

2018 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

Eighth Edition – 3/5 to 3/11/18

35 days to go

~Welcome Rep. Zulkosky; sending positive thoughts to Reps Spohnholz and Guttenberg ~

HIGHLIGHTS

Tiffany Zulkosky was sworn in as the Representative for House District 38 on Friday. Rep. Zulkosky is the 19th woman serving in the 30th Legislature which sets the 30th Legislature as the one with the **most women serving**.

[Special Orders](#) (*scroll toward the end of the Floor Session*) in the House on Friday focused on the women who have or are serving in the Alaska Legislature with Rep. Drummond reading a list of all women legislators going back to Territorial Days.

The House passed a resolution declaring March as Women’s History Month.

Both Rep Spohnholz and Guttenberg were on medical leave this week-wishing them speedy recoveries.

Unfortunately, absences from the House have made it difficult for the Majority to move legislation.

Heart felt public testimony over two hearings moved [HCR 19](#), Governor: AK Native Languages Emergency, sponsored by Rep. Ortiz from HCRA. It is in RLS waiting to be scheduled for a Floor vote.

The resolution calls on the Governor to work with the legislature, the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council, and Alaska Native organizations to ensure the survival and continued use of all 20 of the state's Alaska Native languages.

HCR 19 also urges the Governor to issue an administrative order recognizing a linguistic emergency.

[SB 15](#) passed the Senate. The bill prohibits the sales of e-cigarettes and vaporizers to Alaskans under 19 years of age. It’s been referred to L&C and FIN in the House. For more information about teens a vaping look here: [USNews article](#)

[HB 274](#), extending the Board of Psychologists and Psychological Associates through 2026 passed the House and was referred to L&C and FIN in the Senate.

[Work Draft for SB 112](#), Worker’s Compensation; Drug Database & Test sponsored by Sen. Giessel was heard and held in SL&C. Look here for the differences between the Work Draft and the Sponsor Substitute of the bill: [Differences from version R](#)

BUDGET ISSUES

The House Finance committee adjourned Thursday and cancelled Friday's meeting in the wake of Rep. Guttenberg's medical emergency. The Committee expects to pick up budget work next Tuesday/Wednesday, March 13-14th.

Most Senate Finance Subcommittee meetings for the coming week are being cancelled. The Senate is waiting for the House to move the operating and mental health budgets over to the Senate before the subcommittees close out.

SSTA moved [SB 196](#), Appropriation Limit during a hearing on Tuesday. The bill would limit the state's undesignated general fund spending to \$4.1 billion per year.

The amount would be revised annually based on inflation and state population. There is disagreement as to the cap amount for FY2019—some say it could be \$4.6 billion and some say it could be as low as \$3.96 billion.

State spending is already limited by an amendment to the Constitution, but that limit has never been approached. Each year, Alaska's budget is paid with money from three main sources: fees and program earning; the federal government, and the state's general fund.

SB 196 limits general fund spending but exempts spending for the PFD, state debt payments and state construction/renovation projects. The bill is expected to be heard in SFIN on Thursday, March 15th.

A Floor motion by Sen. Wielechowski to move [SJR 1](#), an amendment to the Constitution to guarantee the permanent fund dividend, from the Judiciary committee failed.

HFIN will take public testimony, Monday at 1:30pm, on [HJR 23](#), an amendment to the Constitution on the Permanent Fund; POMV and the Dividend. They will hear the bill again on Tuesday at 1:30pm.

SFIN will hear an overview of the Power Cost Equalization and Community Assistance program by David Teal, Tuesday morning at 9:00am and may take up [HB 321](#), the Fast Track Supplemental bill, Thursday morning if it passes the House earlier in the week.

During the Thursday meeting of HFIN, the committee will take public testimony on [HB 212](#), REAA & Small Muni School District Fund and hear [SB 78](#), Permanent Fund Dividend Contributions/Lottery. SB 78 was last heard in April of 2017.

SB 78 creates a Permanent Fund Education Raffle and Education Endowment Fund and provides an opportunity to contribute to Alaska's Public Education Fund.

Alaskans can donate all or part of their Permanent Fund Dividend in a manner similar to the familiar "Click. Pick. Give." program. When a person donates a portion of their PFD check, they also have a chance to win a percentage of the total money donated through an education raffle.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

Governor Walker announced an initiative to build on the longstanding economic relationship between Alaska and China. *Opportunity Alaska: China Trade Mission* will help Alaskan businesses build new relationships in China and foster existing ones. Governor Walker, Director of International Trade

Shelley James, and Commerce Commissioner Mike Navarre will travel with the businesses selected to participate in the mission.

Opportunity Alaska: China Trade Mission participants will travel to China May 19 through May 26th. Businesses will engage with key decision makers to expand Alaska markets, meet potential customers, industry and government officials.

The \$3,000 participation fee includes comprehensive meeting arrangements, itinerary and interpretation services, logistical arrangements, and ground transportation. Costs for airfare, hotel, incidentals, and meals will be the responsibility of the participant.

There will be a competitive application process for those interested in making the trip. Applications will be reviewed and prioritized based on existing or developed relationships.

Applications will be accepted through Monday, April 2, 2018. **Applications and additional information is available here:** gov.alaska.gov/chinatrade2018

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

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!

The week could be called "Education Week". It starts with a joint hearing of the House and Senate EDC. Monday at 8:00am tune in to hear a presentation about a pilot study on Educator Workforce by the Coalition for Student Equity.

[SB 185](#), Reemployment of Retired Teachers and Admin and [SCR 15](#), March 27, 2018: AK Education & Sharing Day will be heard in SEDC, Wednesday at 8:00am.

Then the HEDC and HSS committees will jointly hear 6 hours of testimony over three days about the work of the Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council and how the departments of Education and Early Development and Health and Social Services work together to provide services and care for children 0-8 years of age.

The joint meetings are scheduled on: Wednesday the 14th at 8:00am - Introduction to Early Childhood Development and the Alaska Early Childhood Coordination Council; Thursday the 15th at 3:00pm-

Health Start & Strong Families; and, Friday morning at 8:00am- the hearings close with High Quality Early Care & Education and Early Childhood Partnerships; Engagement, Innovation & Investment.

Also on Friday at 8:00am, [HB 214](#), Bree's Law is scheduled for a hearing in SEDC.

What else is happening?

Monday at 1:00pm HJUD will hold the first of three scheduled hearings on [HB 75](#), Gun Violence Protective Orders. Public testimony will be taken in the afternoon and again at 7:00pm. The third hearing will be Wednesday at 1:00pm.

Monday at 1:30pm SHSS will hear a presentation from Randall Burns, Director of the Division of Behavioral Health, on the Behavioral Health Continuum of Care and the Alaska Psychiatric Institute and [SB 193](#), Medicaid Assistance Work Requirement, sponsored by Sen. Kelly gets its first hearing.

SJUD also meets on Monday at 1:30pm and will be hearing [SB 122](#), OCS Citizens Review Panel and [SB 124](#) Abortion Procedures, Child Surrender. Public testimony will be taken on the abortion bill.

An Update of the 2020 Census Operations by the Regional and Assistant Regional Directors of the Los Angeles Regional Office of the US Census Bureau will be heard in SL&C on Tuesday at 1:30pm and in HL&C on Wednesday at 3:15pm

[HB 7](#), Marked Ballot Photos: Persuasion at Polls, sponsored by Rep. Kreiss-Tomkins, last heard in March 2017 is up for its first hearing this session in SCRA. The bill would officially allow Alaskan voters to take and share "ballot selfies"- the photos that people take of themselves or their ballots in the voting booth.

SHSS will hear [HB 138](#), March: Sobriety Awareness Month on Wednesday at 1:30pm. The bill's sponsorship was picked up by Rep. Spohnholz after Rep. Westlake resigned. This is its first hearing this session.

SJUD meets again on Wednesday at 1:30pm to hear [SB 124](#) Abortion Procedures, Child Surrender. Its fourth hearing on the bill will be Friday at 1:30pm when the committee will also hear [SJR 14](#), a proposed amendment to the Constitution to require parental consent to abortion.

Thursday at 3:15pm HSTA will hear [HB 352](#), Voter Registration & PFD App Registration, companion to [SB 186](#) which was heard and held in SSTA last week.

The bills clarify that the Director of the Division of Elections must treat eligible Permanent Fund Dividend applicants as new or updated voter registrations, unless an applicant declines to provide the statutory required information for voter registration.

The bills also specify that the Director will process the registration information received and notify the applicant of his or her registration status.

Finally, the Victims Advocate Selection Committee-a joint committee of the House and Senate-will meet to review the Victims Advocate Selection process. The Victims Advocate directs the Office of Victims Rights; serving 5-year terms at the pleasure of the Legislature. Taylor Winston is the current Victims Advocate.

~ End of Report ~

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