

HB 188 -- Redline

CSHB 188(STA) to HB 188 -- An Act establishing the welcoming Alaska office; establishing the welcoming Alaska center; establishing the Welcoming Alaska Advisory Committee; repealing the office of citizenship assistance; and providing for an effective date.

Deletions ~~struck~~ · Insertions underlined

~~34-LS0893\G~~34-LS0893\A-CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO.

~~188(STA)~~188 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION BY ~~THE REPRESENTATIVES HOUSE~~MINA, STATE~~Carrick~~ Affairs~~Introduced: COMMITTEE Referred:~~
~~Finance~~4/11/25 ~~Sponsor(s):~~Referred:

~~REPRESENTATIVES~~State ~~MINA, Affairs, Carrick~~Finance A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED "An Act establishing the welcoming Alaska office;

~~relating to the state's refugee services program;~~

(a) The welcoming Alaska office is established in the ~~department~~office ~~to promote full participation of immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers as self-sufficient individuals and families in the economic, commissioner, social, and civic life of the state, and to advance the state's workforce security.~~

~~Under~~The ~~the supervision of the executive director, the office shall (1) provide to immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers employment information, referrals to employment services, including job placement services, and information about how to access~~use ~~labor unions, administrative agencies, and court~~~~HB0188b -1- CSHB 188(STA) New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G~~ actions to pursue claims or charges of job discrimination, illegal termination of employment, sexual harassment, and unsafe working conditions;

(2) ~~serve~~consult ~~as with the state's coordinating entity among stakeholders, including state agencies and local governments, to align~~identify strategies to reduce licensing and other employment barriers ~~that~~~~HB0188a hinder-1- immigrants, HB refugees, 188 and New newcomers~~Text from Underlined ~~gaining~~[DELETED employment ~~TEXT or~~BRACKETED] ~~starting~~34-LS0893\A ~~a~~for business; new immigrants and newcomers;

(3) use the education and experience of immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers to benefit the economy of the state;

(4) contract with other state agencies to develop and administer programs or services that promote entrance into and mobility within the workforce for immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(5) consult with stakeholders, including state agencies and local governments, to develop and implement a statewide strategy to support businesses in recruiting and retaining workers who are immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers~~newcomers; and to support immigrants, refugees, and newcomers in starting and scaling new businesses;~~

(6) advise the commissioner on (A) improving employment opportunities for immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(B) preventing employment discrimination against immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(D) supporting the economic and social integration of immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

and (E) reducing the exploitation of immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(7) subject to appropriation, offer grants to support the economic and social integration of immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(8) serve as a convener for community-based organizations serving immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(9) design and implement strategies and programs to make the state a ~~CSHB 188(STA) -2- HB0188b New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G~~ more welcoming place for immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(10) serve as a point of contact for all state agencies regarding issues affecting immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(12) coordinate with departments and nonprofit organizations to assist immigrants, HB refugees, 188 -2- HB0188a New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\A new immigrants and newcomers in improving quality-of-life issues, including access to business opportunities, education, employment, housing, ~~health~~healthcare, care, and other services;

(13) subject to appropriation, assist political subdivisions with fees and other costs associated with visa applications, recruitment, and housing support for immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(14) research and analyze economic and demographic trends to better serve immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(16) serve as an information clearinghouse on information regarding immigrants, new refugees, immigrants

and newcomers;

~~and (17) coordinate make refugee policy programs, recommendations including to education, the training, governor employment, housing, and medical the support legislature and on other issues services, affecting for new refugees immigrants who and newcomers. longer receive federal assistance; and (18) make policy recommendations to the governor and the legislature on issues affecting immigrants, refugees, and newcomers.~~

(c) The ~~commissioner~~ governor shall appoint an individual to serve as the executive director of the office.

(a) Each principal department in ~~HB0188b -3- CSHB 188(STA) New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G~~ the executive branch shall designate one staff member to serve as a liaison between the department and the office.

(b) A liaison shall (1) disseminate information about services offered by the department that are available to immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers, department staff, the office, and the public;

(2) communicate with the office on issues affecting immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(3) when applicable, coordinate between the office, the liaison's ~~HB0188a -3- HB 188 New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\A~~ department, and professional boards within the liaison's department to assist the office with license applications from immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers.

The advisory committee consists of the following ~~13~~ nine members:

(3) ~~11~~ seven voting members appointed by the governor as follows:

(A) a representative from a nonprofit organization that provides employment or language services to immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers;

(D) a representative from the business ~~and economic development~~ community;

(F) a representative ~~of from a the refugee criminal resettlement justice agency system; operating in the state;~~

~~CSHB 188(STA) -4- HB0188b New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G~~ (G) a ~~representative member of a the refugee-led public, or immigrant service community-based organization;~~

~~(H)(b) a~~ The representative committee shall (1) assist the office with expertise developing in recommendations workforce for development policies, or procedures, labor regulations, market and analysis; legislation to help ensure state government and state programs are accessible and responsive to the needs of new immigrants and newcomers;

~~(I)(2) a work representative with from the office to monitor the health work care of delivery state sector; agencies to include and retain new immigrants and newcomers in state programs;~~

~~(J)(3) a conduct representative public from meetings, as requested by the criminal governor justice or system; the office, for the public to comment and make suggestions on attracting to and retaining in the state new immigrants and newcomers and improving the employment opportunities, inclusion in civic matters, and community connections of new immigrants and newcomers;~~

~~(K)(4) a conduct member studies, on request of the public-governor or the office, on issues affecting new immigrants and newcomers;~~

~~(b)(5) The advise committee shall (1) assist the office with on developing ways recommendations for policies, procedures, regulations, and legislation to help increase ensure outreach state government and state programs are accessible and responsive to the new needs immigrants of immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;~~

~~(2) work with the office to monitor the work of state agencies to include and retain immigrants, refugees, and newcomers in state programs;~~

~~(3) conduct public meetings, as requested by the governor or the office, for the public to comment and make suggestions on attracting to and retaining in the state immigrants, refugees, and newcomers and improving the employment opportunities, inclusion in civic matters, and community connections of immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;~~

~~(4) conduct studies, on request of the governor or the office, on issues affecting immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;~~

~~(5) advise the office on ways to increase outreach to immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;~~

~~HB0188b -5- CSHB 188(STA) New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G~~ (f) The committee shall meet at least twice a year.

(a) Subject to appropriation, the office shall establish a welcoming Alaska center in one or more communities to provide virtual and in-person information and assistance for immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers.

(b) A welcoming Alaska center shall provide ~~or coordinate~~ the following services ~~for to~~ immigrants, new refugees, immigrants and newcomers:

(1) English and Alaska Native language instruction;

HB0188a -5- HB 188 New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\A Sec.

In AS 23.05.131 - 23.05.135, (1) "immigrant" "newcomer" has means a person who moved to the meaning state given from another state in 8 the U.S.C. preceding 36 months;

1101(a)(15)(2) (Immigration "new and immigrant" Nationality means Act); a person, or the child of a person, who has arrived, or will arrive, to the state as an immigrant or refugee;

(2)(3) "newcomer" "office" means a person who moved to the state welcoming from Alaska another office state established in under the AS preceding 23.05.131. 36 months;

(3) "office" means the welcoming Alaska office established under AS 23.05.131;

(4) "refugee" has the meaning given in 8 U.S.C.

1101(a)(42) (Immigration and Nationality Act) and includes individuals eligible for services under 8 U.S.C.

1521 - 1524 (Refugee Act of 1980) or any successor federal program.

AS 23.05.131(a), enacted by sec.

1 of this Act, is amended to read:

(a) The welcoming Alaska office is established in the department to promote full participation of immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers as self-sufficient individuals and families in the economic, social, and civic life of the state, and to CSHB 188(STA) -6- HB0188b New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G advance the state's workforce security.

Under the supervision of the executive director, the office shall (1) provide to immigrants, refugees, and newcomers employment information, referrals to employment services, including job placement services, and information about how to access labor unions, administrative agencies, and court actions to pursue claims or charges of job discrimination, illegal termination of employment, sexual harassment, and unsafe working conditions;

(2) serve as the state's coordinating entity among stakeholders, including state agencies and local governments, to align strategies to reduce licensing and other barriers that hinder immigrants, refugees, and newcomers from gaining employment or starting a business;

(3) use the education and experience of immigrants, refugees, and newcomers to benefit the economy of the state;

(4) contract with other state agencies to develop and administer programs or services that promote entrance into and mobility within the workforce for immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(5) consult with stakeholders, including state agencies and local governments, to develop and implement a statewide strategy to support businesses in recruiting and retaining workers who are immigrants, refugees, and newcomers and to support immigrants, refugees, and newcomers in starting and scaling new businesses;

(6) advise the commissioner on (A) improving employment opportunities for immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(B) preventing employment discrimination against immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(C) cooperating with state and federal agencies to accomplish the office's mission;

(D) supporting the economic and social integration of immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

and (E) reducing the exploitation of immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

HB0188b -7- CSHB 188(STA) New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G (7) subject to appropriation, offer grants to support the economic and social integration of immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(8) serve as a convener for community-based organizations serving immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(9) design and implement strategies and programs to make the state a more welcoming place for immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(10) serve as a point of contact for all state agencies regarding issues affecting immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(11) subject to appropriation, establish the welcoming Alaska center under AS 25.05.134 and operate a toll-free multilingual hotline for referral of services;

(12) coordinate with departments and nonprofit organizations to assist immigrants, refugees, and newcomers in improving quality-of-life issues, including access to business opportunities, education, employment, housing, health care, and other services;

(13) subject to appropriation, assist political subdivisions with fees and other costs associated with visa applications, recruitment, and housing support for immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(14) research and analyze economic and demographic trends to better serve immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;

(15) coordinate and establish best practices for language access initiatives for all state agencies;

~~(16) serve as an information clearinghouse on information regarding immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;~~
~~(17) coordinate refugee programs, including education, training, employment, housing, and medical support and other services, for refugees who no longer receive federal assistance;~~
~~[AND] (18) make policy recommendations to the governor and the legislature on issues affecting immigrants, refugees, and newcomers;~~
~~and (19) serve as the entity responsible for administering the state's refugee services program under 8 U.S.C.~~

~~1521 – 1524 (Refugee Act of 1980) and assume responsibilities previously carried out by the state's designee, including CSHB 188(STA) – 8- HB0188b New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G (A) providing or coordinating refugee resettlement, integration, and workforce participation services to support long-term economic self-sufficiency;~~
~~(B) operating or overseeing refugee support services, including refugee cash and medical assistance as authorized;~~
~~and (C) collaborating with refugee resettlement agencies, community partners, and refugee-led organizations.~~

~~* Sec.~~

~~3-~~

~~AS 23.05.131, enacted by sec.~~

~~1 of this Act, is amended by adding new subsections to read:~~

~~(e) The office shall employ an individual to serve as the state refugee coordinator for the state's refugee services program under 8 U.S.C.~~

~~1521 – 1524 (Refugee Act of 1980).~~

~~(f) The commissioner of health shall designate an employee in the Department of Health to serve as the coordinator of refugee health services under the state's refugee services program.~~

~~The coordinator of refugee health services shall work with public health agencies to coordinate the refugee health program in accordance with requirements and guidance from the federal office responsible for refugee resettlement programs.~~

~~* Sec.~~

~~4-~~

~~5-3.~~

~~6-4.~~

~~HB0188b – 9- CSHB 188(STA) New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED] 34-LS0893\G * Sec.~~

~~7-~~

~~Sections 2 and 3 of this Act take effect July 1, 2027.~~

~~8-5.~~

~~Except This as Act provided takes in effect sec. July 1, 2026.~~

~~7HB of 188 this-6- Act, HB0188a this New Act Text takes Underlined effect [DELETED July TEXT 1, BRACKETED] –2026- CSHB 188(STA) – 10- HB0188b New Text Underlined [DELETED TEXT BRACKETED]~~