

Election Security, the BSA, and on to the Budget...

It has been a busy month so far at the State Capitol. It has never been more important than it is today, to focus on our Election processes.

What to know: Meeting highlights week of March 6th and 13th

Education related:

On March 6th, the [House Education Committee](#) discussed the HB65 Base Student Allocation (BSA). Second hearing. Rep. Ortiz presented the impacts of inflation on our educational system. There were good questions raised on whether the legislators need to look at the way education is funded as the formula is complicated. On March 13th [House Education Committee](#) discussed HB 106 Teacher Recruitment - Lump Sum Payment. This had a fiscal note of \$51 million. Also at that meeting was an introduction to HB 105 Sex/Reproduction Education.

On March 14th, [Senate Finance heard SB 29](#) regarding Civics Education. Sen. Stevens presented this bill. He laid out the reasoning for the bill. The costs for this bill were outlined by Dept. of Education, and were almost a half a million dollars. Sen. Stevens requested the Dept. of Education rethink the fiscal note as he believed it was way more than warranted.

Ballots & Voting:

On March 7th, the [Senate State Affairs](#) committee held a hearing on both SB1 (Voting Security) and SB19 (Elections, Ballots). SB19 was introduced by its sponsor - Sen. Kawasaki. This bill would have automatic renewal for absentee voting, a ballot tracking system, pre-paid return postage and a requirement for people to have the ability to correct a ballot if rejected. Former Rep. Chris Tuck also testified in support of this bill.

Sen. Shower presented his election bill SB1. While he testified that he wanted many of the same things as SB19, there was testimony which pointed out to wanting four things: to get rid of Ranked choice voting, get rid of the ERIC process, get rid of Dominion voting machines, and limit the time it takes count votes. They also want "outside review" of all election results - unclear as to who they would want. (See more of the testimony by the new Director of Elections – information below.)

US Presidential Elections:

On March 13th, the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) discussed the US Presidential Election Popular Vote Compact. Sen. Wielechowski presented the bill. His POV was that this bill provides that every single voter in the US gets a say in the Presidential Election. All of the focus of the campaigns in recent history have focused on only certain states and the rest of the country is ignored. There was much testimony both for and against, and a number of people testified from out of state

Carol Beecher on ERIC – Senate State Affairs Committee -March 9 - Submitted by Sue Sherif

The new Division of Elections Director Carole Beecher made state (ADN) and national news (Washington Post) when she testified to Senate State Affairs that she was considering withdrawing Alaska from ERIC, the nonprofit [Electronic Registration Information Center](#), established to “improve the accuracy of America’s voter rolls and increase access to registration” for all voters. An important part of its work is sharing information about voters who are registered to vote in more than one state, so that states can maintain more accurate voter rolls. Founded in 2012 and run and managed by the member states, 34 states and DC participated until recently when a few states have pulled out in moves that are seen as political statements. Beecher agreed that ERIC provided a service but cited economic reasons for considering withdrawal. Because membership dues are based on population, Alaska is in the lowest tier of dues.

A Juneau League member who was formerly on a statewide elections policy board, wrote this in response: “Regarding the concern about the cost of membership at \$17,000 a year, I’d say that is a bargain. It is much less than the cost of an employee(s) that would be needed to do the type of follow-up work with voter registrations. ERIC has very sophisticated, secure software to share voter roll data between states and provide those member states with up-to-date information. I [met] David Becker of ERIC when I served on [the] election policy committee and he was a knowledgeable, ethical person with a passion for fair and accurate elections.” Becker, a leader and former board member of ERIC, has been accused of being an operative of George Soros. This Juneau member, who has years of experience in elections, writes further, “I would encourage the League and the Alaska Association of Municipal Clerks to support the State of Alaska maintaining its productive membership in ERIC, and encourage all of the other non-member states to join.”

National Issues Become Local Issues and Local Issues Become National...

From the LWV.ORG website:

“Pro-voter reforms have transformed our democracy and led to unprecedented voter turnout in the 2020 Election. But they are too often threatened by politicians and special interests who prioritize their own needs over an equal and fair democracy. When it comes to opposing these anti-voter efforts, the League is on the frontlines, advocating in state houses and in Congress, fighting anti-voter laws in court, and organizing activists to make their voices heard.”

Don't be fooled, keep asking questions, and look at an issue from all sides and all research. Often, using the guise of election “security”, it may result in just the opposite.

As you watch and listen to our legislators, and to testimony in the Alaskan House and Senate, try to assess whether their actions and words are truly for the ‘good of the State’ or if they are indicative of a special interest. The less secure and non-partisan the election system is, for instance, the more open it is to manipulation from outside interests.

DID YOU KNOW? Arctic Village Council v. Fenumiai

LWV of Alaska and its co-plaintiffs filed a lawsuit in Alaska state court, asserting that the lack of a notice and cure process for errors on absentee ballots violated the Alaska Constitution's guarantees of the right to vote and procedural due process. The State has filed for a dismissal of the case, but the case is ongoing. To read more on this see: [Arctic Village Council v. Fenumiai](#).

Alaska Legislative Updates

Senate:

Updated Legislation: No new or updated legislation that we are tracking. [SB52](#) - Increase Base Student Allocation moved to Senate Finance Committee.

House:

Updated Legislation: The following Reps. have become co-sponsors of HB65: Reps. Hannan, Galvin and Mina.

We have added [HB 82 Selection and Review](#) of Judges to our watchlist.

Governor's Office:

The Governor submitted two new bills of interest regarding education (referenced above): HB105, Teacher Recruitment - Lump Sum Payment, and HB106, Sex/Reproduction Education with companion bills in the Senate: SB96, and SB97.

Judicial System:

We have added HB 82 to our watchlist of legislation (see above).

Alaska Legislative Meetings Scheduled for week of March 20th

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

The bill [HB 61: Limitations On Firearms Restrictions](#) has been scheduled for a meeting
House Community & Regional Affairs ~ Mar 21 2023 8:00am
To see the bill go to [HB 61](#)

The bill [HB 65: Increase Base Student Allocation](#) has been scheduled for a meeting
House Education ~ Mar 22 2023 8:00am
To see the bill go to [HB 65](#) - this is invited testimony only. See below for Public Testimony:

PUBLIC TESTIMONY on **HB 65**, the bill to increase the Base Student Allocation. **SPECIAL DAY/TIME:**
Tuesday 3/21, beginning at 5:15 PM.

Feel free to email public comments to committee members or call to testify:

Co-Chair Rep. Justin Ruffridge - Rep.Justin.Ruffridge@akleg.gov

Co-Chair Rep. Jamie Allard - Rep.Jamie.Allard@akleg.gov

Rep. Mike Prax - Rep.Mike.Prax@akleg.gov

Rep. CJ McCormick - Rep.CJ.McCormick@akleg.gov

Rep. Thomas McKay - Rep.Thomas.McKay@akleg.gov

Rep. Rebecca Himschoot - Rep.Rebecca.Himschoot@akleg.gov

Rep. Andi Story - Rep.Andi.Story@akleg.gov

The bill [SB 63: Limitations On Firearms Restrictions](#) has been scheduled for a meeting
Senate Community & Regional Affairs ~ Mar 21 2023 1:30pm
To see the bill go to [SB 63](#)

The bill [SB 97: Teacher Recruitment; Lump Sum Payment](#) has been scheduled for a meeting
Senate Education ~ Mar 24 2023 3:30pm
To see the bill go to [SB 97](#)

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

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 (By law (AS 24.05.150))
- May 17th - 121st day of the session (Per the Alaska Constitution)

It is anticipated that the legislature is going to go past the 90th day of the session and go until May 17th this year.

Wrap Up

How are we doing?

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 lwwak@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 lwwak@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,
HB 82	SELECTION AND REVIEW OF JUDGES	REP RAUSCHER	Judiciary, Finance
HB 106	TEACHER RECRUITMENT-LUMP SUM	At the request of the GOVERNOR	Education, Judiciary, Finance
HB 105	SEX/REPRODUCTION EDUCATION; SCHOOLS	At the request of the GOVERNOR	Education, Judiciary, Finance