2018 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

Third Edition – 1/ 29 to 2/2/18

~ Rep. Lincoln sworn in; Rep. Fansler resigns; Rep. Eastman removed from Ethics Committee; Senator Wilson on probation ~

HIGHLIGHTS

The Senate approved the Alaska Decoration of Honor for Jacob Sims, Hansen Kirkpatrick and David Brabander - three Alaskans killed in the line of duty during 2017.

The Decoration of Honor was created in 2007 and calls for a medal to be awarded to the families of Alaskan soldiers who have been killed in combat.

SCR 14 was transferred to the House and is scheduled for a hearing next Thursday at 1:00pm in special Military and Veteran's Affairs Special Committee (MLV).

The Statewide Suicide Prevention Council released its 2018-2022 Plan: Casting the Net Upstream: Promoting Wellness to Prevent Suicide. Find a copy here: SSPC Plan

Republican gubernatorial candidates participated in a candidate forum in Juneau. Scott Hawkins, Michael Sheldon, former state senator Mike Dunleavey and current state representative Mike Chenault met with the Juneau Republican Women.

Republican candidates for Lt. Governor, Edith Grunwald, Stephen Wright, former state representative Lynn Gattis and current state senator Kevin Meyer also attended the Forum.

Rep. Kawasaki and Senator Begich and Wielechowski have introduced a package of legislation to protect net neutrality in Alaska and urge Congress to overturn the Federal Communications Commission order reversing net neutrality protection across the United States.

HJR 31, HB 277, SJR 12, and SB 160 would ensure the internet remains a free and open place for personal communications and commerce.

HB 277, will be heard in the House Labor & Commerce Committee on Feb. 9 and HJR 31 will be introduced in the State Affairs Committee on Feb. 6 and heard again on Feb. 8 for public testimony.

HB 186 Food Donations, sponsored by Rep. Talerico is the **first bill** to pass the legislature. HB 186 will allow hotels, restaurants, stores and other food donors who choose to donate their excess unsold food or out dated food to donate to food banks or charitable organizations free from liability.

BUDGET ISSUES

Departmental Budget Overviews continue this week. To find hearing times/dates click here:

Daily Schedule

A couple of budget bills (**HB 287 and SB 131**) focus on Education Funding and removing it from the end-of-session rush.

HB 287, sponsored by Rep. Seaton and co-sponsored by each member of the House Majority, would fund K-12 Education early and separately from the Operating budget.

The bill moved from FIN to RLS this week, priming it for a Floor vote in the near future. Read the Sponsor statement here: Sponsor Statement HB 287 Review the FIN presentation here: HB 287 Education and Pupil Transportation PowerPoint

SB 131 sponsored by Senator Stevens would put early Education funding into statute. It requires the Governor to submit a separate appropriation bill for Education when the operating budget is submitted and requires the legislature to pass and transmit to the Governor such a bill by April 1st of each year.

SB 128 Marijuana Education and Treatment Fund, sponsored by Senator Giessel, passed from SHSS on the 2nd. The bill would appropriate 25% of the marijuana excise tax for use by the Divisions of Public Health and Behavioral Health for education and treatment. Its next committee is FIN.

A similar bill, Rep. Claman's HB 296, will be heard in HHSS, Thursday the 8th at 3pm. In addition to an appropriation to the Divisions of Public Health and Behavioral Health, HB 296 would allow an even distribution to go to the Alaska Children's Trust for grant distribution.

The supplemental bills (HB 321and SB 168) were introduced this week. SB 168 is scheduled for a hearing in SFIN on Friday, the 9th.

Important Budget Dates:
30th Legislative Day Deadline for Governor to submit budget Amendments

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES

HB 240 Pharmacy Benefits Managers moved from HL&C Friday afternoon without amendment. Its next committee is FIN. Learn more about PBMs and the need for parameters on their practices under the bill's document tab here: HB 240 documents

SB 112 introduced last April by Senator Giessel and received it's first hearing in SL&C on the 1st. The sponsor: SB 112 sponsor statement Expect a deeper dive on this bill if it starts moving.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

February is Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month. See the Governor's proclamation here: TDVAM

February 13th is Wear Orange Day -- a national day of awareness in honor of the month. Tell people why you are wearing orange and post pictures and updates on Instagram and Twitter using the hashtags **#Orange4Love #HandsUnite** and **#RespectWeek2018**

Introduced last April, HB 214 sponsored by Rep. Drummond receives its first hearing Friday in EDC at 8am. The bill will name a section of the Safe Children's Act after Bree Moore.

Ms. Moore was killed by her boyfriend in June 2014. Her parents work tirelessly to ensure teens have the information they need to identify teen dating violence, report it, and get support. They were instrumental in getting mandatory education on teen dating violence written into the Safe Children Act.

Additional bills to support the naming of Bree's Law:
SB 132 Bree's Law; Dating Violence Programs was introduced this session by Senator Costello is a companion to HB 214 and was referred to EDC, FIN.

HB 324 and SB 171 Child Abuse; Training Programs; Bree's Law, sponsored by request of the Governor names Bree's Law and also expands both the list of people required to be trained to recognize child abuse and the training contents. The bills also address general crisis response training for school personnel.

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

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

Daily Committee Hearings for 2018: Meetings

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 Gavel

Streaming Video: Live Now

Testifying:

Legislative Information Office (LIO) Find your LIO here: http://akleg.gov/lios.php
In Juneau: See committee hearing list for room numbers

Call-in: Available with prior approval from the committee chair
From Anchorage: (907) 563-9085; From Juneau: (907) 586-9085; all others: (844)586-9085

HEARINGS OF INTEREST

If you want to share your opinions/concerns about a particular piece of legislation, look for hearings where the committees list public testimony being taken. That's your chance! Comments are usually time-limited (between 2-3 minutes). Written comments are taken too and can be of any length.

Board extensions being heard this week include HB 323 the **Board of Pharmacy** in HL&C at 3:15pm on Monday; HB 273 the **Marijuana Control Board**, HB 274 the **Board of Psychologists/Psych Assoc**., and HB 275 the **Board of Massage Therapists** in HFIN on Tuesday at 1:30pm; and on Friday at 3:15pm in HL&C committee members will hear HB 318 extending the **Board of Social Work Examiners.**

Tuesday and Thursday at 3:00pm, HSTA members will hear HCR 2 Respond to Adverse Childhood Experiences sponsored by Rep. Tarr. The resolution urges the Governor to join the legislature in funding research for statewide solutions and asks the state's policy decisions acknowledge and take into account the principles of early childhood brain development and, whenever possible, consider the concepts of toxic stress and early adversity.

Read the sponsor statement here: sponsor statement

SB 105 sponsored by Senator Wilson is being heard Tuesday in SL&C at 1:30pm. The bill will allow Marital & Family Therapists to bill Medicaid for certain services.

Crimes Against Medical Professionals, HB 312, sponsored by Rep. Claman has its first two hearings this week at 1:30pm on Monday and Wednesday in HJUD. The bill allows peace officers to make warrantless arrests for certain 4th degree assaults committed at health care facilities and adds an aggravating factor for consideration at sentencing if certain felony crimes are committed at health care facilities against health care professionals.

The Sexual and Other Workplace Harassment Subcommittee continues its work at 7am on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.

If you're in state government, you've probably heard about or have been asked to participate in "shared IT services". Plans are to consolidate services under one department.

Commissioner of Administration Designee Leslie Ridle is set to meet with SFIN Tuesday morning at 9am to discuss the Shared Services Initiative.

Watch on Wednesday a Joint Session of the legislature for the State of the Judiciary address by the Chief Justice.

LINKS OF INTEREST

2018 Legislative Contacts-includes Rep. Lincoln

Toll-free Numbers for Legislators

Steps in the Passage of a Bill

Summary of Alaska Legislation 2017

~ End of Report ~

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