

The 2025 Legislative Session begins!

Will a new bi-partisan Alaska Legislature be able to make something happen?

We'll be watching all of the activities unfold this session, highlighting topics, and providing Action Alerts on our priorities so you can help make our voice heard..

The LWV-AK priorities for 2023/24

- Election-related bills
- Education-related and Funding
- Campaign Finance reform, and
- Civics Education

Highlights - Short on time? Read this first!

House moves fast on Education - What IS the BSA?

Listen to the [House Education Committee](#) who heard a presentation by Alexi Painter, Legislative Finance Director. He went through the make-up of the BSA. Everyone wants an increase, but what impact would that have across the districts? Is there a better way? How is it determined, when was it last updated?

No time to listen? Download the [Legislative powerpoint](#) and a report from the [Institute of Social and Economic Research](#) who's final summary says, "We could spend a lot more and still not produce desired outcomes." And "Reducing spending without changing how dollars are spent will likely harm outcomes." Read it through.

Then read the proposed [HB69](#). More meetings starting 8:00 am Monday, with **Public Testimony Wednesday evening, 5:00 pm on [HB69](#)**. Read more [Week 1 highlights](#) below.

[Senate Education Committee](#) will also focus on Education this week. See meetings schedule below.

****And - they are moving fast on Elections reform****

There was a special joint session of the House and Senate Affairs meeting. Carol Beecher presented. **Highly recommend that you listen to this one to hear the questions asked**. Presentation [here](#).

What's New

State House: There is a new 21 member majority in the House made up of 14 Democrats, five independents, and two Republicans (Rep. Kopp (R-Anchorage) and Rep. Stutes (R-Kodiak)). This majority elected Rep. Bryce Edgmon (I-Dillingham) as Speaker. The new coalition Majority Leader is Rep. Charles Kopp. Rep. Kopp is a former Alaska State House member. The minority is led by Rep. Mia Costello (R-Anchorage). Rep. Costello is a former Alaska State Senator and former Representative.

State Senate: There is a new bi-partisan majority coalition in the State Senate with 14 members this year (down from 17 last session). It consists of five Republicans and nine Democrats led by Senate President Sen. Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak) and Sen. Cathy Giessel (R-Anchorage) as Majority Leader. There are six Republicans in the State Senate minority led by Sen. Mike Shower, (R-Wasilla).

Legislation Tracking

Bills released first week of session

As of the end of the first week, there are 24 Education-related bills, and eleven (11) Election related-bills. We'll be watching these as they move forward. There is one Campaign Finance bill ([HB16](#)), and one regarding guns in schools (SB03).

	EDUCATION/CAMPAIGN FINANCE BILLS	
HOUSE		
<u>HB16</u>	Campaign finance, contribution limits	Rep Schrage
<u>HB09</u>	Schools: Funding; Disability services	Rep Carrick
<u>HB12</u>	Free breakfast & lunch in public schools	Rep Dibert
<u>HB28</u>	Teacher/state employee student loan prgrm	Rep Story
<u>HB29</u>	School/university employee health insur	Rep Vance
<u>HB38</u>	Teachers & Supplemental Employee Benefits	Rep Saddler
<u>HB39</u>	Education for deaf & hard of hearing	Rep Allard
<u>HB40</u>	Designate sex for school sponsored sports	Rep Allard
<u>HB42</u>	School grants and bond debt reimbursement	Rep Allard

HB57	Communication devices in public schools	Rep Fields
HB69	Education Funding: Increase BSA	Rep Himschoot
HJR05	Secure Rural Schools Program	Rep Bynum
SENATE		
SB05	School/university employee health insur	Sen Hughes
SB06	Asian american/pacific islander program	Sen Gray-Jackson
SB08	Education for deaf & hearing impaired	Sen Gray-Jackson
SB13	Summer ebt benefits for children	Sen Dunbar
SB18	Communication devices in public schools	Sen Wielechowski
SB20	CPR curriculum	Sen Gray-Jackson
SB22	Financial literacy program in schools	Sen Wielechowski
SB23	Civics education	Sen Stevens
SB27	Teachers & pub employee retirement plans	Sen Kiehl
SB41	Public schools: mental health education	Sen Gray-Jackson
SB46	Education funding	Sen Claman
SB03	Authorize handguns school employee/volunt	Sen Hughes

	ELECTION BILLS	
HOUSE		
HB04	Presidential write-in votes	Rep Saddler
HB19	Elections: reverse ballot measure 2	Rep Rauscher
HB21	Voter preregistration for minors	Rep Story
HB43	Elections, voting, ballots	Rep Schrage
HB63	School & Election boards; voting; elections	House rules by req. of the Governor
SENATE		
SB02	AI, deepfakes, cybersecurity, data xfers	Sen Hughes
SB25	Judicial retention election information	Sen Myers
SB33	Synthetic media: liability; elections	Sen Cronk
SB52	Absentee Ballots	Sen Hughes
SB64	Elections	Senate Rules
SB70	School & Election Bds; Voting; Elections	Senate rules by req. of the Governor

If you want to keep up with the full list of ALL bills introduced, see [List of bills January 2025](#).

Governor's Budget

In December, Governor Dunleavy released his budget for the first session of the 34th Legislature. He is recommending a \$3,892 PFD. This budget brings with it an over \$1.7 billion deficit (more by some accounts), leaving it up to the Legislature to decide how and what to fund. He suggested no revenue to offset the costs.

The Governor has outlined his budget this way. This does not provide for an increase in the BSA, instead providing funding in some other ways.

Education

- Total investment in K-12 Education \$1.5 billion
- \$1.1 billion in K-12 Foundation Formula (encompasses "BSA") funding and \$67.8 million for Pupil Transportation
- \$2.75 million in continued support for Career and Technical Education, Teacher Apprenticeships, and Teacher Recruitment and Retention Initiatives
- \$300,000 for Electrician and Plumber career pathway development for students
- \$5 million for the University of Alaska Fairbanks toward achieving R1 Status

<https://gov.alaska.gov/fy26-governors-proposed-budget/>

What to Know: Week 1 - Recap of Meetings, etc.

Follow the Committee links and you'll find the list of members, meeting dates and times, Legislator emails, voting records, etc. Changes to times and locations will be noted.

House Education Committee - (Meets MWF 8:00 am Davis 106)

A presentation was held on Education Funding by the Director of Legislative Affairs describing the make-up of the BSA (base student allocation).

House State Affairs Committee - (Meets T TH SA 3:15 pm Gruenberg 120)

Special joint with Senate State Affairs Committee held in Davis 106. Presentation by Carol Beecher, Director of Elections. **Highly recommend that you listen to this one.** Director Beecher discussed

Senate Education Committee - (Meets MWF 3:30 pm Beltz 105.)

No meeting this week.

Senate State Affairs - (Meets T TH 3:30 pm Beltz 105.)

See joint meeting with House State Affairs above.

Upcoming Meetings - Week of January 27th

Meetings covering our watchlist bills/areas are listed below.

House Education Committee - (Meets MWF 8:00 am Davis 106)

Continued information on Financing and the BSA. Note time/location change:

HB69: Education Funding Increase BSA

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVES HIMSCHOOT, Dibert, Josephson

HEARING: Jan 27 Monday 8:00 AM (H)EDUCATION at DAVIS 106 -- Testimony
<Invitation Only> -- TELECONFERENCED

HEARING: Jan 29 Wednesday 8:00 AM (H)EDUCATION at DAVIS 106
TELECONFERENCED

HEARING: Jan 29 Wednesday 5:00 PM (H)EDUCATION at DAVIS 106 -- Please
Note Time Change -- TELECONFERENCED – **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Senate Education Committee - (Meets MWF 3:30 pm Beltz 105.)

Hearings all week on Education funding with presentations from various school districts across the state (Kenai (M), Fairbanks and Anchorage (W), and **PUBLIC TESTIMONY** (F). All in Beltz 105 at 3:30 pm.

Legislative Calendar and Events

- February 17, 2025 - President's Day
- March 31, 2025 - Seward's Day
- April 20, 2025 - 90th day of the session (By law (AS 24.05.150))
- May 21, 2025 - 121st day of the session (Per the Alaska Constitution)

Wrap Up/Links

How are we doing?

Let us know! Reach us at alaskalwv@alaskalwv.org, and/or work to get the word out with your local leagues! Board meetings every third Monday at 5:45 pm.

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.

Quick links:

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

You can see your LWV Alaska Board members and Officers and their contact information on the AlaskaLWV.org/Board/ site.

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