

Legislative Newsletter

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Six weeks into the session and where are we?

The Education committees have been active, not too many other bills have come in front of the committees. The budget subcommittees will be finished by mid-March, and then the conversation moves to the budget. It continues to look like a trade-off between an increased BSA or an increased PFD.

What to know:

The House and Senate Education Committee stayed focused on hearing testimony. The House Education committee spent time challenging the Alaska Administrators on [February 27th](#). They questioned the use of COVID funds to help teachers, and why the results of testing showed a decline in student competency. On [March 1st](#), the House also heard testimony on private and charter schools. The mood of the Senate Education committee toward the Administrators was more thoughtful. In a [meeting on February 27th](#) in the afternoon, Sen. Stevens asked them to help the Senate better explain to the other members of the legislature why increased funding was important and how to provide some measure of accountability.

The Senate Education committee held a hearing on [SB 43](#) regarding Health and Personal Safety Education. Sen. Tobin said they received a large “124 page document” from Alaska Right to Life opposing this bill. She mentioned Alaska Statute 14.03.016 which recognizes the authority of the parent to withdraw their student from any teaching involving human reproduction or sexual matters, so SB 43 should not be a threat to parental rights. However, some of the people testifying were not convinced.

Therese Lewandowski a LWV member and a Kenai Peninsula Votes member, wrote the following letter in support of legislation regarding Ballot Curing:

“Ballot Curing – What’s that?”

The mayoral election turnout on February 14 was, well, less than the amount you may have spent on Valentine’s Day flowers and chocolate. Borough-wide voter turnout was only 13.10%. We hope to see more of you in October when the Borough and City elections will be in full swing.

In the meantime, are you paying attention to what your representatives in Juneau are up to? Two bills regarding voting are especially important. Which brings me to ballot curing.”

Ballot curing letter, continued...

“In the 2022 state election too many mail-in absentee ballots were rejected due to some error by the voter such as not signing or neglecting to get their signature witnessed. These voters were not able to correct their ballot as our state election system does not allow for that. According to thefulcrum.us there are 24 states that have some form of ballot curing for their elections. Ballot curing is the process where the elections office would notify the voter of an error and allow for them to correct the error so their vote would be counted. Luckily there are two bills advancing in the legislative session that would create ballot curing.

Both [Senate Bill 19](#) and [House Bill 37](#) include a new provision that would allow a voter to be informed and to correct mistakes made on their mailed-in ballot if the elections office receives the correction within 14 days after the election. They will also provide for a system to check voters' signatures, provide a stamped return envelope for mail-in ballots and create stricter penalties for election crimes.

SB 19 and HB 37 are currently stuck in committee. Call or email your legislator and ask that these bills be put forward. You can find your legislator contact information at akleg.gov.

Therese Lewandowski for Kenai Peninsula Votes”

These aren't the only ballot issues we're following as [SB 1](#) is up for hearing this week as well. We are not supporting SB 1, but want to track it closely to see what Sen. Shower is proposing. See below.

National Issues: IMPACT ON ISSUES

Have you wondered what the positions of the League of Women Voters US are? There are 58 positions on a variety of issues in civic discussion. Have you ever wondered why the League US holds a particular position, or how these positions came about?

The answers can be found in a bi-yearly LWVUS publication *Impact on Issues*. The 165-page 2022-2024 edition is now available online as downloadable pdf at:

https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf

A print copy can also be ordered at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) in the near future. Currently, the only one currently listed in Amazon is the 2020-2022 edition, which is now out of date.

You may not want to read this document cover-to-cover, but please take a look so that you know what it does, and you can use it in the future as a reference source for our organization.

Please remember our state League positions are available on our website at:

<https://www.lwvalaska.org/positions-bylaws/>

League advocacy stems from League studies and carefully crafted positions.

ERA NEWS: Don't forget to contact our Senators [Sen. Murkowski](#), and [Sen. Sullivan](#) and [Rep. Mary Peltola](#) to urge their support of the Equal Rights Amendment.

Alaska Legislative Updates

Senate:

New Legislation: No new or updated legislation that we are tracking.

House:

Updated Legislation: Rep. Galvin has signed on as co-sponsor of HB 37 ELECTIONS, VOTING, BALLOTS.

Governor's Office:

Former special education teacher Susan McKenzie was appointed new commissioner of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development.

To see the bills we are tracking and where they are in the process, check the details on [the VotingRightsAlaska.org Legislation page](https://www.votingrightsalaska.org/legislation).

Judicial System:

Consider writing letters on [SB31](#) Selection of Judges and [HB34](#) Confirmation/Qualifications of Judges. These two pieces of legislation should not move forward as they will seek to change the Alaska Constitution to put the selection of judges into the a political arena. See the quote from retiring Chief Justice Daniel Winfree on [VotingRightsAlaska.org](https://www.votingrightsalaska.org).

Alaska Legislative Meetings Scheduled for week of March 6th

It seems the letter had some effect on the legislators as [SB19](#) is now on the schedule. And, [SB1](#) Ballot Voting Security is also scheduled. Your voices matter! Please keep an eye on these meetings.

From the BTMF system on the **bills we are tracking** for the upcoming week:

The bill [HB 65: Increase Base Student Allocation](#) has been scheduled for a meeting
House Education ~ Mar 6 2023 8:00am

To see the bill go to [HB 65](#)

if your browser does not support html links cut and paste the following URL Address

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail33?Root=HB++65>

****PUBLIC TESTIMONY**** The bill [SB 29: Civics Education; Est Ak Cvcs Ed Comm](#) has been scheduled for a meeting

Senate Education ~ Mar 6 2023 3:30pm

To see the bill go to [SB 29](#)

if your browser does not support html links cut and paste the following URL Address

<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail33?Root=SB++29>

The bill **[SB 1: Elections: Ballot, Voting, Security](#)** has been scheduled for a meeting
Senate State Affairs ~ Mar 7 2023 3:30pm
To see the bill go to [SB 1](#)
if your browser does not support html links cut and paste the following URL Address
<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail33?Root=SB+++1>

The bill **[SB 19: Elections; Ballots](#)** has been scheduled for a meeting
Senate State Affairs ~ Mar 7 2023 3:30pm
To see the bill go to [SB 19](#)
if your browser does not support html links cut and paste the following URL Address
<http://www.akleg.gov/basis/Bill/Detail33?Root=SB++19>

Legislative Calendar and Events

In case you missed it:

- On Feb. 22nd - **US Senator Lisa Murkowski** gives her [annual address](#) to the legislature.
- Past events: On Feb. 7th - **US Senator Dan Sullivan's** gave his [annual address](#).
- And on Feb. 17th - **US Rep. Mary Peltola's** gave her first [annual address](#).
- March is **Women's History month**, with March 8th being International Women's Day
- April 16th - 90th day of the session
- May 17th - 121st day of the session

Wrap Up

The League always needs volunteers! Writing letters, talking to your legislators, and helping out by giving us your feedback - it doesn't have to be a total commitment. We would LOVE to hear from you. Please encourage others to take action by sharing this Legislative Newsletter, Action Alerts, and Calendar Events. Contact us at lwvak@lwvalaska.org, and/or work to get the word out with your local leagues.

Expanding the League's impact helps us to ***Empower Voters and Defend Democracy*** as a community! We'll keep these links accessible here for you.

- Alaska State Legislature website, akleg.gov
- Alaska State's Gavel to Gavel public affairs TV network, www.ktoo.org/gavel/

League of Women Voters of Alaska

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Anchorage, AK 99510-1345

Email us at lwvak@lwvalaska.org
www.lwvalaska.org

BILL	SHORT TITLE	SPONSOR(s)	COMMITTEE REFERRAL(S)
SB 1	ELECTIONS: BALLOT, VOTING, SECURITY	SEN. SHOWER	State Affairs, Judiciary, Finance
SB 2	REPEAL BALLOT MEASURE 2 VOTING CHGS	SEN. SHOWER	State Affairs, Judiciary, Finance
SB 5	VOTER REGISTRATION	SEN. SHOWER	State Affairs, Judiciary
SB 6	VOTING MACHINES AND VOTE TALLY SYSTEMS	SEN. SHOWER	State Affairs, Judiciary
SB 7	ELECTION INTERFERENCE, FRAUD, MISCONDUCT	SEN. SHOWER	State Affairs, Judiciary

BILL	SHORT TITLE	SPONSOR(s)	COMMITTEE REFERRAL(S)
SB 17	CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS	SEN. KAWASAKI	State Affairs, Judiciary
SB 19	ELECTIONS; BALLOTS	SEN. KAWASAKI	State Affairs, Finance
SB 29	CIVICS EDUCATION; EST AK CIVICS ED COMM	SEN. STEVENS	Education, Finance
SB 31	SELECTION AND REVIEW OF JUDGES	SEN. SHOWER	State Affairs, Judiciary
SB 52	INCREASE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION	SENATE EDUCATION	Education, Finance
SB 61	US PRESIDENT ELECT. POPULAR VOTE COMPACT	SENs. WIELECHOWSKI & GRAY-JACKSON	Judiciary, State Affairs

BILL	SHORT TITLE	SPONSOR(s)	COMMITTEE REFERRAL(S)
HB 1	REPEAL BALLOT MEASURE 2 VOTING CHGS	REP RAUSCHER	State Affairs, Judiciary
HB 4	ELECTIONS: REPEAL BALLOT MEASURE 2	REP VANCE	State Affairs, Judiciary
HB 24	GOV APPOINT BRD OF GOV. OF AK BAR	REP RAUSCHER	State Affairs, Judiciary
HB 34	CONFIRMATION/QUALIFICATIONS OF JUDGES	REP RAUSCHER	State Affairs, Judiciary
HB 36	APOC; REFERENDA/RECALL; CONTRIBUTIONS	REP SCHRAGE	State Affairs, Judiciary
HB 37	ELECTIONS, VOTING, BALLOTS	REP SCHRAGE	State Affairs, Judiciary
HB 65	INCREASE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION	REP ORTIZ	Education,