

# **2017 CAPITOL CURRENTS**

*30<sup>th</sup> Alaska State Legislature ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Session*

**15<sup>th</sup> Edition – 4/24 to 4/30/17**

**~ Marching very slowly towards Day 121 and beyond ~**

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

Confirmation for over 100 appointees to state boards and commissions will have to wait. The Senate Majority led the effort to quickly adjourn the joint session called by the governor. This is the second confirmation try in two weeks.

In addition to board and commission members, up for confirmation – the attorney general, commissioners for the Departments of Public Safety, Natural Resources and Education.

**HB 23** will be shortly on its way to the governor for his signature. It has been in the works for years and provides benefits to surviving families of slain public safety officers and firefighters.

The Sexual Assault Awareness Month legislation (**SCR 2**) is sitting in the House Rules Committee. The Rules committee substitute designates April as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Awareness Month in both 2017 and 2018.

It further designates April 7, 2017 and April 6, 2018 as Go Blue Day. HCS SCR 2(RLS) is up again in Rules on Monday – May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **BUDGET ISSUES**

A conference committee was appointed for **SB 26** – the Permanent Fund (PF) restructuring legislation to resolve the differences in the House and Senate versions.

Basically it boils down to whether the PF Dividend is guaranteed at \$1,000 for three years or at \$1,250 for two years; the amount of funding for and the way the PFD will be calculated after that; and how big of a draw to take for government services.

Folks are still waiting on the Senate decide whether they will rescind their actions on **HB 57** – the state's operating budget for FY18. Once they decline, another conference committee will be established to iron out those differences. Deep cuts to early education, K-12 education, the University, VPSO's, domestic violence centers, and public health nursing are but a few of the services being considered for reductions.

Senate Finance will continue hearings on the oil and gas production tax legislation as defined in **HB 111**. So far, the Senate can agree that the cash subsidy program should be eliminated, but they are skeptical of the House's adjustments to a broader tax framework that would raise oil taxes at prices below \$100 a barrel.

The Senate Finance Committee held a meeting to discuss their fiscal solution touting that no new taxes will be necessary on individuals or on the oil industry. The backbone of the Senate Majority's solution is a spending limit that excludes capital budgets, dividends, and debt obligations.

Their plan also draws from a shrinking Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR) to fill any gap left over between revenues and expenditures.

## **EDUCATION ISSUES**

Statewide public testimony in the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee spoke in favor of **HB 115** with about a 3-2 margin. This is known as the Education Funding Act or “income tax” bill.

As currently written, it is a progressive tax that is projected to raise about \$680 million in school tax revenue. There is also a PFD deduction component to offset some of those taxes.

## **HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES**

Starting June 30<sup>th</sup>, the Alaska Safe Children's Act will require school districts to provide evidence-based, age-appropriate child sexual abuse and assault awareness training for grades K-12, as well as teen dating violence awareness and prevention training for grades 7-12.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES**

Both of the governor’s Real ID bills are in their respective Finance committees. **HB 74** and **SB 34** would bring the state into compliance with the federal Real ID Act by changing the requirements for a state ID and or driver’s license.

Beginning this summer, Alaskans will need compliant ID’s in order to fly domestically or to enter federal facilities.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

There is a new executive order just out of Washington, DC that re-opens areas of the outer-continental shelf in the Chukchi and Beaufort Seas to potential energy exploration and development.

## **GOVERNOR'S CORNER**

<http://gov.alaska.gov>

The governor announced the winner of the 2017 *Choose Respect: Alaskans Pulling Together for Each Other* poster contest. The contest is conducted in commemoration of Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October 2017) and Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Awareness Month (April 2017).

Liliana Rovira, a fifth grader at Government Hill Elementary School was selected as the winner. The 1<sup>st</sup> runner-up was David Fisher, 7<sup>th</sup> grade at the Z. John Williams Memorial School, 2<sup>nd</sup> runner-up was Joerenz Nobleza, 7<sup>th</sup> grade at Eben Hopson Middle School, and 3<sup>rd</sup> runner-up was Ambrosia Wood, 5<sup>th</sup> grade at Glennallen Elementary School.

## **NEW DOCUMENTS**

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

Child Support Services Division

Report on Tier 3 Countries Membership in Hague Child Support Convention of March 31, 2017

## **NEW BILLS OF INTEREST**

<http://www.akleg.gov>

Health Care Issues

**HB 240 / Guttenberg – Pharmacy Benefits Managers**

**SB 119 / Hughes – Health Care Cost: Disclosure; Insurers**

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## BILLS ON THE MOVE

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

### HOUSE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

#### [HB 1 / Election Registration and Voting](#)

Passed House on 4/28, but reconsideration given.

Allows qualified voters to register to vote within 30 days or on the day of an election to vote a questioned ballot; enhances online voter registration with electronic signatures to make the registration process quicker and easier; ensures the same early voting locations are available during every election; creates an option for permanent absentee voting for individuals that plan to vote by mail every year; and clarifies terminology for early voting to remove confusion between early voting and absentee in-person voting.

#### [HB 25 / Insurance Coverage for Contraceptives](#)

Scheduled but not heard in House Finance 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 4/25.

Companion is SB 34. 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, and other federally issued identification documents will be necessary to fly to the lower-48 or gain access to a federal building.

#### [HB 159 / Opioids; Prescriptions; Database; Licenses](#)

Heard and held in 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, but cancelled.

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 5/1.**

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.

**HCS SCR 2(RLS) Sexual Assault and Child Abuse Awareness Month-Go Blue Day**

**Scheduled House Rules on 5/1.**

Proclaims April 2017 and April 2018 as Sexual Assault Awareness Month and Child Abuse Awareness Month. Designates April 7, 2017 and April 6, 2018 as Go Blue Day in observance of child abuse prevention.

**SENATE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION**

**HB 8 Enforcement of Foreign Protective Orders**

<Passed House on 3/6>

**Referred to Senate Rules on 4/24.**

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.

**SB 103 / Education Grants; Scholarship; Innovative Education Fund** <Passed Senate on 4/26>

**Transmitted to the House.**

The current Alaska Performance Scholarships and the Alaska Education Grants will be phased out over the next four years. The Higher Education Fund will be renamed to The Alaska Innovation Education Grant Fund. The purpose is to provide school districts with grants to fulfill academically innovative ways of delivering education.

**COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

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

**~ End of Report ~**

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