

2018 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

Tenth Edition – 3/19 to 3/25/18

21 days to go

~ Students are not the only ones who can stage a walkout ~

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate Minority members walked off the Senate Floor Friday during debate on [SB 196](#), Appropriation Limit sponsored by the SFIN committee. SB 196 sets a \$4.1 billion statutory limit on how much the legislature can appropriate every year with regard to agency operation budget expenses.

In addition to other amendments, the Minority offered four that would use budget surpluses to repay Alaskans for the cuts to their 2016 and 2017 Permanent Fund Dividends and shield PFDs from potential elimination.

The Senate President stated the amendments were "not germane" and ruled them out of order.

"Endlessly tabling amendments or inappropriately ruling them out of order to avoid voting on them is unacceptable," said Senator Gardner in a statement released after the Minority left the Floor.

The bill ended up passing as the remaining 13 members of the Majority voted for the bill; however, the effective date clause vote failed.

Governor Walker has proclaimed [March 26-30th](#) as Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, Dental Health Aide, and Behavioral Health Aide Week. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Community Health Aide Program.

Click to read: [Proclamation](#)

[HCR 19](#) sponsored by Rep. Ortiz urging Governor Walker to declare a "linguistic emergency" to help ensure the survival of Native language in Alaska passed the House. The resolution calls on state agencies, the Alaska State Legislature, Alaska Native organizations, and others to work to strengthen policies to prioritize the continued use of Alaska Native languages.

See the report that called for the resolution:

[The Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council's 2018 Biennial Report](#)

[HJR 21](#) sponsored by Rep. Guttenberg passed the House this week. The resolution calls on the federal government to respect states' rights and the will of the Alaskan people regarding marijuana policy. It also urges the federal government to reconsider its listing of marijuana as a schedule one controlled substance. Other schedule one controlled substances include heroin, LSD, and ecstasy.

The Legislative Session Staff Directory was updated. Here's the link for your reference:

[Staff Session Directory 2018](#)

BUDGET ISSUES

In an unprecedented move, SFIN will take **Public Comment on the operating budget prior to Budget Subcommittee Closeouts**. The testimony will be taken Tuesday and Wednesday.

Testimony is limited to two minutes per person. If testifying in person, arrive 15 minutes early for the sign-in process.

All callers must hang up immediately after testifying to help keep open lines available.

Call-in:

From Anchorage: (907) 563-9085

From Juneau: (907) 586-9085

All others: (844) 586-9085

You can send in written comments to Finance.Committee@akleg.gov

Senate Finance Committee Operating and Mental Health Budgets Public Comment Schedule

Tuesday, March 27th

9:30-10:30am	Juneau
10:30-11:00am	Utkiakvik, Tok, Delta Junction
11:00-11:30am	Kenai, Kodiak, Dillingham
1:30-2:30pm	Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, Unalaska
2:30-3:00pm	Sitka, Cordova, Valdez
3:00-3:45pm	Fairbanks, Mat-Su

Wednesday, March 28th

1:30-2:00pm	Glennallen, Seward, Homer
2:00-3:00pm	Statewide Offnets
3:00-4:00pm	Anchorage

Budget department closeouts are scattered through the week. It starts Monday with Public Safety at 7:00am; then Tuesday, Correction at 8:00am, Education at 1:00pm, and Health & Social Services at 5:30pm.

Meanwhile, House Finance will hear [HB 282](#), the **Capital Budget Contingent on Tax** and [HB 284](#), the **Capital Budget** on Monday; take public testimony on [HB 233](#), **Education Tax Credits; Sunset; Repeals** sponsored by Reps Tuck and Millett on Tuesday; and take public testimony on Friday for [HB 212](#), **REAA & Small Muni School District Fund** sponsored by Rep. Foster.

All hearings are scheduled to start at **1:30pm**.

The annual **Spring Revenue Forecast** was released Friday. The Forecast suggests Alaska will earn **\$2.34 billion in unrestricted general fund revenue in FY 2018** and **\$2.26 billion in FY 2019**.

The estimate for **FY 2018 is \$256 million higher** than the Fall 2017 estimate and **\$212 million higher for FY 2019**.

Unrestricted general fund revenue is the revenue available to spend after federal funds, earnings of the Permanent fund, and cash designated for specific programs is subtracted from the balance sheet.

The Forecast projects average oil prices of **\$61 per barrel** or \$5 higher than they were in the Fall Forecast for FY 2018 and **\$63 per barrel** in FY 2019. The Forecast revenue estimates are products of oil prices multiplied by production.

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!

SB 198, UAA Long-Acting Contraception Study sponsored by Sen. Kelly will be heard in SFIN **Monday** morning at **9am**.

Monday also sees HJUD hearing **HB 75, Gun Violence Protective Orders** sponsored by Rep. Tarr twice at **1pm** and at **7pm**.

HFIN will hear **HB 268, Opioid Prescription Information** sponsored by Rep. Gara at **1:30pm**.

Tuesday morning starts with HCRA hearing **HB 390, Ranked-Choice Primary Elections** sponsored by Rep. Parish at **8am**.

HB 27, High-Risk Chemicals for Child Exposure sponsored by Rep. Tarr will be heard Monday at 1pm in HRES.

The day ends with HHSS hearing several bills at **3pm** including **HB 193, Health Care: Balance Billing** sponsored by Rep. Grenn; **SB 108, Medical Care/Licensing/Medical Board** sponsored by Sen. Giessel; **SB 174, Programs for Persons with Disabilities** sponsored by Sen. Micciche; and **HCR 22, Sexual Assault Awareness Month**, sponsored by Rep. Millett.

HEDC hears **HB 52, Pre-Elementary School Programs/Plans** sponsored by Rep. Kawasaki **Wednesday morning at 8am**. This is the bill's first hearing this session. HB 52 defines "pre-elementary school" as a pre-kindergarten program provided by a school district for children ages 3-5 years or whose primary function is educational.

It further directs the Board of Education to adopt regulations regarding funding as well as statewide and local goals and directs them to develop regulations for the certification and implementation of a statewide plan to implement early childhood education.

Thursday at 3pm HHSS meets and will hold second hearings for **SB 174, Programs for Persons with Disabilities** sponsored by Sen. Micciche and **SB 108, Medical Care/Licensing/Medical Board** sponsored by Sen. Giessel.

Also on the HHSS schedule is **HB 358, Insurance Coverage for Telehealth** sponsored by the Chair-Rep. Spohnholz and **HJR 32, Constitutional Amendment: Parental Consent to Abortion** sponsored by Rep. LeDoux.

HB 184, Discrimination: Gender ID; Sexual Orientation sponsored by Rep. Josephson is scheduled in HJUD on **Friday at 1pm**.

~ End of Report ~

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