

2019 CAPITOL CURRENTS

31st Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

Second Edition – 1/21 to 1/27/19

– 76 Days to go! –

*~ Foster as Speaker Pro Tem allows Sharon Jackson to be seated
and the State of the State goes forward ~*

HIGHLIGHTS

After 13 days, the House remains stalled while they try to find a Majority. An attempt earlier in the week to nominate Rep. Talerico as Speaker failed 20/20.

Bills will only be read across the House Floor once the members organize.

A House majority must be formed in order to elect a permanent Speaker of the House, make committee assignments and conduct legislative business.

In the meantime, they are convening bi-partisan briefing sessions on key issues.

The Senate is starting to move with committee assignments, confirmation hearings, info sessions and a bill hearing or two.

President Giessel introduced [SB 36](#) extending the Board of Nursing through June 30, 2025 and [SB 37](#) relating to a statewide immunization program removing the 3-year phase-in period.

During a January 22nd confirmation hearing for the department of administration's commissioner designee, John Quick, questions arose over his purported ownership of a Washington business. One of the registered owners wrote a letter to the Finance committee stating that he never had any ownership in the business.

The governor accepted Mr. Quick's resignation on the 24th and named Paula Vrana as Acting Commissioner.

Alaskans from Homer to Anchorage to Fairbanks to Juneau participated in the 3rd Women's March joining supporters from across the nation. Approximately 650 people marched in Juneau with speakers focusing on missing and murdered indigenous women.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

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

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

Governor Dunleavy delivered his first State of the State Address Tuesday. He declared war on criminals and said he plans to keep spending in line with revenue, protect the PFD, and restore public trust in government.

The biggest Address news were three proposed constitutional amendments to establish a spending limit and saving plan, protect the dividend and require a vote of the people for new taxes.

The Governor continues to make appointments to various boards and commissions. Look here for the list to date: [Boards and Commissions](#)

Two nominations to the Marijuana Control board may be less industry friendly. Vivian Stiver has a history of speaking against legalization and was involved in a 2017 effort to ban marijuana operations in Fairbanks. Lt. Christopher Jaime has expressed interest in revisiting the onsite use issue.

BUDGET ISSUES

Former Commissioner designees Quick and Tangeman sat in front of Senate Finance on Tuesday. Responding to questions, Tangeman explained the \$1.6 billion deficit number comes from having \$3.2 billion in revenues forecasted (projecting oil prices to be about \$64 per barrel) while former Governor Walker's proposed budget was \$4.8 billion.

Tangeman said oil revenue is projected at about \$2.2 billion, and revenue from the Earnings Reserve is projected (using the POMV approved last session) at about \$2.9 billion.

About \$1.9 billion will go to a full PFD package, based on Dunleavy's proposal. Adding the \$2.2 billion of oil revenue to the \$1 billion left from the percent of market value appropriation gets to the \$3.2 billion in revenue.

Donna Arduin, the new OMB Super director who has worked for several Governors around the country and is known as a budget hawk, debuted Thursday in Senate Finance. She painted a very big complicated picture, gave broad answers to tough questions and promised budget details by February 13th.

Those details will amend the Governor's original budget bills—[SB 19](#) the capital budget; [SB 20](#) the operating budget; and, [SB 21](#) the mental health budget

The Governor's goal is to erase the \$1.6 billion gap and fully fund the PFD. He also has a three-year plan to pay Alaskans funds that should have been distributed as part of the 2016-2018 PFDs.

There are legislative skeptics who warn of severe cuts and say it doesn't make sense. For example, getting rid of eleven of the state operating agencies would save only \$580 million. Even if you eliminate all those departments and lay off all state employees there would still be a deficit.

Expect strong reactions when the new budget finally shows up.

BILLS

The Governor introduced 4 bills on Wednesday as part of his tough on crime pledge. The bills address parole and prison sentences, pretrial processes, and sex crimes.

[SB 32](#) lengthens sentencing penalties for drug offenses including trafficking; creates a felony for removal of an electronic monitoring device; increases the maximum length of probation for sex offenses from 15 to 25 years; defines "terroristic threatening" to allow law enforcement to respond sooner to a threatened school shooting

[SB 33](#) deletes the pretrial assessment tool currently in place for judges to use in making release decisions; without the tool judges will have more discretion in determining whether a person is released and uses an electronic monitoring device or has a third-party custodian, or a pretrial

department of corrections officer will monitor the person; encourages video-conferencing for pretrial hearings; and removes good time credit for time spent on pre-trial electronic monitoring [SB 34](#) eliminates caps on the amount of time that can be imposed upon probation violators; expands list of crimes that may qualify as probation violations; restricts earned-compliance (good time) credit to a 3 day to 1day ratio; takes away good time earned to date if probationers are found in violation of any of their conditions

[SB 35](#) classifies unwanted contact with semen as sexual contact and makes it punishable as a sex offense; requires persons convicted of producing or viewing child pornography to register as a sex offender; requires people registered as sex offenders in another state to register with the Alaska registry when they move into the state; makes abuse of a minor a felony in all circumstances; expands the list of tools used to solicit sexual favors - entice a minor from only computers to all communication devices.

ITEMS OF INTEREST ON THE MOVE

Confirmation hearings continue:

Monday at 3:30pm - Senate Resources will hear from Fish & Game commissioner designee Doug Vincent-Lang.

Tuesday at 1:30pm - Senate Transportation will hear from Transportation and Public Facilities commissioner designee John MacKinnon.

Tuesday at 3pm - Senate Judiciary and State Affairs will meet jointly to hear from Attorney General designee Kevin Clarkson.

Thursday at 3:30pm - Senate State Affairs will hear from Brigadier General Torrence Saxe, commissioner designee of Military and Veteran's Affairs.

CEO Mike Abbott and Trustee Chair Mary Jane Michael with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority will meet with Senate Finance Thursday morning at 9am.

Thursday at 3:30pm in Senate State Affairs, [SCR 1](#) Uniform Rule Amendment; Budget sponsored by Senator Shower will be heard. The bill would amend the Uniform Rules to only allow an appropriation bill to appear on the daily calendar after the ninetieth day of a regular session.

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Website-Daily Committee Hearings for Jan. 28- February 2, 2019 [Weekly Hearings](#)

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 \(carenr@gci.net\)](#)