

2017 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

14th Edition – 4/17 to 4/23/17

~ *Most Head home for the Weekend* ~

HIGHLIGHTS

In the days leading up to the 90th day of session it was somewhat manic. Three of the four often touted pillars of a comprehensive and sustainable fiscal plan were being heard in committees or on the floor of one house or the other.

As we entered the first few days for what could be another 31 days or more, a slight depression seemed to settle in. Several committees were cancelled. Floor sessions were not held on Tuesday, the House didn't meet Thursday and the Senate adjourned Thursday until Monday.

Most legislators headed home to pick-up cars arriving on ferries, others are moving into new temporary living quarters.

Besides an operating budget that still needs to be worked out, the other three bills that support the overall construction of this fiscal building are:

SB 26 – Creating a structured draw from the Permanent Fund (Most if not all legislators agree that this is the year to restructure the Fund, even if it means a reduced dividend). Concurrence failed in Senate- awaiting a conference committee.

HB 111 – Oil and gas tax reform (Expert witnesses and public testimony in the Senate Resources Committee this past week, seem to contradict the significant oil tax policy changes approved in the House just a few days ago). Hearings all this next week in Senate Resources.

HB 115 – Creates a state income tax and directs the revenue into the Education Funding Act (The Senate appears to be the linchpin for this segment of an overall plan, but they want to see more cuts first to the state's overall budget). Hearings all this next week in Senate Labor & Commerce.

The governor offered the people's house this past week as a place where both the House and the Senate leadership could meet and hopefully find some common ground to craft these pillars into a workable solution.

However, both sides seem to be dug in hoping to outflank the other in this battle of substance and words concerning our state's looming budget deficit.

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

If the House concurs in the Senate changes to HB 23, then it will head to the governor for his signature. This legislation provides for medical insurance coverage for surviving dependents of peace officers and firefighters killed in the line of duty.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

<http://gov.alaska.gov>

The governor announced that Alaska has been selected to participate in a national project to help combat the state's opioid and heroin epidemic. In two months, Alaska will have an action plan geared toward treating those in the criminal justice population—with help from the National Governors Association and the Centers for Disease Control.

On the heels of this announcement, the state learned it will receive a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to combat heroin and opioid addiction. The funds come from the two-year State Targeted Response to the Opioid Crisis Grants (STOG), and will go to support prevention, treatment, and recovery services focused on individuals suffering from opioid addiction.

Our First Lady – Donna Walker announced the recipients of the 2017 Volunteer of the Year awards. They are: Bob Morris of Anchorage, Joel Buchanan of Coffman Cove, Erick Mountain of Nulato, Bob “Ziggy” Szewe, June Degan of Juneau, Clarke Brown of Anchorage, Michelle Overstreet of Wasilla, Shirley M. Springer Staten of Anchorage, Dan Rodgers of Anchorage, and Bobbi Anne Barnowsky of Old Harbor on Kodiak Island.

NEW BILLS OF INTEREST

<http://www.akleg.gov>

Health Care Issues

HB 234 / Guttenberg – Extend Alaska Health Care Commission Termination Date

Public Safety Issues

HJR 21 / Guttenberg – Federal Government Respect State Regulation of Marijuana

Constitutional Issues

SJR 8 / Begich – Constitutional Amendment: Permanent Fund; POMV; Dividend

Employee/Retirement Issues

HB 236 / Kawasaki – Extend Alaska Seniors Benefits Payment Program

BILLS ON THE MOVE

~ Below are pertinent bills that had hearings or other action this past week ~

HOUSE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

HB 23 / Insurance for Dependents of Deceased Fire and Police

<Passed Senate on 4/19>

Awaiting in House for concurrence in Senate changes.

Provides major medical insurance coverage under the Public Employees' Retirement System of Alaska for certain surviving spouses and dependent children of peace officers and firefighters.

HB 25 / Insurance Coverage for Contraceptives

Heard and held in House Finance on 4/18. Scheduled on 4/27.

Requires insurers that cover prescription drugs to provide coverage of FDA-approved prescription contraceptive drugs and devices; requires coverage for voluntary sterilization procedures; and requires coverage for consultations, exams, procedures and medical services necessary to prescribe, dispense, insert,

deliver, distribute, administer, or remove the drugs, devices, and other products or services covered; allows exemptions for certain religious organizations and requires the Department of Health and Social Services to amend the state's Medicaid plan to include the enumerated coverage.

HB 74 / Driver's License and ID Cards and Real ID Act

Heard and held in House Finance on 4/20. Scheduled on 4/25.

Allows DMV to issue both REAL ID federal compliant and noncompliant identification cards and driver licenses as a citizen of Alaska requests. This in turn will allow our residents to access military facilities, other federal facilities, and pass through TSA checkpoints at airports with these proper compliant cards. Otherwise, a U.S. passport, other recognized passport, will be necessary to fly to the lower-48.

HB 159 / Opioids; Prescriptions; Database; Licenses

Scheduled House Finance on 4/27.

Companion is SB 79. Provides an option for patients to execute a "Voluntary Nonopioid Directive" that would allow a person not to be administered an opioid. The bill would also require health care licensing boards, such as nurses, physicians, and osteopaths to adopt regulations for licensure, renewal, and certification by regulation to make certain requirements of licensee's continued demonstration in pain management. It would also implement provisions to limit an initial prescription for an opioid to not more than a seven day supply.

For pharmacists, the bill would require registration with the controlled substance prescription database regardless of whether the pharmacist has a federal drug enforcement administration registration number. Further, it would allow a person to request a pharmacist to dispense less than the prescribed amount of a schedule II or schedule III controlled substance. Among other items, it also would require that the controlled substance prescription database be updated daily rather than the current weekly update.

HB 164 / Protect: Vulnerable Adults/Long Term Care

Scheduled House Finance on 4/24.

Companion is SB 83. Certain provisions of the reporting requirements for the protection of vulnerable adults is amended to include alignment with the Older Americans Act of 1965. It also allows the Ombudsman to disclose a person's identity for purposes of making a referral to an agency under certain conditions. It also clarifies where reports of harm are to be lodged within DHSS.

SB 55 / Omnibus Crime and Corrections

<Passed Senate on 4/3>

Scheduled House Rules on 4/26.

Clarifies and amends the following sections to the criminal justice codes. Marijuana penalties, victim notification, probation term lengths, administrative license revocations, referral for minor consuming, removing inflation adjustments, data reporting, and other minor and technical changes.

SCR 2 Sexual Assault Awareness Month: April 2017

<Passed Senate on 3/6>

Scheduled House Rules on 4/26.

Proclaims April 2017 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

SENATE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

SCSHB 8 (CRA) / Enforcement of Foreign Protective Orders

<Passed House on 3/6>

Moved from S(Jud) on the 19th

Conforms Alaska law with the Full Faith and Credit provisions of the Violence Against Women's Act requiring law enforcement and courts to recognize protective orders issued by tribal courts and courts of outside jurisdictions.

AWAITING TRANSMITTAL TO THE GOVERNOR

[Enrolled HB 49](#) / **Extend Board of Direct-Entry Midwives**

Extends the Board of Direct-Entry Midwives through June 30, 2021.

<Passed Senate on 4/16>

HB 78 / **Indigenous Peoples Day**

Establishes the second Monday of October of each year as Indigenous Peoples Day.

<Passed Senate on 4/16>

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Check the Daily Schedule at night for the next day's hearings.

NOTE: The 24-Hour rule may go in effect this week.

Hearings only have to be announced the day before a committee meets.

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

2017 Legislators contact information

<http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/whoswho.pdf> ~ <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/800numbers.pdf>

2017 1st Session Staff contact list ~ http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/session_phone_list.pdf

2017 House & Senate Committees ~ <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/commlist.pdf>

~ End of Report ~

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