

2018 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

Twelfth Edition – 4/2/18 to 4/8/18

7 days to Day 90

~ then off to 121 ~

HIGHLIGHTS

The Alaska Supreme Court cleared the way for undeclared and nonpartisan candidates to run in the state Democratic Party primary. On Wednesday, the court affirmed a decision made earlier by Juneau Superior Court Judge Philip Pallenberg. [Click here for the Decision](#)

Judge Pallenberg had decided that parties have the right to associate themselves with the candidates of their choice, regardless of their party registration. The State contested that decision.

Through Tuesday, there were 206,032 undeclared registered voters, 83,856 nonpartisan voters, 139,357 Republicans and 74,869 Democrats. [Voters by Party](#)

Republican Party Chairman Tuckerman Babcock said the decision parallels the principle that parties determine who can vote in primaries. The Republicans had tried to change party rules to bar from the party's primaries any Republicans who caucus with another party after state representatives LeDoux, Seaton and Stutes joined the House Majority Coalition.

Disallowing the rule change, Josie Bahnke, State Division of Elections, ruled the change was made too late and violated state law. Mr. Babcock has said he'll ask MS. Bahnke to reverse herself based on new decision.

April 13th is "Purple Up! For Military Kids" day. The Governor signed a proclamation for April as the Month for the Military Child and encourages all Alaskans to wear purple – the color symbolizing all branches of the military – as a visible show of support and appreciation of military children. See the proclamation here: [Proclamation](#)

As the Legislature gears up to work on the Capital budget, Governor Walker has proposed the re-allocation of FY 2019 budget requests to pay for the completion of a centralized statewide 911 dispatch system.

In a letter to the Finance Co-Chairs of both bodies, the Governor stated Alaska is only one of three states without a statewide 9-1-1 system. Geographically, about 92 percent of the state is not covered by enhanced "9-1-1" direct service. See the letter here: [Governor Letter](#)

[HCR 2](#), Respond to Adverse Childhood Experiences sponsored by Rep. Tarr passed the House on [Go Blue Day](#) honoring child abuse prevention efforts across the state.

BUDGET ISSUES

The Senate Finance draft version of the operating budget agrees with the House on the amount to payout in Permanent Fund dividends: \$1600.

Overall the committee's budget would cut \$98 million from the House's version of the budget-most of the cuts would be to Medicaid.

The draft CS relies on a \$700 million draw from the Constitutional Budget Reserve and a \$2.7 billion draw from permanent fund earnings to help pay for the budgets and PFDs.

SFIN took public testimony on the operating and mental health budgets and on HB 287-Approp: Pupil Transportation: Education- from around the state on Friday.

[SFIN Workdraft CS for HB 287](#) directs \$1.25 billion in FY 2019 toward K-12 education-fully funding the base student allocation and pupil transportation with permanent fund earnings. It also fully funds the BSA and pupil transportation for FY 2020 contingent on the passage of [SB 26](#)—Approp. Limit & Permanent Fund Dividend; Earnings which has been sitting in a conference committee since last session.

SFIN is scheduled to take up the **budget bills starting Tuesday afternoon at 1:30pm**; Wednesday 9am and 1:30pm; and, Thursday at 9am.

Meanwhile in HFIN...

The committee will be meeting at 9am and at 1:30pm Monday-Wednesday.

(See the Hearings of Interest list below for non-budget bill hearings)

[SB 107](#), Alaska Capital Income Fund sponsored by SFIN and [SB 78](#), Permanent Fund Dividend Contributions/Lottery sponsored by Sen. Bishop will be heard Monday at 9:00am

[HB 233](#), Education Tax Credits; Sunset; Repeals sponsored by Rep. Tuck; [SB 165](#), Comprehensive Health Insurance Fund sponsored by Sen. MacKinnon; [HB 306](#), PERs/TERs Distributions-a Gov's bill; and [HB 399](#), Corporation Tax; Remove Exemptions/Credits sponsored by HFIN are all on Monday's 1:30pm schedule

Tuesday morning the committee hears public testimony on [HB 339](#), Increase Base Student Allocation. It also scheduled to be heard Wednesday afternoon.

[SB 97](#), Pension Obligation Bonds sponsored by SFIN is on the schedule for Tuesday afternoon.

[HB 304](#), Microloan Revolving Fund & Loans is set for Wednesday morning.

House Finance may introduce “An Act relating to the oil and gas production tax, tax payments, and credits” and will hold an additional meeting Tuesday at 5:00pm to hear it pending referral.

And in the H&S STA committees...

On Tuesday and again on Thursday at 3:15pm, HSTA is scheduled to hear [SB 196](#), Appropriation Limit sponsored by SFIN.

[SJR 9](#), Constitutional Amend. Permanent Fund Approp. Dividend sponsored by Sen. Stedman is scheduled for Thursday in SSTA at 3:30pm.

HEARINGS OF INTEREST

If you want to share your opinions/concerns about a particular piece of legislation, look for hearings where the committees list public testimony being taken. That's your chance!

Lots of bills are scheduled, but it looks to be a crazy week, so my best advice is to look on the calendar each day and then be ready for what's there to change! [Daily Schedule](#)

Monday morning 8:00am, the EDC committees will hold a joint hearing for a presentation by the Alaska Council of School Administrators.

At 9:00am, SFIN will take up [SB 38](#), Pharmacy Benefits Managers sponsored by Sen. Giessel. Its companion, [HB 240](#) sponsored by Rep. Guttenberg should pass the House to become the vehicle for this legislation. This hearing will allow committee members to get up to speed on the issues so they'll be ready for HB 240 when it gets referred to them.

SFIN is hearing some non-budget bills—one of the [SB 186](#), Voter Registration & PFD Registration-a Gov's bill- will be heard Monday afternoon at 1:30pm.

Also at 1:30pm, SJUD will take public testimony on [SJR 14](#), Constitutional Amend: Parental Consent to Abortion sponsored by Sen. Olson. The bill is further scheduled in SJUD on Wednesday and Friday.

[HB 79](#), Omnibus Workers' Compensation, a Gov's bill, will be in SFIN Tuesday morning at 9:00am.

Tuesday at 1:30pm, SL&C will hear [HB 142](#), Unemployment Insurance Benefits sponsored by Rep. Tuck.

HHSS will hold a discussion on the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) Tuesday afternoon at 3:00pm Division of Behavioral Health Director Randall Burns and API CEO Ron Hale will offer a presentation; then, the committee will hear from various community members.

[HCR 19](#), Governor: AK Native Languages Emergency sponsored by Rep. Ortiz will be in SCRA, Tuesday at 3:30pm.

Also at 3:30pm SSTA will take public testimony on [HB 1](#), Election Registration and Voting sponsored by Rep. Tuck and on [HB 7](#), Marked Ballot Photos; Persuasion at Polls sponsored by Rep. Kreiss – Tomkins.

[SB 32](#), Prescriptions for Biological Products sponsored by Sen. Hughes will be in HFIN Wednesday at 1:30pm.

Even though SFIN has the budgets listed for their Thursday 9:00am meeting [SB 193](#), Medicaid Assistance Work Requirement sponsored by Sen. Kelly is also on the list—we'll see if they get that far.

Then Thursday afternoon at 1:30pm they'll hear [HB 318](#) Extend Board of Social Work Examiners and [HB 323](#), Extend Board of Pharmacy.

~ End of Report ~

Contact: Caren Robinson (carenr@gci.net)