

## February – Two steps forward, then back...

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Before we jump into our statewide updates, important information at the Federal level:

### Federal Legislation

The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act, is coming up for a vote in the House of Representatives soon. It requires voters to physically show proof of citizenship when registering or voting. The SAVE Act would change the way all citizens register to vote **upon enactment**. It would upend online voter registration, make impossible to mail in a registration application, and eliminate voter registration drives. There are many more ways it tries to make voting more difficult. It also opens the way for states to implement even more restrictive voter requirements.

Here are some links to help you research more about the bill: [SAVE Act Would Undermine Voter Registration for All Americans](#); [How the SAVE Act may affect registering to vote for women, other groups](#); [Tell your members of Congress to oppose the SAVE Act](#) and then [read the bill](#) for yourself.

***If you agree with us and many others*** that this bill should ***not*** become law, please go to the [LWVUS website](#): [Tell your members of Congress to oppose the SAVE Act](#). This site makes it quick and easy for you to submit your opposition to this bill.

### Also from the LWVUS - what is the League saying about the actions of the President and others?

There have been two recent Press Releases from LWVUS on what is happening with the Congress and the President: [LWV Condemns Trump Administration's Weaponization of Government Against Americans](#); and [The League of Women Voters of the US Urges Congress to Act in New Letter](#). The US League is speaking up! Add your voice to let our Senators and Representative know how you feel.

Email Sen. Sullivan at: <https://www.sullivan.senate.gov/contact/email>

Email Sen. Murkowski at: <https://www.murkowski.senate.gov/contact/email>

Email Rep. Begich at: <https://begich.house.gov/contact/email-me>

## On Speaking Up: Celina Stewart, CEO of LWV

Want to understand the impact of the President's banning of "DEI"? Read the set of blogs by Celina Stewart, CEO: [What is DEI? Beyond the Buzzwords](#) and [How DEI Impacts Us — And Democracy](#).

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## And, a heads-up for Alaska: Guess what??? Open Primaries and Ranked Choice Voting will likely be coming up for a vote — again.

It seems this zombie just won't die! The Division of Elections has just approved signature gatherings for another ballot initiative to **repeal** Open Primaries and Ranked Choice Voting. Given the dysfunction in the Federal Congress these days, we have been lucky to have open primaries and ranked choice voting to balance the hugely partisan gridlock in other parts of the US. But, it remains critical that we continue to educate and inform Alaskans of their benefit. Please reinforce how critical this is to a better functioning legislature every chance you get!

## Statehood for Washington DC! At the Alaska Legislature?

The League of Women Voters supports Washington DC's request to become the 51st state. Sen. Tobin, along with Sen. Dunbar and Sen. Gray-Jackson have introduced SJR6 - a Senate Joint Resolution to support DC Statehood. To quote from the Resolution:

"Whereas, residents of the District of Columbia, despite paying federal taxes, serving in the military, and sharing all other responsibilities of citizenship of the United States, were no longer considered citizens of a state or entitled to the rights, guaranties, and immunities of the Constitution of the United States, including the right to appoint the number of electors of President and Vice President of the United States...the right to elect two senators and at least one representative to Congress, and the right to self-govern...[\[read more\]](#)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature supports admitting Washington, D.C., into the Union as a state of the United States of America..."

Please help us support the LWVDC and all the people in Washington DC. It is a shame that an integral part of our country does not have the same rights as all

other Americans. There is a hearing on SJR6 on February 25th at 3:30 pm. Email your support to [senate.State.Affairs@akleg.gov](mailto:senate.State.Affairs@akleg.gov) now!

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## Education funding - will it be soon enough to help schools this year? - Still asking...

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*Uncertainty regarding whether the rapid changes (and firings) at the federal level could affect overall state funding is fueling budgetary concerns.*

### House of Representatives:

**Last week** - more testimony: On February 17th, the Institute of Social and Economic Research presented to the Senate Education Committee. The presentation described how Alaska has fallen to 15% below the national average in spending if you adjust for the cost of living. And much more.

**This week** - more drama: HB69 has about a billion dollar impact over three years. Even if the current bill passes the House and Senate in its current form, it is most likely going to be vetoed by the Governor as it is. There aren't votes to override his veto.

Rep. Dibert, in the majority, has been hospitalized and away for some time. The House has a very slim 21 member majority, and, with one member absent, **they don't have enough votes to pass this bill over to the Senate.**

On Wednesday, the full House moved the HB69 out of the Education committee over to the House Finance over the objections of the minority. On Thursday, the House Finance committee moved the bill out of committee to the Rules committee. This was an unexpected move by Rep. Stapp to force a vote in the full House with no hearings at all. On Friday, there was a motion by the minority to move the bill out of the Rules committee for a full vote of the House. At that point, the House majority objected and that vote failed along party lines. So what just happened??

There are two big issues at play: first, it is unclear how we would possibly pay for this and there still hasn't been any solutions presented for revenue or cuts; the second issue is that there hasn't been any policy related changes incorporated into the bill in order to gain support of the minority and the Governor. An amendment proposed in the House Education committee earlier was rejected.

So – until Rep. Dibert is able to return, this bill is unlikely to pass the House to move to the Senate. It also means that a vote might not be in time to meet the mid-March deadline for the school districts to finalize their budgets.

Senate:

There is a meeting on Monday, February 24th on **SB 82** –the Governor’s Education bill. With legislation stalled in House, this is an extremely important meeting. This bill includes the Governor’s priorities of increasing establishment and funding for Charter schools, and raising funding for homeschool/correspondence students. It also raises statutory funding levels for transportation costs, establishes a three-year pilot program offering lump-sum recruitment and retention payments to full-time teachers, and includes additional changes to the BSA formula to increase funding in selected areas. This is a complicated bill, and has been the focus of much of the closed door discussions being held on the Education issues.

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## Legislation Tracking

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*New bills of interest*

Bills of interest introduced from 2/7/2025 to 2/21/2025. See the [full list of bills](#) on [akleg.org](#).

	EDUCATION/CAMPAIGN FINANCE BILLS	
HOUSE		
<a href="#">HB 87</a>	Women’s History Month	Rep. Hall
<a href="#">HB 90</a>	Financial Literacy Program in Schools	Rep. Eischied
<a href="#">HB 98</a>	Maximum Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Rep. Fields
<a href="#">HB 105</a>	Public schools: Mental Health Education	Rep. Galvin
SENATE		
<a href="#">SB 93</a>	Early Education Programs	Sen. Tobin

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## Upcoming Meetings – Week of February 24th

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Meetings covering our watchlist bills/areas are listed below.

**\*How to testify:** If you can't attend in person, please call your Legislative Information Office (<http://akleg.gov/lios.php>), and also review the testimony instructions at: [https://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/AKLEG\\_Testimony\\_Instructions.pdf](https://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/AKLEG_Testimony_Instructions.pdf). If you need further information contact the Juneau Legislative Information office at 907-465-4648.

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

Send written testimony to: [House.Education@akleg.gov](mailto:House.Education@akleg.gov)

**Monday, February 24th**

HB 28: Teacher/state Employee Student Loan Program - <Invitation Only>

HB 12: Free Breakfast & Lunch in Public Schools — <Invitation Only>

HB 57: Communication Devices in Public Schools — <Invitation Only>

**Wednesday, February 26th**

The Institute of Social and Economic Research is presenting to the House Education Committee (they already presented to the Senate on Feb. 17th).

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

Send written testimony to: [House.State.Affairs@akleg.gov](mailto:House.State.Affairs@akleg.gov)

**Tuesday, Feb.25th**

HB87: Women's History Month\* — **PUBLIC TESTIMONY** <Time Limit may be set>

**Thursday, Feb.27th**

HB87: Women's History Month

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

Send written testimony to: [Senate.Education@akleg.gov](mailto:Senate.Education@akleg.gov)

**Monday, February 24th**

SB 82 Education: Schools; grants; funding; debt

(unclear if this will be heard later in the week either Wednesday or Friday)

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

Send written testimony to: [Senate.State.Affairs@akleg.gov](mailto:Senate.State.Affairs@akleg.gov)

**Tuesday, Feb. 25th**

**SB 43**: Women's History Month\* — **PUBLIC TESTIMONY** <Time Limit may be set>

**SB 40**: Hispanic History Month\* — Invited & Public Testimony

**SJR6**: Washington DC Statehood — Invited & Public Testimony

(unclear if any of these will be heard later in the week)

\* Note: due to President Trump's Executive Order there is no longer Federal recognition to recognize any specific group

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## **Legislative Calendar and Events**

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- 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)

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## **Wrap Up/Links**

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### ***How are we doing?***

Let us know! Reach us at [alaskalwv@alaskalwv.org](mailto: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](http://akleg.gov)
- Alaska State's Gavel to Gavel public affairs TV network, [www.ktoo.org/gavel/](http://www.ktoo.org/gavel/)

You can see your LWV Alaska Board members and Officers and their contact information on the [AlaskaLWV.org/Board/](https://AlaskaLWV.org/Board/) site.

**League of Women Voters of Alaska**

PO Box 101345  
Anchorage, AK 99510-1345

**Email us at** [alaskalwv@alaskalwv.org](mailto:alaskalwv@alaskalwv.org)  
[www.alaskalwv.org](https://www.alaskalwv.org)