



Alaska Citizen Review Panel

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Alaska Citizen Review Panel evaluates the policies, procedures, and practices of state and local child protection agencies for effectiveness in discharging their child protection responsibilities. The Panel is mandated through CAPTA 1997 (P.L. 104-235), and enacted through AS 47.14.205

LEGISLATIVE VISIT – REPORT

Dates of visit	February 11 – 13, 2015
Members of CRP on the visit	Dana Hallett, Diwakar Vadapalli

Presentation:

Annual overview of the Panel's work to the House Committee on Health and Social Services

Meetings:

Rep. Les Gara (*D – Anchorage*)

Member, House Finance Committee; House Finance Subcommittee on HSS

Rep. Paul Seaton (*R – Homer*)

Chair, House HSS Committee

Rep. Tarr (*D – Anchorage*)

Member, House HSS Committee

Rep. Wilson (*R – North Pole*)

Member, House Finance Subcommittee on HSS

Rep. Saddler (*R – Eagle River*)

Member, House Finance Subcommittee on HSS

Rep. Herron (*D – Bethel*)

House Majority Whip

Sen. Olson (*D – Nome*). *Due to scheduling conflict, we could only meet with his staffer.*

Member, Senate Finance Subcommittee on HSS

Sen. Coghill (*R – North Pole*)

Senate Majority Leader

Member, Senate Finance Subcommittee on HSS

Sen. Giessel (*R – Anchorage*)

Vice Chair, Senate HSS committee

Member, Senate Finance Subcommittee on HSS

Deputy Commissioner Ree Sailors

Department of Health and Social Services

Director Christy Lawton

Office of Children Services

The Panel tried to reach out to several other legislators that either could not be reached or were not available for a meeting due to scheduling conflicts.

Acknowledgments: The CRP would like to thank the House Committee on Health and Social Services, and Rep. Paul Seaton for accommodating our request for a hearing. The Panel would also like to thank all the legislators and their staff for meeting with us and discussing various issues related to child protection in Alaska.

As part of its public outreach responsibilities, each year during the legislative session, the Panel presents an overview of its work from the previous year to the State's Standing Committees on Health and Social Services (HSS) of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. In addition, the Panel also meets with various legislators, the Governor's office, and the Commissioner's office during and beyond the legislative session to discuss various issues of importance.

1. Presentation

This year, the Panel presented its overview to the House HSS Committee on February 12. The Committee is chaired by Rep. Paul Season (R-Homer), and includes Rep. Foster (D-Nome), Rep. Stutes (R-Kodiak), Rep. Talerico (R-Healy), Rep. Tarr (D-Anchorage), and Rep. Wool (D-Fairbanks). A recording of the entire presentation and discussion are available on the Panel's website at: <http://crpalaska.org/reports/presentations/>

The Panel had consistent challenges over the last several years in scheduling a hearing with the Senate HSS Committee.

2. Highlights from other meetings

Many issues were discussed, including:

- Supporting a budget request to add positions to the current OCS workforce.
- Improving CRP's oversight responsibilities and OCS responsiveness
- Improving CRP's public outreach responsibilities by reaching out to legislators when the legislature is not in session
- Exploring case reviews as part of the CRP's mandate
- Issues and concerns in OCS' Western Region
- Availability and accessibility of data and information from OCS

The Governor's Office redirected us to meet with the Commissioner of DHSS. Commissioner Davidson was unavailable due to scheduling conflicts. However, the Panel met with Ree Sailors, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), and Christy Lawton, Director of the Office of Children Services (OCS). We discussed various opportunities and challenges in enhancing CRP's functioning.