

2019 CAPITOL CURRENTS

31st Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

Ninth Edition – 3/11 to 3/17/19

– 29 Days to go to 90, but then... –

~House Finance preps for the road: the PFD and FY20 budget-what's love got to do with it?~

HIGHLIGHTS

Starting Friday, the 22nd, the House Finance Committee will hold meetings across the state to take citizen testimony on the interplay between the permanent fund dividend and the FY20 Budget.

Take the opportunity to share your thoughts!

Friday:	5pm	Juneau	Capitol room 519
Saturday:	Noon	Ketchikan	TBD
		Mat-Su	Mat-Su LIO
	2pm	Bethel	TBD
	5:30pm	Kenai/Soldotna	Soldotna Sports Center
Sunday:	2pm	Anchorage	Anchorage LIO
		Fairbanks	Fairbanks LIO
		Sitka	TBD

However the hearings turn out, don't make plans to spend your retroactive PFD payments just yet. The Legislature's non-partisan lawyers say the Governor's plan may be illegal. The Department of Law disagrees. The issue has to do with residency discrimination.

Alaska is the least responsive state to the decennial (10-year) census - 64% versus the national average of 72%. Why does that matter? Census numbers are used to determine distribution for federal funds to states. Every 1% of Alaskans who don't respond to the census equates to \$22,192,500 less per year for the state.

Alaska's non-response rate in 2010 was 36% which translated into a loss of nearly \$8 billion over that last ten years- funds that could have helped with school lunch programs, Pell Grants, Section 8 Housing, Title 1 grants and special education grants, highway planning and construction-the list goes on.

The next Census will be conducted in 2020-let's all participate!

Is Budget news the only news? There are a couple of other things going on:

Lawmakers are looking at rolling back the conflict of interest legislation passed last year. They say the result is stricter than expected and interferes with the ability to talk to constituents.

The Senate Rules committee-Senator Coghill chair- introduced [SB 89](#) Legislature; Ethics; Conflicts this week and it is already scheduled for hearings next week. A similar measure is expected in the House. Ethics watchdogs like former Rep. Gren, are "disheartened".

Lt. Governor Meyer signed regulations to allow onsite use of marijuana at specially authorized stores. The Marijuana Control Board considered these regulations for two years holding 11 public meetings on the issue.

Honor Mealey, of North Pole High, won Poetry Out Loud, the statewide poetry recitation contest, and will represent Alaska in the national contest!

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

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

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

The Governor submitted names to the National Marine Fisheries Service for consideration to serve on the [North Pacific Fishery Management Council](#) this week. A decision is expected by June.

BUDGET ISSUES

Okay-back to the budget:

The Governor's radical budget continues to cause universal consternation.

Re-runs of old Capital News programs remind us that we have been here and done this. Over the years, Alaska has taken a few hard looks at how it does business to save money, reduce the footprint, eliminate regulatory burdens and make things work better.

Senate Dems are highly critical of the current effort. They asked the Governor for a long-term fiscal plan they say is required by law and should already have been submitted.

In accordance with AS 37.07.020(b) of the Executive Budget Act, the responsibilities of the governor include a requirement to generate "a fiscal plan with estimates of significant sources and uses of funds for the succeeding 10 fiscal years" See the letter here: [Letter to Governor](#)

Senate Republicans also have major budget concerns after spending nearly a month on it. Among other things, they are looking at "step down" cuts over several years to lessen the shock.

617 people signed up to testify and almost 300 sent in written testimony to the House Transportation and Public Facilities committee this week—one hearing on Wednesday set the record for the highest number of callers received by a legislative committee meeting since they started tracking the numbers.

The topic on testifiers minds? The Marine Highway System which the Governor has slated for a 75% funding reduction. The theme of the comments—do not cut funding or service to the ferry system.

The Department of Revenue released the [2019 Spring Revenue Forecast](#) this week. The spring forecast includes the Department's updated FY19, FY20, and long-term forecasts for oil price, oil production, and state revenue.

Not counting transfers from the Permanent Fund, the Department is forecasting unrestricted revenue of \$2.7 billion in FY 2019 and \$2.3 billion in FY 2020.

The Permanent Fund is expected to transfer \$2.7 billion to the general fund in FY 2019 and \$2.9 billion to the general fund in FY 2020. These amounts are available both for payment of Permanent Fund Dividends and for general government spending

Bill Hearings

[SB 23](#) Approp. Supp. Payments of Prior Year’s Dividend and [SB 24](#) PFD Supplemental Payments, both sponsored by the Governor passed from SSTA this week and will be heard in **SJUD Friday at 1:30pm**

Budget Hearings

Monday:	7:45am	SHSS Subcommittee-Division of Public Assistance
	8:00am	HEDC Subcommittee-Partial Closeout
	9:00am	SFIN Spring Revenue Forecast
	1:30pm	HFIN Alaska Municipal League Budget Discussion
Tuesday:	8:00am	HDOC Subcommittee-Closeout
	11:15am	SADM Subcommittee-Office of Public Advocacy; Public Defender Agency
	1:00pm	SEDC Subcommittee-overview
	3:30pm	HHSS Subcommittee- Medicaid Consolidation; Proposed Medicaid Decrements; Closeout continued
Wednesday:	8:00am	HEDC Subcommittee- Partial Closeout
Thursday	3:30pm	HHSS Subcommittee-Final Closeout
Friday:	7:45am	SHSS Subcommittee-Division of Public Assistance
	8:00am	HEDC Subcommittee- Final Closeout
Saturday:	1:30pm	HHSS Subcommittee-Partial Closeout

BILLS ON THE MOVE

[HJR 9](#) Elizabeth Peratrovich Commemorative Coin sponsored by Rep. Johnson passed from HSTA this week and is on Monday’s Floor Calendar.

[HB 57](#) Child Labor Hours sponsored by Rep. Wilson moved from HSTA and is awaiting a hearing in L&C. The bill was amended to allow work to start at 4am-an hour earlier than the bill’s original 5am time.

[HB 83](#) Prohibit Voting by Facsimile, sponsored by Rep. Kreiss-Tomkins also passed from HSTA. The bill requires regulations to be adopted prohibiting voting by facsimile and has an effective date of January 1, 2020. The version passed from committee clarifies that the division of elections can deliver absentee ballots to voters by fax, but voters are prohibited from returning completed absentee ballots to the division by fax. The bill is sitting in RLS.

[SB 89](#) Legislature; Ethics; Conflicts sponsored by SRLS will be heard twice this week—**Monday and Wednesday in SJUD at 1:30pm**-public testimony will be taken on Monday

[SB 74](#) Internet for Schools sponsored by Sen. Hoffman receives its first hearing in **SEDC Tuesday at 9:00am**. The bill increases funding to school districts where one or more schools qualify for a discounted rate for Internet services under the federal universal services program to receive an amount for each school that is equal to the amount needed to bring the applicant's share to a minimum of 25 megabits of download a second of the Internet services. The current rate is for 10 megabits.

[SB 6](#) Pre-Elementary Programs/Funding sponsored by Sen. Begich receives its first hearing in **SEDC Thursday at 9:00am**. The bill establishes early education programs allowing children who are four to participate in such programs established in school districts and approved by the Department of Education and Early Development

Crime Bills

[HB 12](#) Protective Orders sponsored by Rep. Kopp moved from HSTA will be heard in **HJUD on Monday at 1:30pm**

[SB 35](#) Crimes; Sex Crimes; Sentencing; Parole sponsored by the Governor will be heard in **SJUD Monday at 1:30pm**

[HB 50](#) Arrest; Release; Sentencing; Probation and [HB 51](#) Parole; Sentencing; Credits -House versions of the Governor's crime bills receive their first hearing in **HSTA on Tuesday at 3:00pm**

[SB 33](#) Arrest; Release; Sentencing; Probation, Governor sponsored will be in **SSTA Tuesday at 3:30pm and Thursday at 1:30pm**

[HB 14](#) Assault; Sex Offenses; Sentencing Aggravator sponsored by Rep. Lincoln is up on **Wednesday at 1:30pm in HJUD**-public testimony will be taken

[SB 34](#) Probation; Parole; Sentences; Credits sponsored by the Governor will be heard in **SJUD at 1:30pm on both Wednesday and Friday**

[HB 20](#) Sexual Assault Examination Kits sponsored by Rep. Tarr will be heard on **Thursday at 3:00pm**

[HB 49](#) Crimes; Sentencing; Mental Illness; Evidence sponsored by the Governor receives its first hearing in **HJUD on Friday at 1:30pm**

ITEMS OF INTEREST

HRES will hear a presentation on the Alaska Traditional Foods Movement by Melissa Chlupach from the UAA College of Health on **Monday at 1:00pm**

Join the **Tuesday Lunch and Learn** at Noon to hear: Overcharged: Why Americans Pay Too Much for Healthcare: by the authors of the book, Charles Silver & David Hyman

Wednesday at 1:30pm SHSS will here an Overview of the Department of Health and Social Services from Commissioner Crum followed by a presentation from JP Ouellette, Chair of the Office of Children's Services Citizen's Review Panel

The **House Tribal Affairs** committee will hear a presentation Thursday morning at **8:00am** regarding the **Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact**

Natalie Norberg, OCS Director, will present a response to the Citizen's Review Panel presentation on **Friday at 1:30pm in SHSS**

Confirmation hearings:

Wednesday - HJUD 1:30pm appointees for the Commission of Judicial Conduct

Thursday- SL&C 1:30pm-consideration of Governor's Appointees-Boards are to be determined-check the daily calendar

Friday HJUD 1:30pm confirmation hearing for the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics
HL&C 3:15pm confirmation hearings for the Alcohol Beverage and Control Board

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Website-Daily Committee Hearings for March 18-24, 2019

[Daily 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 ~

Contact: [Caren Robinson \(carenr@gci.net\)](mailto:carenr@gci.net)