

2016 CAPITOL CURRENTS

29th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

Second Edition – 2/1 to 2/7/16

70 days to go

~ *New Interim Commissioner for the Department of Education* ~

HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Susan McCauley has taken the helm at the Department of Education after the resignation of Commissioner Mike Hanley. She starts March 1st as the interim commissioner.

Juneau has lost more state jobs over the past two years than any other place in Alaska, said OMB director Pat Pitney. As presented in Senate Finance, Juneau lost 198 state jobs. Anchorage, with twice the number of state employees, only lost 193 positions.

The Alaska Code of Military Justice bill (**HB 126**) passed the House. The bill would modernize the outdated Code and provide a framework for the proper tools and procedures to help the Guard enforce order and hold guardsmembers accountable.

HB 11 is awaiting transmittal to the governor following passage this week. It removes records from Court View (the state's online court records database). They would be scrubbed after 60 days for people whose cases are dropped and dismissed, or if they are found innocent at trial. The records will still be kept in hard copy.

Pets are rejoicing across Alaska as **HB 147** received a hearing in Judiciary and is scheduled again this coming week. This bill spells out protections for animals in domestic violence situations and has broad bipartisan support.

The state is launching a new effort to investigate former VECO chief Bill Allen for sex crimes, according to Alaska Attorney General Craig Richards and U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan.

Members of the Alaska Correctional Officers Association held a press conference to say they're unhappy with the governor's choice for Corrections' commissioner.

The Alaska House Speaker has introduced legislation to block our attorney general from serving on state boards and commissions.

"Misleading" is how the Legislative Affairs Agency put it. They were responding to a statement by the landlords of the Legislature's Anchorage office building that purchasing the building could save the state millions of dollars.

BUDGET ISSUES

A new poll by Alaska Dispatch News shows that most people support Governor Walker's plan to close the state's budget gap, even though it would reduce Alaskans' PFD checks. On the other hand, many at a recent legislative hearing said leave the dividend alone and keep cutting.

Without backing a specific proposal, economist Gunnar Knapp said Alaska lawmakers will have to consider five different factors to fix the budget:

Evaluate what we spend on government, what we spend on PFD's, what new tax revenue could be added, how to inflation-proof the Permanent Fund (PF), and what other growth the state might have in the PF earnings reserve and the CBR Fund.

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

DNR Commissioner Mark Meyers has hinted at delays in developing the most challenging agreements between the gas producers. This is threatening the timeline for an anticipated special session to ratify key elements of the AKLNG gasline project.

A Constitutional amendment on fiscal terms could face voters in the November general election.

A state Senate committee heard testimony this past week to amend the U.S. Constitution and establish a mechanism for states to overturn certain federal decisions.

EDUCATION ISSUES

Alaska Senator Click Bishop and Rep. Geran Tarr are sponsoring a "Lunch & Learn" this coming Thursday. Begins at Noon in Room 106 of the Capitol. You will learn how the early care and learning sector provides thousands of jobs for Alaskans and pumps \$512 million into our economy.

The latest data collected by the federal government show that Alaska spends more on elementary and secondary education than any other state. Anchorage was ranked fourth per-pupil. Only Philadelphia, Boston, and New York City spent more.

A University of Alaska program – ANSEP – educates Alaska Native students in science, technology, engineering, and math. It's proposing to take over the Mt. Edgecumbe High School.

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES

SB 53 – The Advanced Practice Registered Nurses legislation has a hearing in House Finance on Wednesday. This is the last committee before going to the Floor for a vote!

A state court judge heard arguments in a lawsuit over Governor Walker's authority to expand Medicaid without legislative approval. Superior Court Judge Frank Pfiffner said it could be the end of March before he renders a decision. Appeals may be next.

The Senate's MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee was very busy with hearings on SB 74 and **SB 78**. Another round of multiple hearings will be conducted in the week ahead.

HB 227 was heard in the House HSS Committee. This bill contains all of the reforms and amendments in the HSS draft of the governor's **HB 148**. Since Medicaid expansion was accepted, the expansion clauses have been removed from both bills.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

House Judiciary is taking testimony on Monday for **SB 23**. This is the last committee of referral. As amended, it establishes standards for dispensing by a pharmacist and includes the completion of an opioid overdose training program.

It goes on further to define "program" to include the use of electronic, video, or automated education. The House HSS CS also added the word "nurse" to the description of health care provider.

End the Violence against Women! *One Billion Rising* march is this Tuesday. Starts on the Capitol steps at Noon marching to the State Office Building 8th Floor Atrium. Be sure to wear red and pink. Go to www.onebillionrising.org for more information.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Governor Bill Walker announced his most recent appointments to the Board of Fish. Alan Cain of Anchorage, Israel Payton of Wasilla, and Robert Ruffner of Soldotna will join the Alaska Board of Fisheries, which sets regulations and policy related to the state's fishery resources. This will be Mr. Ruffner's second chance at confirmation.

The point man in Washington DC for Arctic issues was recently in Alaska. Mark Brzezinski is the executive director of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee that oversees the many federal agencies with a hand in the U.S. Arctic.

Alaska LNG has purchased close to 600 acres at a site in Nikiski that could eventually house the project's gas liquefaction plant.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

<http://gov.alaska.gov>

The Alaska State Council on the Arts and the Alaska Humanities Forum in December announced the eight recipients of the 2016 Governor's Awards for the Arts and Humanities. The awards ceremony took place on Jan. 27th in Juneau. Congratulations to all honorees around the state.

Governor Walker has also made a number of appointments to state boards and commissions. He has forwarded the following names to the Legislature for their consideration. I've only listed those I think you may be interested in.

The House Journal of Feb. 3rd will contain more listings and details. You can view that document at: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/PDF/29/J/H2016-02-03.PDF>

- **Commissioner - Department of Corrections:** Dean Williams
- **Board of Education and Early Development:** Rebecca Himschoot – Sitka
- **Alaska Judicial Council:** Loretta Bullard – Nome
- **State Commission for Human Rights:** Brandon Nakasato – Anchorage
- **Marijuana Control Board:** Brandon Emmett – Fairbanks, Loren Jones – Douglas Peter Mlynarik – Soldotna, Bruce Schulte – Anchorage
- **State Medical Board:** Camille Carlson – Fairbanks, Bruck Clift – Palmer, Stephen Craig Humphreys – Soldotna, Joy Neyhart – Juneau, Grant Roderer – Anchorage
- **Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Board of Trustees:** Laraine Derr – Juneau, Jerome Selby – Kodiak
- **Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives:** Kathryn Roberts – Anchorage, Deborah Schneider – Wasilla
- **Board of Nursing:** Tina Gillis – Bethel, Jennifer Stukey – Wasilla, Wendy Thon – Eagle River
- **Board of Pharmacy:** Richard Holt – Wasilla, Phil Sanders – Soldotna
- **State Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board:** Ruth Kostik – Juneau, James Parietti – Chugiak, M. Celeste Tydingco – Sitka
- **Board of Social Work Examiners:** Angela Christiansen – Kodiak, Rachel Olson – Palmer
- **Violent Crimes Compensation Board:** Gerad Godfrey – Eagle River Anchorage, Mark Springer – Bethel.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Closeouts** - Deadline for House Finance Subcommittees is **February 12th this year**.
- **Feb. 17th** - Senator Lisa Murkowski will give her Annual Address before the Legislature.
- **30th Legislative Day (Feb. 17th)** - Deadline for Governor's Amendments to the FY17 Budget.

NEW DOCUMENTS

~ Report below is on file with both the House Clerk and Senate Secretary ~

1. Alaska Criminal Justice Commission Annual Report February 1, 2016

NEW BILLS OF INTEREST

<http://www.akleg.gov>

BUGET ISSUES:

HB 293 / SB 167 – Supplemental Budgets

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

HB 296 / Rep. Drummond – Wage Discrimination Based on Gender

EDUCATION ISSUES:

HB 302 / Rep. Tarr – School Discipline

HEALTH CARE ISSUES:

HCR 21 / Rep. Tarr – Adverse Childhood Experiences

HB 295 / Rep. Wilson – Time Limit on Public Assistance

HB 297 / Rep. Saddler – Pharmacy Board; Employees; Drug Distributors/Manufacturers

SB 166 / Sen. Wielechowski – Drug Prescription Database; Registration

SB 169 / Sen. Gardner – Pharmacist Prescription of Contraceptives

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES:

SB 165 / Sen. Micciche – Alcohol Beverage Control Board; Minors; Alcohol

BILLS ON THE MOVE

~ Below are pertinent bills that had hearings or other action this past week ~

SENATE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

SB 72 / Designated Caregivers for Patients

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB72

Version 29-LS0047\F - CS moved out of Senate HSS on 2/1. Referred to Labor & Commerce.

SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB744

Version 29-LS0692\F - Hearings continued last week in special Senate Medicaid Subcommittee.

SB 78 / Medicaid Expansion/Reform

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB78

Version 29-GS1055\A - Hearings continued last week in special Senate Medicaid Subcommittee.

SB 98 / Prescription Without Physical Examination

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB998

Version 29-LS0838\W - CS moved out of House HSS on 2/1. Referred to Labor & Commerce.

SJR 15 / Call for US Countermand Convention

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SJR15

Version 29-LS0425\A - Heard and held in Senate Judiciary on 2/3.

SCR 4 / US Countermand Convention Delegates

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SCR4

Version 29-LS0548\A - Heard and held in Senate Judiciary on 2/3.

HOUSE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

HB 147 / Animals: Protection, Release, Custody

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB147

Version 29-LS0302\Y - Heard and held in House Judiciary on 2/1. Next scheduled for 2/10.

HB 221 / Enforcement of Foreign Protective Orders

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB221

Version 29-LS1041\W - Moved out of House Judiciary on 2/1. Referred to Rules.

HB 227 / Medical Assistance Reform

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB227

Version 29-LS1096\H - Heard and held in House HSS on 2/2.

HB 245 / Permanent Fund: Deposits; Dividend; Earnings

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB245

Version 29-GH2859\A - Heard and held in House Finance on 2/2.

HB 260 / Day Care Assistance and Child Care Grants

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB260

Version 29-GH 2769\A - Heard and held in House HSS on 2/4.

SB 9 / Election Pamphlets

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB9

Version 29-LS0244\P - House CS moved out of House State Affairs on 2/2. Referred to Rules.

SB 23 / Immunity for Providing Opioid OD Drug

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB23

Version 29-LS0058\N - House CS moved out of House HSS on 2/4. Referred to Judiciary. Scheduled for hearing on 2/8.

SB 53 / Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB53

Version 29-LS0043\P - Hearing in House Finance has been scheduled for 2/10.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

MONDAY – Feb 8th

(HOUSE) EDUCATION Committee

8:00 AM

Capitol Room 106

HB 264 / Repayment of Scholarships and Education Grants
HB 157 / Language Immersion Charter Schools and Teacher Certifications

(HOUSE) HSS Finance Subcommittee
8:30 AM H. Finance Room 519
DHSS Overview - Division of Public Health

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee
9:00 AM Senate Finance Room 532
SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies
SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

(HOUSE) JUDICIARY Committee
1:00 PM Capitol Room 120
SB 23 / Immunity for Providing Opioid OD Drug

(HOUSE) FINANCE Committee
1:30 PM H. Finance Room 519
HB 256 / Operating Budget - HB 257 / Mental Health Budget - HB 255 / Capital Budget

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee
1:30 PM Senate Finance Room 532
SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies
SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

(HOUSE) Corrections Finance Subcommittee
5:00 PM Capitol Room 106
Alaska Criminal Justice Commission Recommendations

TUESDAY – Feb. 9th

(HOUSE) STATE AFFAIRS Committee
8:00 AM Capitol Room 106
HB 275 / Indigenous Peoples Day

(HOUSE) FINANCE Committee
1:30 PM H. Finance Room 519
HB 256 / Operating Budget
HB 257 / Mental Health Budget
HB 255 / Capital Budget

(HOUSE) HSS Committee
3:00 PM Capitol Room 106
Presentation: “Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE’s)”
Dr. Vincent Felitti
Dr. Matthew Hirshfeld

(HOUSE) Education Finance Subcommittee
6:00 PM Capitol Barnes Room 124
Department Budget Overview

WEDNESDAY – Feb. 10th

(JOINT HOUSE/SENATE) EDUCATION Committee

8:30 AM Capitol Room 106

**State Board of Education & Early Development - Annual Report to the Alaska Legislature
- Chairman James Field**

HB 102 / Funding for Residential Psychiatric Treatment Centers

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee

9:00 AM Senate Finance Room 532

SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies

SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

(JOINT) SESSION of the LEGISLATURE

11:00 AM House Chambers

State of the Judiciary Address by Chief Justice Craig Stowers

(HOUSE) JUDICIARY Committee

1:00 PM Capitol Room 120

HB 147 / Animals: Protection; Release; Custody

(HOUSE) FINANCE Committee

1:30 PM H. Finance Room 519

SB 53 / Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

HCR 4 / US Countermand Convention Delegates

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee

1:30 PM Senate Finance Room 532

SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies

SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

THURSDAY – Feb. 11th

(HOUSE) FINANCE Committee

1:30 PM H. Finance Room 519

Presentation: “Shared Services Initiative”

Sheldon Fisher, Commissioner, Dept. of Administration

Everett Ross, Alaska Shared Services Consultant

(HOUSE) HSS Committee

3:00 PM Capitol Room 106

Presentation: Medicaid Redesign and Expansion by DHSS and Agnew:Beck Consultants

(HOUSE) Public Safety Finance Subcommittee

5 :00 PM Capitol Room 120

Open Items

FRIDAY – Feb. 12th

(HOUSE) HSS Finance Subcommittee

8:30 AM H. Finance Room 519 - **Division of Behavioral Health**

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee

9:00 AM Senate Finance Room 532

SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies
SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

(SENATE) HSS Finance Subcommittee
11:00 AM Senate Finance 532

DHSS – Division of Juvenile Justice; Division of Behavioral Health; Alaska Pioneer Homes

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee
1:30 PM Senate Finance Room 532

SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies
SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

SATURDAY – Feb. 13th

10:00 AM Butrovich Room 205

(SENATE) STATE AFFAIRS Committee

SB 91 – OMINIBUS CRIME LAW & PROCEDURE

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Website – Daily Committee Hearings - For: Feb. 8 – Feb. 14, 2016

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_hearing.asp?session=29&Chamb=B&Date1=02%2F08%2F2016&Date2=02%2F14%2F2016&Comty=&Root=&Sel=1&Button=Display

Live on the Web [www.360north.org]

Streaming Video

<https://vimeo.com/akltv> or <http://alaskalegislature.tv>

Testifying

A toll-free number can only be used if you have had prior approval to call in from the appropriate committee chair. You can also testify by going to a state Legislative Information Office (LIO).

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

2016 2nd Session List of Legislators and staff

http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/session_phone_list.pdf

2016 House / Senate – Standing and Special Committees

<http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/commlist.pdf>

2016 House / Senate – Finance Sub-committee Members

<http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/HFINSubcmte.pdf>

<http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/SFINSubcmte.pdf>

~ End of Report ~

Contact: Caren Robinson (Carenr@gci.net)