

2019 CAPITOL CURRENTS

31st Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

Sixth Edition – 2/18 to 2/24

– 52 Days to go! –

*~ The magnitude of the Governor's proposed budget is starting to sink in.
Prognosis uncertain. Uphill climb likely. ~*

HIGHLIGHTS

Legislators left Juneau for the weekend and held town hall meetings on Saturday. In Anchorage, a bipartisan group of 15 lawmakers (both Senators and Representatives) listened to constituents, mostly there to talk about their frustration with the Governor's amended budget.

Services were held in Nenana for former lieutenant governor (and state constitution signatory) Jack Coghill.

With House committee memberships established, **bills were finally read across the floor - 69 in all.** Several are companions to bills in the Senate.

Others such as [HB 58](#), sponsored by Rep. Rauscher would create a new rule for electing a Speaker. If the House were to go 14 days without a speaker, the members of the political party with the most members would get to elect the speaker.

[HB 55](#) sponsored by Rep. Foster would designate May 31st as Katie John Day.

[HB 63](#) sponsored by Rep. Hannan would require the Lt. governor's office to make a public posting whenever a state job is created, eliminated or transferred to be classified, partially exempt, or exempt.

For a list of all the bills introduced in the House click here: [HB Introductions](#)

During Joint Sessions this week, U. S. Senator Sullivan says he'll try to push Governor Parnell's Choose Respect campaign nationally - specifically introducing legislation to provide legal representation to victims of sexual assault.

Among other things, U. S. Senator Murkowski expressed concerns about a state budget that places the PFD over everything else. Neither is a fan of the Green New Deal.

Chief Justice Bolger said the Court System needs money to beef up cyber security after a recent incident with the Nome Court System. He supports opening the courts all day Friday.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

The governor's office will post press releases and other items of interest here:

<https://gov.alaska.gov/>

The Governor transmitted several bills for consideration including:

[HB 64 / SB 62](#): Alcohol Tax; Appropriation to Community Assistance. The bill would permit the legislature to appropriate half of the proceeds, currently going into the General Fund, for community assistance purposes.

[HB 66/ SB 64](#): Repeal State Debt Reimbursement for Schools. The bill would repeal [AS 14.11.100](#), which provides authority for school construction debt to be reimbursed by the state in an allowable percentage of the municipal debt payment.

[HB 67 / SB 6](#): Department of Labor; Technical Ed. Programs. The bill adds a new duty for the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to coordinate and monitor state career and technical education (CTE) programs by cooperating with the Department of Education and Early Development, the University of Alaska, and any other entities that provide or fund these programs

[HB 68 / SB 66](#): The bill would merge the Division of Labor Standards and Safety with the Division of Workers' Compensation as of July 1, 2019. The new division would be called the Division of Workers' Safety and Compensation and would administer the same programs as are currently administered by the divisions of Labor Standards and Safety and Workers' Compensation.

[HB 69 / SB 67](#): Would repeal the Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission.

BUDGET ISSUES

Town Hall Meetings:

Most who came to the town halls opposed Dunleavy's budget proposal, which makes up part of the \$1.6 billion deficit by taking \$310 million from Department of Education and Early Development and \$134 million from the University.

Chugiak residents attending their town hall at the Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center commented roughly 2-to-1 against the budget, mostly concerned with potential cuts to education.

An assistant professor of molecular biology at the University of Alaska Anchorage, said her students have become anxious about their futures under the proposed cuts.

Some constituents urged lawmakers to disregard the Dunleavy budget altogether and instead use former Gov. Bill Walker's proposed budget that included increased spending and slightly higher Permanent Fund dividends.

Senator Von Imhof told the crowd she didn't believe it was legal for the legislature to ignore Governor Dunleavy amended budget. Yet, House legislators have stated they will start their work off Walker's original budget.

Many at the Anchorage hearing said they would be open to a reduced Permanent Fund dividend if it meant public services would remain funded, something Republican Rep. Laddie Shaw said he supported: "My district stands up for the value of giving for what they get, instead of the value of taking what you would like to have".

The big question: Are we willing to pay the price to save the full PFD and/or avoid new taxes?

Other Budget Items:

University President Jim Johnson told Senate Finance the proposed 41% cut could have a ripple effect - students and researchers may “vote with their feet” causing significant additional revenue loss. Johnson remained a staunch defender of the University and the Board of Regent’s original ask.

The Marine Highway system is in limbo again. Based on current thinking, funding and operations stop next October unless they figure something out. A study would look at options, but some are concerned about timing since it isn’t expected until August 1.

Alaska Native Issues Forum guest speakers, Liz Medicine Crow, President and CEO of First Alaskans Institute and Kendra Kloster, Executive Director for Native Peoples Action, called on the audience to be mindful of how communities will be impacted with the proposed budget cuts and be willing to share their stories with state lawmakers. “If this really is just a conversation starter, then let’s not let that be a conversation that’s one-sided”, exhorted Medicine Crow.

Budget Bills:

[SB 23](#) Approp. Supp. Payments of Prior Year’s Dividend and [SB 24](#) PFD Supplemental Payments, both sponsored by the Governor will be heard in **SSTA Thursday at 3:30pm - public testimony will start around 6pm, time limits may be set**

SB 23 authorizes the payment of unpaid dividends, which came as a result of executive and legislative action, in 2016, 2017, and 2018. The transfer occurs over the next three fiscal years. The bill also authorizes the transfer for the payment of the Permanent Fund Dividend Program for the fiscal years ending 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.

SB 24 lists the formula for the payments. The receipt of a prior year’s dividend and the eligibility for a current year’s dividend will determine eligible individuals. An individual eligible for the 2016 unpaid dividend is a person who received the 2016 dividend and is eligible for a 2019 dividend; an individual eligible for the 2017 unpaid dividend is a person who received a 2017 dividend and is eligible for a 2020 dividend; and an individual eligible for the 2018 unpaid dividend is a person who received a 2018 dividend and is eligible for a dividend in 2021.

Budget Hearings:

Monday:	7:45am	SHSS Subcommittee-departmental overview
	9:00am	SFIN SB 20 departmental overviews for Labor & Workforce Development; Administration; Commerce, community & Economic Development; Governor; and Revenue
Tuesday:	1:30pm	HFIN Fall 2018 Revenue Forecast
	9:00am	SFIN Legislative Finance Division Overview
	1:00pm	SEDC Subcommittee-FY 2020 DEED budget
	1:30pm	FY 2020 Fiscal Overview by David Teal-Leg. Finance
	2:00pm	S University Subcommittee-FY 2020 University Budget
	5:30pm	SREV-FY 2020 Budget Presentations & Divisional Overview-Tax, Treasury, AK Municipal Bond Bank, PFD Division and Child Support Services

Wednesday:	8:00am	HEDC How are K-12 Schools Funded in AK?
	1:30pm	HFIN Fall 2018 Production Forecast
	5:30pm	SCCED Subcommittee-AK Industrial Development & Export Authority, Alaska Energy Authority, Regulator Commission of AK
Thursday:	9:00am	SFIN Investment Funds Update & Cash Flow Deficiency Plan
	1:30pm	HFIN FY 2020 Department Overviews: Administration, Office of the Governor
	5:30pm	SREV Permanent Fund Corporation, AK Housing Finance Corporation; Mental Health Trust Authority
Friday:	7:45am	SHSS Subcommittee-Alaska's Medicaid Program
	8:00am	HEDC How are K-12 Schools Funded continued
	1:30pm	HFIN Departmental Overviews: Revenue, Labor

BILLS ON THE MOVE

[SB 7](#) Medical Assistance Work Requirement, sponsored by Sen. Micciche, receives its second hearing in **SHSS on Friday at 1:30pm**

[SB 34](#) Probation; Parole; Sentences; Credits, both Gov's bills, are being heard at **3:30pm on Tuesday and Thursday in SSTA-listed for Friday in SJUD at 1:30pm** pending referral

[SB 36](#) Extend Board of Nursing sponsored by Sen. Giessel passed from SL&C and is being heard for the first time in **SFIN on Friday at 9:00am**

[SB 53](#) University Reporting Requirements for Accreditation, sponsored by Sen. Stevens, will be heard in **SEDC on Tuesday at 9:00am**, public testimony will be taken.

Two House Crime bills receive their first hearings this week:

[HB 12](#) Protective Orders sponsored by Rep. Kopp and [HB 14](#) Assault; Sex Offenses; Sentencing Aggravator sponsored by Rep. Lincoln will be heard in **HSTA Thursday at 3pm**

HB 12 expands reasons a court may not deny a petition for a stalking, sexual assault or domestic violence protective order. Petitions may not be denied solely because the act in question was the basis for a previous protective order nor because a court previously found that the incident was stalking or sexual assault or domestic violence committed against the petitioner but declined to order relief. Further, the bill allows for petitioners to petition for a protective order extension of six months within certain time frames.

HB 14 is in response to a court case heard last year when the offender was convicted, but not of a sex offense, and didn't have to register as a sex offender. HB 14 makes engaging in masturbation in the presence of another person and ejaculating on that person without the consent of that person a crime of sexual assault in the 3rd degree; if the person is a minor the charge is sexual abuse of a minor in the third degree.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

The Legislative Council is organizing on **Monday at 5pm**

SCRA will hear a presentation on the 2020 Census on **Tuesday at 3:30pm**

SHSS will hear a departmental overview of DHSS on **Wednesday at 1:30pm**

SJUD will hear from the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission also on **Wednesday at 1:30pm**

Thursday at noon Rep. Rasmussen is hosting a Lunch & Learn “Where Does the Journey to Success in Life Begin?” by Dr. Deena Bishop, Superintendent of the Anchorage School District

HHSS will hear a presentation on the Alaska Psychiatric Institute on **Thursday at 3:00pm**

Confirmation hearings:

- Monday-** HJUD Attorney General Designee Kevin Clarkson **at 1:00pm**
SHSS John Sturgeon, Joe Riggs and Ken McCarty with the Mental Health Trust **at 1:30pm**
SJUD Police Standards Council **at 1:30pm**
- Tuesday-** SL&C Boards of Public Accountancy, Barbers & Hairdressers, Massage Therapists and Social Work Examiners **at 1:30pm**
HSTA Corrections and Public Safety Commissioner Designees Dahlstrom and Price **at 3:00pm**
- Wednesday-** SFIN Administration’s Commissioner Designee Kelly Tshibaka **at 9:00am**
HJUD appointees with the Violent Crime Compensation Board **at 1:00pm**
- Thursday-** SL&C Board of Marital & Family Therapy and the Board of Examiners in Optometry **at 1:30pm**
SSTA Administration’s Commissioner Designee Kelly Tshibaka time limit may be set for public testimony **at 3:30pm**
- Friday-** HJUD Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar **at 1:00pm**

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Website-Daily Committee Hearings for February 25-March 2, 2019

[Daily Schedule](#)

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](#)

Streaming Video: [alaskalegislaturetv](#)

Testifying

Legislative Information Office (LIO) [LIO Offices](#)

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

1-855-463-5009 or in Juneau 907-463-5009

~ **End of Report** ~

Contact: [Caren Robinson \(carenr@gci.net\)](#)