

2019 CAPITOL CURRENTS

31st Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

First Edition – 1/15 to 1/20/19

– 83 Days to go! –

~ 31st Legislature Opens with newly elected citizens to represent their districts in the House or Senate ~

NEW LEGISLATORS

The Legislature convened Tuesday January 15th, in snowy/foggy Juneau with a sea of 14 new legislative faces, plus a couple of shifts from the House to the Senate. April 14th marks the 90th/last day of session as set by statute, but the Alaska Constitution allows for 121 days (May 15th) –we’ll see if the 31st Legislature does a better job of ending on time than the 30th!

Click on a name below to learn about the new legislators

Representatives

[Benjamin Carpenter](#)
[William Fields](#)
[Sara Hannon](#)
[Grier Hopkins](#)
[Sharon Jackson](#)
[Barton LeBon](#)
[Kelly Merrick](#)
[Sara Rasmussen](#)
[Josh Revak](#)
[Laddie Shaw](#)
[Andrea Story](#)
[Sarah Vance](#)

Senators

[Elvi Gray-Jackson](#)
[Jesse Kiehl](#)

Familiar House faces now in the Senate

[Chris Birch](#)
[Scott Kawasaki](#)
[Lora Reinbold](#)

HIGHLIGHTS

Senator Cathy Giessel is President of the Senate. She leads a 14 member [Majority](#) made up of 13 Republicans and 1 Democrat. Senator John Coghill is the Rules Chair; Senator’s von Imhof and Stedman head the Finance committee; and Sen. Costello is the Majority Leader.

Look here- [Committees](#) – for lists of committee members.

We can expect action on health care reform and workers’ compensation changes, state agency program structural changes and efficiencies. Top Senate Leadership also made it clear they don’t expect meat axes will be applied to their budget.

How Senate Republican priorities play with the House depends on how that body comes together. A House coalition may mean that the Senate’s work on things like health care, education and workers’ comp will get close scrutiny.

By late Thursday, the House named Rep. Neal Foster their temporary Speaker but nothing can happen until there is a working Majority. Talks continue.

Thirty-three bills and 3 resolutions were pre-filed in the House and 17 bills and 3 resolutions were pre-filed in the Senate.

Among the early topics legislators will review: a Capitol move effort to hold legislative sessions in Anchorage; tighter sentencing for sex offenders and strengthened requirements for sexual assault forensic exam kits; work requirements for those receiving medical assistance; protective orders; pre-elementary programs and funding; and, constitutional amendments applying to permanent fund dividends.

Bills from last year that are reintroduced include a rewrite of the SB 91 criminal justice reform; insurance coverage for contraceptives; regulation of flame-retardant chemicals; and expanding insurance coverage for telehealth.

The Legislature anticipates holding Commissioner confirmation hearings during the first several weeks of session and has already scheduled hearings for John Quick, Bruce Tangeman and Julie Anderson on [Tuesday](#) followed by Adam Crum and Corri Feige on [Wednesday](#).

A joint session to confirm Commissioners would then be held separately from the end of session joint meeting to confirm appointments to Boards and Commissions.

IMPORTANT DATES

15th Legislative Day (Jan. 31st) Deadline for Governor's Supplemental budget requests.

30th Legislative Day (Feb. 15th) Deadline for Governor to submit budget Amendments

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

The governor's office will post press releases and other items of interest here:
<https://gov.alaska.gov/>

The new Administration is taking shape slowly but surely. Announcements are now coming regularly. The press wants to see which Walker Administration appointees got pink slips but so far the Governor says the information isn't available.

Michael Johnson, DEED, is the only Commissioner to continue from the Walker Administration. Commissioners to undergo legislative confirmation hearings this year include:

- Adjutant General-Brigadier General Torrence Saxe - Military and Veterans Affairs and adjutant general for the Alaska National Guard
- Amanda Price - Public Safety
- Kevin Clarkson - Attorney General
- Nancy Dahlstrom - Corrections
- Doug Vincent-Lang - Fish & Game
- Jonathan Quick - Administration
- Julie Anderson - Commerce, Community and Economic Development
- Jason Brune - Environmental Conservation
- Adam Crum - Health and Social Services
- Dr. Tamika L. Ledbetter - Labor and Workforce Development
- Corri A. Feige - Natural Resources
- Bruce Tangeman - Revenue
- John MacKinnon - Transportation & Public Facilities

At-a-Glance Commissioners' Contact List: [Commissioners Contact List](#)

Governor Dunleavy's legislative priorities include MAJOR budget cuts; curbing the "crime wave" including sexual assault and SB 91 repeal; restoring the PFD and reimbursing for short payments. He says climate change will not get his attention.

Agency restructures and regulation reviews are high on his list. And, the Governor **hasn't** ruled out cuts to social services. Look forward to details in the coming weeks.

Governor Dunleavy will give his first **State of the State address at 7:00 pm January 22nd**, in front of a joint session of the House and Senate.

BUDGET ISSUES

Governor Dunleavy released the **prior administration's** fiscal year 2020 budget on December 15, 2018 to meet the mandated release date.

Expect to see his budget priorities in the amended budget due to be released by February 15th. While the Senate has similar goals, the Governor's \$1.6 billion reduction target will be a huge challenge. The House attitude remains to be seen.

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

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

Website-Daily Committee Hearings for Jan. 21-25, 2019

[Weekly Hearing 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](#)

In Juneau: see committee hearing list for room numbers

Call-in: available with prior approval from the committee chair
1-855-463-5009 or in Juneau 907-463-5009

~ End of Report ~

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