

2018 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

Second Edition – 1/22 to 1/28/18

~ *Second Legislator Asked to Step Down* ~

HIGHLIGHTS

Just yesterday, Speaker Edgmon called for Rep. Zach Fansler's resignation, citing conduct unbecoming a legislator. The request stems from an incident earlier this month when Fansler allegedly hit a woman.

House democrats confirmed John Agnaqluk Lincoln as the newly appointed Representative for House District 40 by a unanimous vote Thursday evening.

Representative Lincoln was born and reared in the Kotzebue area. He graduated from Stanford University. Lincoln is a vice president responsible for managing lands for NANA Regional Corp. He is expected in Juneau next week.

Over 1000 people attended the second annual Women's March in Juneau. The theme for this national event was getting women to the polls.

North Slope Borough Police Chief Travis Welch was appointed to the Marijuana Control Board. Meeting in Juneau this week the Board regulates Alaska's commercial marijuana industry. Their next meeting is in April in Nome. Learn more here: <https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/amco>

BUDGET ISSUES

The CEO and executive director of the Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation, Angela Rodell, appeared before the House and Senate Finance committees this week. As of January 1st, the Fund was worth \$64 billion. The Fund earned 12.89 % interest in the last fiscal year.

Lawmakers are considering using some of the Corporation's investment earnings to cover a portion of the budget deficit. Spending some of those earnings instead of reinvesting can stress the fund.

A stress test conducted by outside experts last year found that legislators preferred approaches to spending from the Fund have a high chance of failure at some point over the next decade.

Failure means running out of money in the portion of the Fund that can be spent on dividends and government expenses.

Spending from the Fund seems to be the only serious deficit-cutting approach currently being considered by both Bodies this year.

To view the Senate Finance hearing:

<http://www.360north.org/gavel/video/?clientID=2147483647&eventID=2018011050>

Departmental Budget Overviews continue this week.

To find hearing times/dates click here: [Daily Schedule](#)

Important Budget Dates:

15th Legislative Day Deadline for Governor’s Supplemental budget requests.

30th Legislative Day Deadline for Governor to submit budget Amendments

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES

Rep. Guttenberg’s Pharmacy Benefits Managers (PBM) bill, [HB 240](#), was heard and held in HL&C on Friday. The bill was introduced and public testimony was opened. Next hearing February 2.

Rep. Claman introduced [HB 310](#), a companion to Sen. Gardner’s minimum age for marriage eligibility bill. It’s been referred to STA and JUD.

[HB 312](#) introduced by Rep. Claman addresses a concern of health care workers and the increase in violence perpetrated against them in health care facilities. The bill allows peace officers to make a warrantless arrest at health care facilities for assault in the 4th degree under certain circumstances.

It further adds an aggravator to the sentencing statutes if the defendant committed the offense at a health care facility and knowingly directed the conduct constituting the offense at a medical professional during or because of the medical professional's exercise of professional duties. It’s been referred to JUD.

Rep. Eastman and Sen. Wilson introduced companion bills to prohibit the Department of Health and Social Services from receiving or expending funds for a grant to or contract with an entity that performs abortions or maintains or operates a facility where abortions are performed. [HB 308](#) is referred to HSS, JUD and FIN. [SB 162](#) is referred to HES and FIN.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

[HB 300](#) introduced by Reps Wool, Kawasaki and Drummond would prohibit the expenditure of state or municipal assets to enforce federal marijuana laws. The bill is referred to CRA and JUD.

[HB 311](#) was introduced on Friday by Reps Johnson and Millet. It’s a companion bill to Sen. Costello’s repeal of SB91 - the crime bill passed in 2016. It’s referred to STA, JUD and FIN.

[SB 151](#) adding a superior court judge to the first judicial district was introduced on Monday. It’s companion bill is on next week’s hearing schedule-*see below*

GOVERNOR’S CORNER

Last fall, the Governor included clemency reforms within his Public Safety Plan. In December, the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission passed a resolution asking the Governor to restart the clemency process and address the backlog of clemency applications.

This week the State released new procedures for convicted offenders to apply for pardons and other forms of clemency. To learn more about the new clemency process click here: [Clemency Update](#)

The Governor offered a statement of support Friday for work at Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) to launch a new Statewide Homeless Housing Office. [Homeless Housing Office](#)

The office will serve as a single point of contact for nonprofit and supportive housing providers regarding funding, technical and counseling assistance, data collection, best practice sharing, as well as connect those who are homeless with referrals to community partners as appropriate.

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Check the committee calendar the day of the scheduled hearing as sometimes a bill is rescheduled at the last minute

Daily Committee Hearings for 2018: [Meetings](#)

Gavel to Gavel: Most committee hearings can be seen and heard on Gavel Alaska. It is broadcast on both local access TV and on the internet at [360 North Gavel](#)

Streaming Video: [Live Now](#)

Testifying:

Legislative Information Office (LIO) Find your LIO here: <http://akleg.gov/lios.php>

In Juneau: See committee hearing list for room numbers

Call-in: Available with prior approval from the committee chair

From Anchorage: (907) 563-9085; From Juneau: (907) 586-9085; all others: (844)586-9085

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! Comments are usually time-limited (between 2-3 minutes). Written comments are taken too and can be of any length.

A joint meeting of the Education Committees is scheduled for Monday morning at 8am. The committees will hear an update on Professional Learning for Educators by the League of Alaska Education Innovators.

At noon on Monday join in a Lunch and Learn on the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Sponsored by Reps Tarr and Millett, the lunch and learn will explore pay equity and economic justice. Click here for more information: [Lilly Ledbetter](#)

[SS HB268](#), Rep. Gara introduced a sponsor substitute for the Opioid Prescription Warning bill and it's set for a hearing in HHSS on the 30th at 3pm.

[HB 298](#) adds one superior court judge to the first judicial district (Southeast). Introduced on Monday, it is already scheduled for a hearing in HCRA on the 30th at 3pm. To see the Judicial Districts list click here: [Alaska Judicial Districts](#)

[SB 154](#) introduced by Sen. Wilson on Wednesday adds the State's General Fund as a choice to be selected on the PFD application through the *Pick, Click, Give* program. It's scheduled for a hearing in SSTA on Tuesday at 3:30pm.

Tuesday at 5pm tune in to a meeting of the Sexual and Other Workplace Harassment committee. The committee will be discussing a work plan and timeline for completing their work. They will also meet Thursday at 5pm.

[SB 99](#) Pre-Elementary Programs receives its first hearing on Wednesday at 8am in SEDC.

Interested in Medicaid Reform and Expansion? Monique Martin, Health Care Policy Advisor with the Department of Health and Social Services will make a presentation to SFIN on that topic this Wednesday at 9:00am.

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education will be providing an update on its activities to the HHSS committee on Wednesday at 3:00pm.

[HB 302](#) introduced by Rep. Wool on Wednesday, would extend the termination date of the Board of Professional Counselors through June 30, 2026. The bill is referred to L&C and FIN and is scheduled for a hearing in L&C on Feb. 2nd at 3:15pm.

LINKS OF INTEREST

[2018 Legislator Contact List](#) the contact info for "Vacant" will be for Rep. Lincoln

[Toll-free Numbers for Legislators](#)

[Steps in the Passage of a Bill](#)

[Summary of Alaska Legislation 2017](#)

~ End of Report ~

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