

# 2020 CAPITOL CURRENTS

31<sup>st</sup> Alaska State Legislature ~ 2<sup>nd</sup> Session

## PRE-GAME

~The Second Session of the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature is set to start on Tuesday, January 21<sup>st</sup>~

## NEW LEGISLATION

Here are snapshots of several pre-filed measures:

[SJR 12](#), sponsored by Sen. Bishop, is a proposed constitutional amendment to lower the bar for overriding budget vetoes by governors from a 3/4 to a 2/3 vote of the legislature.

A [HB 182](#) sponsored by Rep. Tarr would reduce the maximum time allowed to test rape kits from one year to six months. Sen. Gray-Jackson sponsored the senate version [SB 133](#).

[SB136](#) sponsored by Sen. Stevens, would allow tribal school compacting. Under the bill, schools would have to follow most state education laws. But there would be differences: While they would be open to any student, once they reached capacity, they could prioritize enrollment of tribal members. They could also give employment preference to tribal members.

[HB 181](#), sponsored by Rep. Claman would require schools to add-in mental health to their health education curricula.

[HB 184](#) sponsored by Rep. Wilson, would exempt veterinarians from the requirements of the controlled substance prescription database.

[HB 198](#), sponsored by Rep. Josephson, adds sexual orientation and gender identity to a sentencing aggravator. If a person knowingly directed the conduct constituting the offense at a victim because of that person's sexual orientation or gender identity, the presumptive sentence for the offense can be increased.

[HB 187](#), sponsored by Rep. Fields, would limit the state's ability to send prisoners out of state. Sen. Gray-Jackson sponsored the senate version [SB 138](#)

See the full list of 32 pre-filed bills released on January 10<sup>th</sup> here: [Pre-file First Release](#)  
The second release will be on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Click here: <http://w3.legis.state.ak.us/> and scroll down to Popular then pre-file release No. 2

## NEW LEGISLATORS

In November, Senate Republicans confirmed Gov. Dunleavy's choice, Representative Josh Revak, to fill a vacant seat in the chamber. Revak will hold the Senate seat pending the November 2020 elections.

In December, Republican members of the Alaska House of Representatives unanimously confirmed Mel Gillis for the South Anchorage House seat vacated by Josh Revak. Gillis, a registered big-game guide since 1974, has lived in House District 25 for more than 30 years.

## GOVERNOR'S CORNER

The Governor released a snapshot report of his first year in office.

Click here: <https://gov.alaska.gov/home/year1/>

## BUDGET ISSUES

Click here for the Governor's proposed 2021 operating and capital budgets:

<https://omb.alaska.gov/fiscal-year-2021-proposed-budget/>

The FY21 **operating budget** of \$4.5 billion in unrestricted general fund spending basically flat-funds state government. The Governor allowed increases for “formula” programs like Medicaid and schools.

The plan takes \$1.5 billion from the Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR) to balance the budget. OMB officials have said he is open to discussions on new revenues, including taxes.

The operating budget increases general fund spending on Pioneer Homes by 18.3%; provides \$43 million for homelessness assistance; fully funds K-12 education and the Alaska Court System; funds new prosecutors and Alaska State Trooper positions; increases general fund spending to the Department of Corrections by 17.4%; adds \$9.4 million to the budget to restore API's full capacity; restored Adult Preventive Dental (adding \$27 million); and it appears that the Governor has backed off the phased Medicaid Cost Containment strategy adding \$263 mil (\$120m from the State/\$143 from the feds) back into the 2021 budget.

State funding in the **capital budget** is reduced from FY20 by approximately 8 percent to \$135 million. According to the governor's office, when designated revenues such as agency fees and federal funding are added in, the capital budget totals about \$1.3 billion.

The supplemental budget bill is due to the legislature by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of session. In a break with tradition, the Governor also released the **2020 supplemental** on December 11<sup>th</sup> so Alaskans can see the “full budget picture”. The supplemental fills gaps in Medicaid and wildfire response funding and would also provide for a second round of PFD payments this fiscal year in addition to the \$1,606 each eligible Alaskan received in the fall of 2019. Finally, it funds an additional \$6 million for the Alaska Psychiatric Institute and \$5 million for the Pioneer Homes.

## IMPORTANT DATES

Jan. 21, 2020	Session Starts
Jan. 22, 2020	CJB Legislative Reception
Jan. 27, 2020	Governor State of the State & Budget
Feb. 19, 2020	30th day of session, Governor's Amended budget introduced
Feb.24, 2020	35 <sup>th</sup> day of session, Last Day Legislator can introduce personal legislation
April 19, 2020	90th day of session, statutory end of session
May 20, 2020	121st day of session, constitutional end of session if extended

**~ End of Report ~**

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