

2017 CAPITOL CURRENTS

30th Alaska State Legislature ~ 1st Session

Third Edition – 1/30 to 2/5/17

– 69 Days to go! –

~ *Presidential Executive Orders are filtering down to Alaska* ~

HIGHLIGHTS

More executive orders were forthcoming from the president this past week. One of them makes sweeping changes in the way America enforces immigration laws and accepts refugees from abroad. Massive demonstrations were held all over the world, including Alaska.

This past week, Donald Trump nominated Neil Gorsuch for the Supreme Court. Gorsuch is a judge on the Denver-based 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. He is the youngest (age 49) nominee to the nation's highest court in more than a quarter century, and he could influence the direction of the court for decades.

Carmel Anderson is one of eight artists selected for the Alaska State Museum 2017-2019 Solo Artist Exhibition Series. Her show, *Unheard Voices/Unheard Wisdom*, shares the experiences of victims impacted by domestic violence and sexual abuse. The show features life-size cast and fabric sculptures. [Unheard Voices Unheard Wisdom](#) will be showing at the State Museum through March 18th. The show will move to Anchorage and down to Sitka before returning to Ms. Anderson's home community of Ketchikan.

[HB 78](#), which would establish the second Monday in October as "Indigenous Peoples Day," was approved this week by the House and was transmitted to the Senate. The legislation was sponsored by freshman lawmaker Rep. Dean Westlake (D-Kotzebue).

BUDGET ISSUES

Several reports state we have cut back spending to **2006 levels**. That's ten years ago.

General Fund (GF) outlay for fiscal year (FY) 2013 was \$7.8 billion. For FY 2017 our GF is at \$4.3 billion. The Department of Health & Social Services has been cut by more than 15% during that time.

Reducing the budget is reaching a "point of diminishing returns" as quoted by Speaker Bryce Edgmon. Massive cuts to the Fish & Game budget are already forcing biologists to manage our fisheries more conservatively, thus leading to fewer opportunities across several fisheries leading to less revenue to harvesters, processors, and communities.

Rep. Sam Kito III of Juneau is proposing a special 2.5% income tax on Alaska's lobbyists' income. Kito III said he wants the revenue produced by his legislation to be directed to the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC), which oversees state laws related to lobbying and campaign finance.

Construction spending in Alaska is expected to decline again in 2017. The Associated General Contractors of Alaska predicts the total value of "on the street" construction spending this year will be nearly \$6.5 billion, down about 10 percent from last year.

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES

Alaska would not benefit by using contractors to run its juvenile jails or the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API), according to a pair of Legislature-ordered reports on privatization.

Handing over management of API to a private company or a nonprofit would cost more "even after significant staff reductions," according to a letter on the study's findings.

The answer to possibly saving money for juvenile jails was an unqualified – "No." A third ordered privatization study, of the pharmacy that serves the six Alaska Pioneer homes, was never done because no bid met the state's requirements.

Several Bristol Bay organizations are partnering on a new task force to combat drugs, particularly the opioid problem in the region. Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) President Jason Metrokin said the new body is meant to help find solutions to a problem that has been growing across the state.

The second full month of marijuana tax revenue has entered the state treasury. In December, thirteen marijuana cultivators paid \$145,800 to the Department of Revenue's Tax Division. Under Alaska law, growers pay the state's tax.

Bud is taxed at \$50 per ounce, and other parts of the plant, like the stems and leaves, is taxed at \$15 per ounce.

The Division of Public Health in Alaska has announced the posting of the Alaska Comprehensive Cancer Plan for 2016 – 2020. You can access this report by going to the following website.

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Documents/Cancer/assets/AlaskaCancerPlan2016-2020.pdf>

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES

The Legislature will be considering rolling back parts of the state's new crime law that are attracting public and law enforcement condemnation.

Senator Coghill told members of Senate Judiciary that he's drafting legislation that includes proposed amendments to SB 91.

Among other things, the proposed changes would restore jail time for violating bail conditions, shoplifting and first-time low-level felony convictions.

NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES

Alaska's State Parks director Ben Ellis was dismissed this week. Deputy Parks director Matt Wedeking has been named acting director.

The Alaska Oil and Gas Conservation Commission currently does not issue public notices or hold hearings when an operator applies for a permit to drill a well and uses the "fracking" technique to increase oil and gas production.

Now, the state's oil-well regulator has proposed notifying the public and accepting comments on applications for hydraulic fracturing operations.

On another related note – oil and gas construction spending is expected to drop 15 percent, to \$2.4 billion, compared with 2016.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

<http://gov.alaska.gov>

The governor's office posts press releases and other items of interest at the website above.

From the House and Senate Journals of Feb. 1, 2017 – A letter dated January 30th was read stating that, in accordance with Article III, Sections 25 and 26, under the Constitution of the State of Alaska, the Governor submits the following names for legislative confirmation of appointments to the positions noted.

State Medical Board

Timothy Olson – Bird Creek

Doug Mertz – Juneau

Board of Nursing

Joseph Lefleur – Ketchikan

Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives

Kathy Roberts – Anchorage

Dana Brown – Fairbanks

Kathryn Ostrom – Anchorage

Board of Pharmacy

James Henderson – Soldotna

Taryl Giessel – Eagle River

Lana Bell – Anchorage

Physical Therapy and Occupational Therapy Board, State

Joan Stassel – Anchorage Appointed: 1/23/2017

Jennifer Carlson – Fairbanks Appointed: 3/1/2017

Rebecca Bingham – Anchorage Appointed: 3/1/2017

Workers' Compensation Board, Alaska

Louis Weaver – Anchorage - Appointed: 1/23/2017

Brett Stubbs – Anchorage

Linda Murphy – Soldotna Appointed: 1/23/2017

Donna Phillips – Girdwood Appointed: 3/1/2014 Reappointed: 3/1/2017

Aaron Plikat – Anchorage Appointed: 3/1/2017

Lake Williams – Fairbanks Appointed: 5/14/2014 Reappointed: 3/1/2017

Saleutogi Letuligasenoa – Fairbanks Appointed: 1/23/2017

Rick Traini – Anchorage Appointed: 8/15/2011 Reappointed: 3/1/2017

Violent Crimes Compensation Board

Nora Barlow – Anchorage

Jeffrey Stubblefield – Eagle River

Marijuana Control Board

Nicholas Miller – Anchorage

Peter Mlynarik – Soldotna

IMPORTANT DATES

JOINT SESSION of the Legislature

State of the Judiciary Address by the Honorable Craig Stowers, Chief Justice (Feb. 8, 2017)

Annual Address by the Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator (Feb. 22, 2017)

Annual Address by the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senator (Feb. 24, 2017)

30th Legislative Day (Feb. 15, 2017) Deadline for Governor to submit budget Amendments

Lunch & Learn – Citizens United for Safety & Protection (Feb. 16, 2017) Capitol/Room 205

How Criminal Justice responses may negatively impact women impacted by Sex Trafficking”

Expert on Sex Trafficking and Sex Work author: Dr. Alexandra Lutnick, will be the speaker.

NEW DOCUMENTS

~ Reports noted in House/Senate Journals are on file with the House Clerk or Senate Secretary ~

Alaska Court System report:

Alaska Criminal Justice Commission

Recommendations for Improving Criminal Sentencing and Criminal Justice Practices - Jan. 30, 2017

Dept. of Health & Social Services reports:

Division of Juvenile Justice Privatization Feasibility Study - Jan. 26, 2017

Alaska Psychiatric Institute Privatization Feasibility Study - Jan. 26, 2017

Dept. of Revenue report:

Mental Health Trust Authority 2016 Annual Report

Dept. of Public Safety report:

Cigarette Fire Safety Program Effectiveness Report - Jan. 24, 2017

NEW BILLS OF INTEREST

<http://www.akleg.gov>

Budget Bills / FY18 *New

*HB 95 / SB 43 – FY17 Supplemental Budget

Health Care Issues

HB 89 / Tuck – Licensing Radiologic Technologists and Occupations relating to that field

HB 100 / Tuck – Post Traumatic Stress Injury Awareness Day

Election/Voter Issues

SCR 1 / Gardner – Uniform Rules: Abstain from Voting

Other Issues

HB 90 / Kito – Occupational Licensing Fees; Investigation Costs

HB 91 / Kito – APOC Registration Fees; Lobbyist Tax

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Check “committee calendar” the day of scheduled hearing. A bill can be rescheduled last minute.

Website-Daily Committee Hearings for Feb. 6 – Feb. 11, 2017

<http://akleg.gov/index.php?tab2=type%3DAll%26com%3D%26startDate%3D02%2F06%2F2017%26endDate%3D02%2F11%2F2017%26chamber%3D#tab2>

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 www.360north.org

Streaming Video:

<http://alaskalegislature.tv>

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

1-855-463-5009 or in Juneau 907-463-5009

BILLS ON THE MOVE

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

HB 7 / Display of Photos of Marked Ballot

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=HB7#>

Version 30-LS0111\A - Heard and moved CS from House State Affairs on 2/2.

HB 8 / Enforcement of Foreign Protective Orders

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=HB8#>

Version 30-LS0127\A - Heard and moved from House C&RA on 1/31. House Judiciary on 2/8.

HB 24 / List U-47700 As a Controlled Substance

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=HB24#tab6_4

Version 30-LS0260\A - Heard and moved from House Judiciary on 2/1. Referred to House Finance.

HB 31 / Sexual Assault Examination Kits

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=HB31#tab6_4

Version 30-LS0271\A - Heard and held in House State Affairs on 1/31 and 2/2.

HB 44 / Legislative Ethics: Voting and Conflicts

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=HB%20%2044>

Version 30-LS0208\O - CSSS heard and moved from House Judiciary on 2/3. House State Affairs 2/9.

HB 49 / Extend Board of Direct-Entry Midwives

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=HB%20%2049>

Version 30-LS0299\A - Heard and moved from House Labor & Commerce on 2/3. Awaiting next.

HB 78 / Indigenous Peoples Day <Referred to the Senate>

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=HB78#tab6_4

Version 30-LS0368\A - Heard and moved from House C&RA on 1/31. Passed House Floor 2/3.

HCR 1 / Amend Uniform Rules: Abstain from Voting

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=HCR1#tab6_4

Version 30-LS0209J - Heard and moved from House Judiciary on 2/3.

SENATE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

SB 5 / Political Contribution Limits/Prohibition

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail/30?Root=SB5#>

Version 30-LS0122\D - Heard and held in Senate State Affairs on 1/31. Next hearing on 2/9.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

MONDAY – Feb. 6

(SENATE) HSS Committee

1:30 PM Butrovich Room 205

Department Overviews – Testimony <Invitation Only>

– Alaska Psychiatric Institute Privatization Feasibility Report

– Juvenile Justice Facilities Privatization Report

– Alaska Pioneers Homes’ Pharmacy Services Privatization Feasibility Report

TUESDAY – Feb. 7

(SENATE) FINANCE Committee

9:00 AM S. Finance Room 532

SB 43 / Supplemental; Reappropriation Budget

(HOUSE) Commerce, Community & Economic Dev. Finance Subcommittee

11:30 AM Barnes Room 124 – Testimony <Invitation Only>

Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office

Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing

(HOUSE) HSS Committee

3:00 PM Capitol Room 106

Presentation: PCG Report Covering AK Psychiatric Institute Privatization – by Dept. of HSS

Note: Presentation will end prior to State of DHSS Finance Subcommittee Meeting scheduled for 3:30.

(HOUSE) STATE AFFAIRS Committee

3:00 PM Gruenberg Room 120

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

(HOUSE) Health & Social Services Finance Sub-committee

3:30 PM Capitol Room 106

Juvenile Justice – Testimony <Invitation Only for both>

Pioneer Home Pharmacy Analysis

WEDNESDAY – Feb. 8

JOINT SESSION of the Legislature

11:00 AM House Chambers

State of the Judiciary Address by the Honorable Craig Stowers, Chief Justice

(HOUSE) Miscellaneous Meeting
12:00 PM Butrovich Room 205

Lunch & Learn: 2-1-1: A Key Resource for Legislative Offices – by Sue Brogan, CVA/VP,
Income Health Impact, United Way of Anchorage - Sponsored by Rep. Spohnholz

By clicking on www.alaska211.org/search.aspx, you can search the 2-1-1 online database that includes more than 800 health and human services providers and 1,700 service locations.

(HOUSE) Judiciary Committee
1:30 PM Gruenberg Room 120
HB 8 / Enforcement of Foreign Protective Orders

(SENATE) HSS Committee
1:30 PM Butrovich Room 205 <Public testimony>
SB 20 / List U-47700 as a Controlled Substance

(SENATE) Resources Committee
3:30 PM Beltz Room 105 (TSBldg) <Public testimony>
SB 6 / Industrial Hemp Production related to Controlled Substances

THURSDAY – Feb. 9

(HOUSE) Public Safety Finance Subcommittee
8:00 AM Barnes Room 124
**Overviews: Dept. of Public Safety, Village Public Safety Officer Program
Alaska State Crime Lab**

(HOUSE) STATE AFFAIRS Committee
3:00 PM Gruenberg Room 120
**HB 91 / Kito – APOC Registration Fees; Lobbyist Tax
HB 44 / Legislative Ethics: Voting and Conflicts** <pending referral>

(HOUSE) HSS Finance Sub-committee
3:30 PM Capitol Room 106
Overviews: Public Assistance – Senior and Disabilities Services

(SENATE) STATE AFFAIRS Committee
3:30 PM Butrovich Room 205 <Public testimony>
SB 5 / Political Contribution Limits and Prohibition

FRIDAY – Feb. 10

(SENATE) HSS Committee
1:30 PM Butrovich Room 205 <Public testimony>
SB 32 / Prescriptions for Biological Products

SATURDAY – Feb. 11

(HOUSE) MISC. Meeting
12:00 PM Bethel LIO
Public Testimony regarding OCS – sponsored by Rep. Wilson
Juneau call-in number: (907) 586-9085

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>

2017 House Finance Sub-committee Members - <http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/HFINSubcmte.pdf>

Legislative Publications List - <http://akleg.gov/publications.php>

Legislative Finance Division - <http://www.legfin.akleg.gov>

View specifics for the Capital and Operating Budgets.

FY 2018 Governor's budget overview - <http://www.legfin.state.ak.us/Overview/Overview2018.pdf>

~ End of Report ~

Contact: Caren Robinson (carenr@gci.net)