funding, and they have applied for a Rasmuson Foundation matching grant. The DDCC has focused their efforts on fundraising for this matching grant. He stated that the DDCC has until June 30<sup>th</sup> to exercise the option to purchase their building or not; and if they don't purchase it, they must move out by the end of September.

### ***Disability Training and Identification Bill***

Patrick Reinhart stated that the Disability Training and ID bill has passed out of the HSS Committee, and there hasn't been any real opposition to it. The bill has attracted a number of new sponsors and appears to be moving forward.

### ***Medicaid***

Patrick Reinhart reported that first Senator Kelly submitted a bill on Medicaid reform, and then the Governor submitted a bill in the House and the Senate on Medicaid expansion and reform. Both of those in the House and Senate are getting almost daily hearings. Patrick reported that he heard from Dave Parish, the Key Coalition lobbyist, that either House Finance or House HSS will be taking public testimony from 1 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. Patrick stated that in terms of Medicaid expansion, he has heard that most agencies, such as Chamber of Commerce, hospitals, health associations, and various other groups, are all in support of Medicaid expansion. He noted that the legislature supports that Medicaid needs to be reformed before it can be expanded.

Patrick Reinhart mentioned that the Executive Committee of the Council voted in favor of supporting a resolution in favor of Medicaid expansion and reform. He stated that the efforts are mostly being led by the Trust, and the Council's logo has been added to the documents as an agency in support of the effort.

### ***HB 76 – Removal of the word “gifted” from GCDSE enabling statute.***

Grace Abbott stated that the bill is currently in the Rules Committee, and they are hoping to continue to further explain the bill to some members that needed clarification. Opposition was not anticipated for this bill, and the only opposition they have been getting has been people confused about where this leaves gifted students. Patrick Reinhart asked Grace Abbott to contact the Council if there is anything they can do to help support them.

### ***HB 99 – Voluntary Termination of Life***

Patrick Reinhart stated that the materials for this bill contain a lot in favor and against, so it will probably be a controversial bill. He stated that in a broad sense, disability groups in general do not support these kinds of bills because they lead to a slippery slope of who makes decisions on whether or not somebody's terminal disease affects the person's quality of life. He directed committee members to the draft letter staff composed that is in opposition to the legislation, noting that if the Legislative Committee votes in favor of the letter, it will be immediately sent to the House HSS Committee.

Alex Gimarc **MOVED** that the Legislative Committee approve this letter dated April 7<sup>th</sup> in opposition to HB 99. **SECONDED** by Ric Nelson.

Alex Gimarc suggested the following edit to the letter. Front page, bottom line, the sentence reads: "...a profit-driven health care system, this..." to insert the words "or government-funded" after the words "profit-driven." The new sentence will read: "With a profit-driven or government-funded health care system, this..." Committee members agreed with the edit.

The motion **PASSED**.

## ***Capital Budget***

Patrick Reinhart reported that in addition to the DDCC capital request, staff have also been tracking the \$1 million request for coordinated human service transportation, which remains in the budget.

## ***HB 102 – Residential Psychiatric Education Funding***

Patrick Reinhart stated that the Council has not taken a position on this legislation, which involves residential in-patient psychiatric facilities receiving base student allocation funding for education provision by the facility. He noted that this legislation is controversial right now and suggests the Council not comment on it at this time as they continue to explore the pros and cons and do further research.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### ***HB 161/SB 90 – Used Durable Medical Equipment***

This issue was previously addressed.

### ***Disability Policy Seminar***

This issue was previously addressed.

## **OTHER INFORMATION FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Patrick Reinhart stated that the Council has heard from AADD that there is an expectation that the House and the Senate will submit ABLE Act bills. He reminded committee members that the Council had previously supported federal legislation for the ABLE Act.

Ric Nelson **MOVED** that the Legislative Committee support legislation that allows the state to set up ABLE accounts. **SECONDED** by Banarsi Lal. The motion **PASSED**.

## **UPCOMING MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES**

- May 5 – 6, Governor’s Council meeting.

## **TIME AND DATE OF NEXT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Legislative Committee will most likely conduct a meeting during the course of the full Council meeting, and the June teleconference date is to be determined.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Alex Gimarc **MOVED** to adjourn the meeting. The motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 1:06 p.m.