2018 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

Ninth Edition – 3/12 to 3/18/18

28 days to go

~ Or 59 if you think we're going through Day 121 ~

HIGHLIGHTS

In a first for the Legislature, HSTA passed HB 184, Discrimination; Gender ID; Sexual Orientation sponsored by Rep. Josephson from committee. It was the first time a committee has approved any measure banning discrimination against lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender and queer Alaskans.

Rep. Tarr and Sen. MacKinnon held a screening for legislators and staff of the HBO documentary I Am Evidence. Produced by Law and Order SVU Actress Mariska Hargitay, the film tells the story of four survivors whose rape kits went untested for years as they navigate their way through the criminal justice system.

Sen. Kevin Meyer, the Chair of the Senate State Affairs Committee, attended the film screening and scheduled a hearing on HB 31, Sexual Assault Training & Exam Kits sponsored by Rep. Tarr for Thursday, March 22nd at 3:30pm.

The Victims Advocate Selection Committee-a joint committee of the House and Senate-selected the current Victims' Advocate, Taylor Winston, to move forward for confirmation of another term of service. The Victims Advocate directs the Office of Victims Rights; serving 5-year terms at the pleasure of the Legislature.

Sen. Costello added a Monday 6:00pm SL&C meeting to the regular schedule of SL&C meetings through the end of session.

See the attached Bill Update for a review of bills of interest and where they are in the process.

BUDGET ISSUES

The Fast-track Supplemental, HB 321, passed both bodies. The stopgap spending plan bill includes $45 million for Alaska Medicaid programs; $24 million to fully fund the Alaska Marine Highway; and $30 million for the Community Assistance Program.

The regular supplemental bill is still in play.

The operating and mental health budgets passed from HFIN on Friday. A total of 197 amendments both through the subcommittee and full committee levels were considered for the operating budget.

The bills are expected to be on the House Floor next week.

Look here for the FY 2019 operating budget reports: HFIN Budget reports

HB 213, Public School Trust Fund sponsored by Rep. Parish passed the House Friday. It's expected to go to the Senate after a reconsideration vote. The bill follows the percent of market value (POMV) approach allowing the state to annually spend 4.75 % of the fund's five-year average value.

HB 142, Unemployment Insurance Benefits sponsored by Rep. Tuck also passed the House. The bill would increase the state's maximum unemployment payment from $370 per week to $510. Alaska's current benefit is the **39th** highest in the U.S. The **$510 amount** would raise the benefit to the **13th** highest.

For only the **6th time** in its 42-year history, the **Alaska Permanent Fund Corporation's** board of trustees issued advice and a warning to the Legislature. The board unanimously approved a resolution stating the multibillion dollar deficit and lessening reserves require spending from the Permanent Fund.

The resolution also says if the Legislature authorizes such spending, it should do so under an organized system, rather than on an as-needed basis. Resolution

On Monday at 9am, SFIN will hear the **Spring Revenue Forecast** from Department of Revenue Commissioner, Sheldon Fisher.

HFIN will hear from Commissioner Fisher at 1:30pm followed by Ken Alper, Director of the Tax Division and Dan Stickel, the Chief Economist.

They'll also hear about "Alaska's Economy" from Mike Navarre, Commerce, Community, & Economic Development Commissioner.

HFIN will **take up the Capital budget next Friday** to hear an overview of the Governor's FY2019 proposals.

The committee will also hear HB 282, Capital Budget contingent on Tax. The funding for the appropriations in HB 282 depend on establishing a state payroll tax.

The tax is a small one—just 1.5 percent and capped so that no one would pay more than $2,200. The levy would bring in $320 million annually with most of the funds being directed toward a long-standing deferred maintenance backlog. The tax would sunset in three years.

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

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 hearings 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!

Several confirmation hearings are being held this week
Bright and early Monday morning (8:00am), SEDC will take up confirmation hearings for the Board of Education & Early Development (James Fields, Sandra Kowalski, Tiffany Scott and Lorri Van Diest) and for the University of Alaska Board of Regents (Stephen *Joey* Sweet).

Monday at 1:30pm SHSS will consider Sai-Ling Liu and Catherine Hyndman for the State Medical Board

Tuesday at 11:30am the House Special Committee on Arctic Policy, Economic Development & Tourism will consider Mike Navarre for the Commissioner of the Department of Commerce, Community, & Economic Development

3:00pm on Tuesday has the HHSS committee considering the State Medical Board appointees.

3:30pm on Tuesday, SSTA will consider Leslie Ridle for the Commissioner for the Department of Administration and Al Tamagni for the Personnel Board.

HEDC takes a turn considering the Board of Education & Early Development and University of Alaska Board of Regents appointees on Wednesday at 8:00am.

At 9:00am on Wednesday, SFIN will consider Sheldon Fisher for the Commissioner of the Department of Revenue; William Westover for the State Assessment Review Board; and Mr. Joey Sweet for the University of Alaska Board of Regents

Thursday at 3:30pm SSTA considers Valerie Davidson as the Lt. Governor Successor; and, Orville Huntington and Duncan Fields for the Board of Fisheries.

What else is happening?

Monday at 1:00pm HJUD will hold its sixth hearing on HB 75, Gun Violence Protective Orders sponsored by Rep. Tarr. Committee member amendments are due to the Chair by 4:00pm on Tuesday. **HJUD will also meet on Wednesday and Thursday nights at 7:00pm.**

HB 312, Crimes Against Medical Professionals sponsored by Rep. Claman is up in SJUD, Monday at 1:30pm.

6:00 pm sees the first Monday night hearing of the SSTA committee. They'll be taking up SB 119, Health Care Costs: Disclosure; Insurers sponsored by Sen. Hughes and SB 38, Pharmacy Benefits Mangers sponsored by Sen. Giessel.

Tuesday afternoon, HFIN takes a break from budget matters and is scheduled to hear HB 268, Opioid Prescription Information sponsored by Rep. Gara at 1:30pm.

HHSS will hear SB 174, Programs for Persons with Disabilities sponsored by Sen. Micciche and HCR 22, Sexual Assault Awareness Month sponsored by Rep. Millett.

Wednesday morning 8:00am, HEDC will hear HCR 21, March 27, 2018: Education & Sharing Day sponsored by Rep. Drummond and SCR 5, Alaska Reads Day sponsored by Sen. Gardner.

Thursday at 3:00pm HHSS will hear a presentation by the Department of Health and Social Services on Medicaid Reform and on the 1115 Waiver.

To find out more about the 1115 Waiver click here: 1115 Waiver

SCR 17, Sexual Assault Awareness Month sponsored by Sen. Meyer will be heard at 3:15pm in HSTA and SSTA will hear HB 31, Sexual Assault Training and Exam Kits sponsored by Rep. Tarr at 3:30pm.

The week wraps up with a Lunch and Learn on Friday at Noon.

Norway's Correctional System will be presented by DOC Commissioner Dean Williams, Judge Trevor Stephens, Sen. Kelly and Rep. Edgmon.

~ End of Report ~

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