

2019 CAPITOL CURRENTS

31st Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

Seventh Edition – 2/25 to 3/3/19

– 43 Days to go! –

*~ The Legislature is fully engaged. The Budget owns the room.
Crime bills and confirmation hearings are also in the mix as we approach half time. ~*

HIGHLIGHTS

The House set up the first Special Committee on Tribal Affairs, a long-time goal of Speaker Edgmon. Rep. Zulkosky chairs the committee which will focus on issues like health, children's services, law enforcement, economic development, and other village level needs.

The Governor's AG nominee, Kevin Clarkson, took heat at a recent House Judiciary confirmation hearing for his divisive work against social causes like LGBTQ, sexual health and reproductive rights. He also had a few supporters who called him thorough, hardworking and honest. His nomination was forwarded.

Governor Walker's Climate Change initiative is no more. Governor Dunleavy rescinded several executive orders, including the one establishing the Climate Change for Alaska Leadership Team.

The Senate stated recently the budget was their highest priority, but public safety is a strong #2. Senator Giessel cautions it will likely take more than 90 days to get there.

While the Governor ran on a platform of repealing the criminal justice reforms in SB 91, some Senate Republicans and others are looking at "repeal and replace" even if it takes more time. They don't want to just go back to before since it wasn't working in the first place.

One crime bill, closing the infamous loophole that caused the ouster of a judge, seems to have bi-partisan support in both bodies and is likely to pass sooner than later.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

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

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

The Governor proclaimed March as [Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month](#) and [Developmental Disability Awareness Month](#).

The nomination period for the Denali Peak Performance Awards program for state employees opened March 1st. The deadline for nominations is close of business Monday, April 1. This program recognizes the hard work and valuable contributions made each day by State employees for the benefit of all Alaskans.

Awards will be presented across each department in the following categories: Co-Worker Recognition, Customer Service Excellence, Exceptional Performance, Crisis Responder, Innovation in Cost-Savings, and Leadership. More details on the program, including nomination forms and contact information, can be found at <http://doa.alaska.gov/dop/denaliawards/>.

BUDGET ISSUES

Leaders of the Alaska Senate and the Alaska House of Representatives said Friday it appears there is growing support for state budget proposals that include fewer cuts than proposed by the governor. President Giessel and Speaker Edgmon say that lawmakers in each body are considering smaller cuts to the state budget, even if the Permanent Fund dividend must be reduced in response.

Senate Democrats are saying the Governor's proposal would send us backward. Non-partisan Legislative Budget Director David Teal said we need much more information before we can evaluate. The Unions are pushing back against ferry cuts. Social program advocates are speaking out. Others say cut PFD not education.

Governor Dunleavy remains steadfast - we need to get our fiscal house in order. Taxes, or something like it, will drive folks to the Lower 48. It appears that T issues will stay on backburner. Not enough time left this session.

The Budget bill also would give OMB the authority to transfer funds within a department. Some say that is a "power grab" - an unlawful delegation of legislative power to the Executive Branch. Legislative lawyers agree. This one is likely to go away.

Bill Hearings

[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 Tuesday and Thursday at 3:30pm-public testimony will start around 6pm; testifiers must call-in before 7:00pm.**

[SCR 1](#) Uniform Rule Amendment sponsored by Senator Shower will have its first hearing on **Thursday at 3:30pm in SSTA.** The bill will add a section to Rule 18 limiting measures which could appear on the daily calendar to appropriation bills after the ninetieth day of a regular session.

Budget Hearings

Monday:	8:00am	HEDC Subcommittee-departmental overview
	1:30pm	HFIN Education Funding by Michael Partlow and Alexei Painter-Leg Finance
Tuesday:	10:15am	H Energy presentation on Power Cost Equalization-CEO, AK Village Electric Co-op
	11:15am	S Administration Subcommittee
	1:30pm	HFIN Education Funding: Local Entity Perspective
	2:00pm	S University Subcommittee
	3:30pm	HHSS Subcommittee
Wednesday:	8:00am	HEDC Subcommittee
	9:00am	SFIN Economic Overview of Governor's Proposed Budget-Ed King, Chief Economist with OMB and Dan Robinson, Chief of Research and Analysis with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development
	1:30pm	HFIN Repeat of the Economic Overview from SFIN
Thursday:	8:00am	H Administration Subcommittee - overview
	9:00am	SFIN Economic Overview continued-Mouchine Guettabi,

	1:30pm	Economist with the Institute of Social & Economic Research (ISER)
	5:00pm	HFIN Repeat of the Economic Overview from SFIN H University Subcommittee
Friday:	7:45am	SHSS Subcommittee-Pioneer Homes, Senior & Disability Services
	8:00am	HEDC Subcommittee
	1:30pm	HFIN Budget Bills HB 39 - operating budget, HB 40 - mental health budget, HB 53 - capital/disaster relief, HB 54 - supplemental/re-appropriation
Saturday:	1:30pm	HHSS Subcommittee-agenda to be announced

BILLS ON THE MOVE

[SB 7](#) Medical Assistance Work Requirement, sponsored by Sen. Micciche, was amended and passed from SHSS on Friday. The committee substitute (CS) names the bill the “Medicaid Work Opportunities Act”

The CS added a requirement for DHSS to include a list of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development employment-related training programs with the notification of the work requirement sent to all recipients; and added a transition period of Medicaid coverage for up to 12 months for individuals that become ineligible due to income limitations. It is not scheduled for a hearing this week.

[HJR 9](#) Elizabeth Peratrovich Commemorative Coin sponsored by Rep. Johnson and [HB 57](#) Child Labor Hours sponsored by Rep. Wilson have their first hearing in **HSTA at 3pm on Tuesday.**

HJR 9 requests the United States Secretary of the Treasury to mint not less than 5,000,000 \$1 coins honoring Elizabeth Peratrovich under the Native American \$1 Coin Act.

HB 57 allows a minor who is 14 or 15 years of age to be employed during the period beginning June 1 and ending the first Monday of September each year, if (1) the work is performed between the hours of 5:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.; (2) the total number of hours worked does not exceed 40 hours in one week or eight hours in one day; and (3) the minor is not enrolled in a school term.

Crime Bills

[SB 12](#) Assault; Sex Offenses; Sentencing Credit sponsored by Sen. Micciche will be heard at **1:30pm on Monday in SJUD.**

[SB 34](#) Probation; Parole; Sentences; Credits, and [SB 35](#) Crimes; Sex Crimes; Sentencing; Parole, both Gov’s bills, are being heard at **1:30pm on Monday and Friday in SJUD.**

[SB 32](#) Crimes; Sentencing; Mental Illness; Evidence is again up in SSTA at **3:30pm on Tuesday.**

[HB 15](#) Sentencing; Vehicle Theft sponsored by Rep. Fields will be heard in **HSTA Tuesday at 3pm.** The bill adds a presumptive term of 120 days-two years if the offense is a first felony conviction and the person committed the crime of vehicle theft in the first degree.

[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.**

ITEMS OF INTEREST

House Tribal Affairs (HTA) will hold it's first committee meeting **Thursday at 8:00am**. They will receive a welcome from Auke Kwaan and Taku Kwaan representatives and hear a presentation from First Alaskans Institute, AFN and Central Council Tlingit & Haida on AK Native Governance.

SL&C will hear a presentation on Licensure in Alaska by Sara Chambers, Director Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensure **Thursday at 1:30pm**.

HHSS will hear a presentation on the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) **Thursday, 3:00pm**. At the same time, **HSTA** will hear a presentation on Medicaid Hospitals Impact on State Health Insurance Costs.

HJUD will hear from Dr. Brad Myrstol, Director of the UAA Justice Center on **Friday at 1:30pm**. Dr. Myrstol will present "Justice Research for Alaska".

Confirmation hearings:

Monday - 3:15pm HL&C appointees for the Marijuana Control Board

Tuesday - HSTA at 3:00pm Administration's Commissioner Designee Kelly Tshibaka

Wednesday - SJUD 1:30pm appointees for the Alaska Judicial Council, Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar, Commission of Judicial Conduct, and the Violent Crimes Compensation Board

3:15pm HL&C appointees for the Marijuana Control Board

Thursday - 9:00am SFIN appointees for the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Website-Daily Committee Hearings for March 4-9, 2019

[Hearing Calendar](#)

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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