

2019 CAPITOL CURRENTS

31st Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

Eighth Edition – 3/4 to 3/9/19

– 36 Days to go to 90, but then... –

~ Everyone has a take on the budget as the Legislature slowly climbs Mt. Dunleavy.
Budget Director Arduin not playing that well in Peoria. ~

HIGHLIGHTS

Senate Judiciary moved [SB 12](#) on to Senate Finance. It will close the so-called “Schneider Loophole” that caused a judge to lose his job last election and created a grassroots advocacy group called “No More Free Passes”.

Efforts are underway - one more time - to move Legislative meetings out of Juneau to Anchorage. The group *Equal Access Alaska* is backing an Initiative that requires all regular and special meetings of the Legislature to be held in Anchorage. The Division of Elections is reviewing the petition.

Vivian Stiver, a Marijuana Control Board appointee, got her first confirmation hearing. Skeptics are concerned that her general attitude and work on a referendum against legal marijuana businesses in Fairbanks will cloud her judgment. She says no problem.

Congressman Don Young just became the longest serving Republican in congressional history.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

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

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

Governor Dunleavy ordered Alaska state flags to fly at half-staff March 7th-10th to honor the memory of Keith Miller - Alaska’s third governor. In 1962, Mr. Miller was elected to the Alaska House of Representatives for one term. In 1966, he was elected Lt. Governor and in January 1969 was elevated to Governor when Governor Hickel accepted the position of Secretary of the Interior in the Nixon Administration.

After leaving the Governor’s office in 1970, Miller was elected to a four-year term to the Alaska Senate in 1972. He also held a seat on the Alaska Transportation Commission for eight years and served as its chairman. Governor Miller was 94.

BUDGET ISSUES

Lt. Governor Meyer said recently the amended budget is a conversation starter. The first budget he’s seen since he’s been in public office that actually matches revenue.

The Legislature says it will write its’ own budget, thank you.

OMB Economist Ed King says there will be impacts but a full PFD will soften the shock – “and the budget will not destroy the economy”. So far, OMB has been unable to quantify job loss.

On the other hand, a UAA Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) Associate Economics professor, Mouchine Guettabi, told the Senate Finance Committee the governor's budget could extend the recession and cost up to 8,100 jobs.

Legislative Finance Director David Teal estimated 5,000 layoffs.

The Governor took his big budget cuts directly to University staff and students. He sent a letter that said he was flexible about the look of the system as long as it is affordable. His primary goal is to match the budget with revenues. Angry University supporters panned the letter and questioned his loyalty.

An Administration proposal to eliminate the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) fund, that subsidizes rural energy costs, also hit a wall. Key legislators have promised to defend this popular program (started in 1984) rather than return to yearly battles over PCE amounts.

Bill Hearings

During last week's SSTA public meeting, more than 120 Alaskans weighed in on two bills that would make incremental PFD payments for amounts exceeding the dividend caps from 2016-2018. Many testifiers were against the paybacks - needed government services declared more important.

[SB 23](#) Approp. Supp. Payments of Prior Year's Dividend and [SB 24](#) PFD Supplemental Payments, both sponsored by the Governor will be heard again in SSTA **Tuesday and Thursday at 3:30pm**

Budget Hearings

Monday:	7:45am	SHSS Subcommittee-Division of Behavioral Health and the Alaska Psychiatric Institute
Tuesday:	9:00am	SFIN will take public testimony on SB 19 , Capital Budget; Supplemental
	1:30pm	HFIN FY20 Overview-Department of Health and Social Services
	3:30pm	HHSS Subcommittee- Divisions of Public Assistance, Senior & Disabilities Services and Behavioral Health
Wednesday:	8:00am	HEDC Subcommittee- Early Learning and AEYC Southeast Alaska
Thursday:	9:00am	SFIN public testimony will be taken on SB 38 the Disaster Relief Supplemental
	3:30pm	HHSS Subcommittee-Division of Juvenile Justice, Public Health, Tribal Claiming, and Office of Children's Services
Friday:	7:45am	SHSS Subcommittee-Public Health, Community Matching Grants, Department Support Services
	8:00am	HEDC Subcommittee- RurAL Cap, Best Beginnings, Alaska State Council on the Arts
Saturday:	1:30pm	HHSS Subcommittee-Partial Closeout

BILLS ON THE MOVE

[SJR 9](#) Constitutional Amendment; Bill for Public Education sponsored by Sen. Costello will be heard on **Thursday at 9:00am in SEDC**- public testimony will be taken. The bill amends the Constitution to require the Governor to submit a separate appropriation bill to authorize proposed expenditures to fund public education for grades kindergarten through twelve and requires the legislature to pass an education budget by the 45th day of each regular session.

[SB 44](#) Telehealth; Physician Assistants; Drugs sponsored by Sen. Giessel-receives its first hearing at **1:30pm in SL&C**- public testimony will be taken. The bill adds physician assistants to the professionals who can render a diagnosis, provide treatment and/or prescribe, dispense, or administer a prescription drug without conducting a physical exam.

[HJR 9](#) Elizabeth Peratrovich Commemorative Coin sponsored by Rep. Johnson and [HB 57](#) Child Labor Hours sponsored by Rep. Wilson are up again in **HSTA at 3pm on Tuesday**. Public testimony will be taken on HJR 9.

Also, in HSTA on Tuesday, [HB 83](#) Prohibit Voting by Facsimile, sponsored by Rep. Kreiss-Tomkins. The bill requires regulations to be adopted prohibiting voting by facsimile and has an effective date of January 1, 2020.

Crime Bills

[SB 12](#) Assault; Sex Offenses; Sentencing Credit sponsored by Sen. Micciche moved from SJUD and is scheduled for a hearing at **9:00am in SFIN on Monday**.

[HB 52](#) Crimes; Sex Crimes; Sentencing; Parole, Governor's bill, is scheduled for two hearings in HJUD one on **Monday at 1:30pm** and one on **Friday at 1:30pm**. Public testimony will be taken during Friday's hearing.

[HB 20](#) Sexual Assault Examination Kits sponsored by Rep. Tarr receives its first hearing this session in **HSTA on Tuesday at 3:00pm**. The bill requires law enforcement agencies to send all kits collected within 6 months of the collection to a laboratory operated or approved by the Department of Public Safety for either a serological or DNA test. It will be heard again on **Thursday at 3:00pm** and public testimony will be taken.

[SB 33](#) Arrest; Release; Sentencing; Probation, Governor sponsored will be in **SSTA Tuesday with Public Testimony scheduled to start around 6:00pm** and at **3:30pm on Thursday**

[HB 12](#) Protective Orders sponsored by Rep. Kopp and [HB 14](#) Assault; Sex Offenses; Sentencing Aggravator sponsored by Rep. Lincoln moved from HSTA and are now in HJUD awaiting hearings.

ITEMS OF INTEREST

Tuesday at 8:00am, H Tribal Affairs will hear a presentation on Tribal Compacts, Contracts & Consultation. They will also meet **at 8:00am on Thursday** and hear about Other Alaska Native Entities.

Wednesday join the Noon Lunch and Learn about the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study and Data of ACEs Effects on Policy Matters; Alaska's statute on ACEs Awareness & Trauma-informed

Government & National/Alaskan Examples of Trauma-informed Approaches to Policy Making by
Laura Norton-Cruz, Director of the Alaska Resilience Initiative

Wednesday at 1:30pm DHSS Commissioner Crum will give an overview of the Department to
SHSS

Thursday join the Noon Lunch and Learn about Facing Foster Care in Alaska by Amanda
Metivier, Sarah Redmon and members of the Statewide Youth Board

HSTA will hear a presentation on Reentry's Role in Reducing Crime at **3:00pm on Thursday**

Confirmation hearings:

Monday - 1:30pm HFIN Attorney General Designee Kevin Clarkson, LAW and Commissioner
Designee Kelly Tshibaka with Administration

1:30pm HJUD Nancy Dahlstrom, Commissioner Designee for Corrections

3:15pm HL&C will hear from members of the Marijuana Control Board

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

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Website-Daily Committee Hearings for March 11-16, 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 \(carenr@gci.net\)](#)

