

2016 CAPITOL CURRENTS

29th Alaska State Legislature ~ 2nd Session

Third Edition – 2/8 to 2/14/16

63 days to go

Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia dies at 79

~ House now under the 24-Hour Rule – They will hear budget related bills only ~

HIGHLIGHTS

In an unprecedented action, the **Alaska House** voted to suspend work on all bills not related to the **state budget and revenue measures**. House Concurrent Resolution 23 took effect this past Monday.

Instead of noticing committee meetings on bills five days ahead, the House can now announce a hearing the day before. There has been no indication the Senate will follow suit with a similar measure.

Earlier that same day, the democratic minorities in the House and Senate presented a proposal to their Republican colleagues for a “caucus of the whole.” In essence, share power with us so we can fix the budget crises together.

Also in the blender for this past week, is the announcement that Senator Donny Olson of Golovin has joined the Senate Majority as the 16th Majority Member. He will continue to speak for rural Alaskans.

And, the House’s Republican-led majority urged state residents to call a toll-free number and leave anonymous suggestions on how the state can save money. After a week in use, they’ve logged hundreds of phone calls. The number is 1-844-414-5949.

In his State of the Judiciary address, Chief Justice Craig Stowers of the Alaska Supreme Court touted the cost-cutting measures the court system has already undertaken. He asserted that next fiscal year they will continue to operate on half days every Friday.

Lawmakers have again delayed taking action on their renovated Anchorage offices. They have now decided to hire an independent financial expert to help them sort out competing cost analyses. It could be March or April before a final decision is reached.

The Alaska State Employees Association and the administration of Governor Walker have reached a tentative agreement on a three-year contract. The pact would have no raises and two days of furloughs a year. It must still be approved by the membership of the union and the Legislature.

The Transportation Security Administration, better known as TSA, says finding new hires in Alaska is challenging. The high cost of living, rural locations, and a skewed perception of what it’s really like to live in Alaska are all factors in finding and keeping employees.

A new report from the McDowell Group shows that the total economic impact of the ferry system was \$273 million, including south central Alaska. That system is responsible for 1,017 jobs and indirectly for 683 jobs.

The *Chuck-e-Cheese* bill has passed the Senate. Actually, the measure (**SB 157**) will ensure the state's definition of "gambling" does not include games that issue tickets for prizes. This includes the "Claw" machines that are found in stores all over the state.

BUDGET ISSUES

At a press opportunity this past week, the Senate Finance Committee stated they want a budget ready for conference committee by Mid-March.

Hundreds of people have weighed in on **SB 128** relating to the Permanent Fund. Senate State Affairs has conducted a marathon of hearings on the Governor's bill that proposes to use a portion of the Permanent Fund to help balance the state budget.

Reportedly, 85 percent of comments were against the idea of using the Fund.

Another related Permanent Fund bill is **SB 114**. This bill too has received a hearing and is scheduled for a couple more this coming week. This bill and the governor's bill used some of the same financial models, so there are many similarities.

House Resources has had three hearings on **HB 247**, legislation to reform the tax credit system for oil companies.

Alaska Airlines has testified that a hike in fuel taxes as proposed in **HB 249** could adversely affect the company's operation in the state. More public testimony will be taken in House Transportation this coming week.

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

A nonpartisan group known as "*Justice Not Politics Alaska*" has been formed to educate people about the downsides of **Senate Joint Resolution 3**. Lying dormant since last April, it would place a constitutional amendment on the next general election ballot that would allow voters to decide whether to change the structure of the judicial council.

EDUCATION ISSUES

"Kids in the Capitol", organized by Alaska Education for Young Children, was well received in the halls of the legislature this week. Kids handed out about 100 valentines and postcards to all legislators. This was a positive reminder on how important Early Childhood Education dollars are.

A Fairbanks English teacher has been elected president of Alaska's National Education Association (NEA).

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES ISSUES

In less than two weeks, Alaskans will be able to apply for the first commercial marijuana licenses in the state. The Marijuana Control Board has approved the forms for the applications that will begin on Feb. 24th.

The Board has also approved what they are calling an "on-site consumption endorsement." Basically allowing a store to include space specifically for smoking or consuming marijuana.

Multiple hearings in a Senate Finance Subcommittee were once again held on **SB 74 and SB 78** concerning Medicaid reform. These hearings will continue into next week.

SB 23 was an exception to the “budget bills only rule” as it got a hearing and moved out of the House Judiciary committee. This bill would legally shield Alaskans who administer a counter-overdose injection to a person suffering a heroin or prescription painkiller overdose. After it passes the House, it will have to return to the Senate for concurrence with the House changes.

Invited testimony is next week on **HB 227** in the House HSS Committee. Medicaid related it deals with several aspects of the medical assistance reform measures.

Moda Health will be allowed to resume operating its health insurance business in Alaska and Oregon after an agreement was reached with both states.

GOVERNOR'S CORNER

<http://gov.alaska.gov>

First Lady Donna Walker has encouraged Alaskans to nominate fellow citizens who have performed extraordinary volunteer service for the 2016 First Lady’s Volunteer of the Year Awards. Nominations are due by March 8th. Application forms are available at the website above.

IMPORTANT DATES

Feb. 15th - Legislators and Reproductive Health Advocates to Rally at the Capitol - Monday at noon, women’s health supporters are invited to rally on the Capitol Steps as part of Planned Parenthood Votes’ annual Reproductive Health and Rights Lobby Day.

The rally will be focused on opposing restrictions on sexual health education and reproductive health, and instead increasing access to reproductive health care for all.

Feb. 16th – One Billion Rising! End the Violence against Women. Starts on the Capitol steps at Noon marching to the State Office Building 8th Floor Atrium.

Feb. 17th – Senator Lisa Murkowski will give her Annual Address before the Legislature.

30th Legislative Day (Feb. 17th) - Deadline for Governor’s Amendments to the FY17 Budget.

Feb. 29th – Senator Dan Sullivan will give his Annual Address before the Legislature.

NEW DOCUMENTS

~ Report below is on file with both the House Clerk and Senate Secretary ~

DCCED – Board of Pharmacy 2016 Alaska Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Report

NEW BILLS OF INTEREST

<http://www.akleg.gov>

BUGET ISSUES:

HB 303 / Rep. Millett – Permanent Fund: Earnings, Deposits, Accounts

HB 311 / Rep. Millett – Sustainable Budget Reporting

CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

SJR 19 / Sen. McGuire – Call Federal Constitutional Convention: Term Limits

EDUCATION ISSUES:

HCR 24 / Rep. Drummond – Designating Public Schools Week

HEALTH CARE ISSUES:

SB 175 / Giessel by Request – Pharmacy Benefits Managers

SB 179 / Sen. Coghill – Ban Late Term Abortion; Child Surrender

PUBLIC SAFETY ISSUES:

SB 176 / Sen. Gardner – Evidence: Prior Reports of Sexual Assaults

SB 180 / Sen. Giessel – Parent-Guardian/Child: Temporary Power of Attorney

HB 308 / Rep. Millett – Child Safety Seat Installation Liability

HB 310 / Rep. Wilson – CINA Proceedings; DHSS Duties; Courts

BILLS ON THE MOVE

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

SENATE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

SB 69 / Board of Chiropractic Examiners; Practice

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB69

Version 29-LS0704\E - Moved from Labor & Commerce on 2/9. Referred to Finance.

SB 72 / Designated Caregivers for Patients (No change)

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB72

Version 29-LS0047\F - CS moved out of Senate HSS on 2/1. Referred to Labor & Commerce.

SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB744

Version 29-LS0692\F - Hearings continued last week in special Senate Medicaid Subcommittee.

SB 78 / Medicaid Expansion/Reform

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB78

Version 29-GS1055\A - Hearings continued last week in special Senate Medicaid Subcommittee.

SB 91 / Omnibus Criminal Law & Procedure; Corrections

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB91

Version 29-LS0541\N - Heard in State Affairs on 2/13. Scheduled again on 2/18.

SB 98 / Prescription Without Physical Examination (No change)

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB998

Version 29-LS0838\W - CS moved out of House HSS on 2/1. Referred to Labor & Commerce.

SB 151 / DHSS Central Registry; License; Background Check

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB151

Version 29-GS2013\A - Moved from HSS on 2/10. Referred to Senate Judiciary.

SJR 15 / Call for US Countermand Convention

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SJR15

Version 29-LS0425\A - Moved out of Senate Judiciary on 2/8. Referred to Rules.

SCR 4 / US Countermand Convention Delegates

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SCR4

Version 29-LS0548\A - Moved out of Senate Judiciary on 2/8. Referred to Finance.

HOUSE COMMITTEE OR FLOOR ACTION

HB 147 / Animals: Protection, Release, Custody

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB147

Version 29-LS0302\Y - Heard and held in House Judiciary on 2/1. Meeting canceled for 2/10.

HB 221 / Enforcement of Foreign Protective Orders (No change)

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB221

Version 29-LS1041\W - Moved out of House Judiciary on 2/1. Referred to Rules.

HB 227 / Medical Assistance Reform

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB227

Version 29-LS1096\H - Further scheduled in HSS for 2/16 and 2/18 with testimony being taken.

HB 245 / Permanent Fund: Deposits; Dividend; Earnings

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB245

Version 29-GH2859\A - Further scheduled for 2/15 in House Finance.

HB 260 / Day Care Assistance and Child Care Grants (No change)

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HB260

Version 29-GH 2769\A - Heard and held in House HSS on 2/4.

HCR 4 / US Countermand Convention Delegates

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=HCR4

Version 29-LS0250\N - Scheduled in House Finance on 2/10, but hearing canceled.

SB 9 / Election Pamphlets (No change)

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB9

Version 29-LS0244\P - House CS moved out of House State Affairs on 2/2. Referred to Rules.

SB 23 / Immunity for Providing Opioid OD Drug

http://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB23

Version 29-LS0058\N - Moved a House CS out of Judiciary on 2/12.

SB 53 / Advanced Practice Registered Nurses

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_complete_bill.asp?session=29&bill=SB53

Version 29-LS0043\P - Bill hearing was canceled for 2/10 in House Finance.

COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Note: House Concurrent Resolution 23, which suspends the Legislature's Uniform Rules 20, 21, 23, and 24 passed the House on Feb. 8th. This means they suspended work on all bills not related to the state budget and revenue measures.

It also kicked in the 24-Rule for noticing hearings on the House side only. HCR 23 took effect immediately. Please check the schedule every night for changes to the list below.

MONDAY – Feb 15th

(HOUSE) FINANCE Committee

1:30 PM H. Finance Room 519

HB 245 / Permanent Fund: Deposits; Dividend; Earnings

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee

1:30 PM Senate Finance Room 532

SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies

SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

(HOUSE) Corrections Finance Subcommittee

5:00 PM Capitol Room 106

Community Residential Centers

TUESDAY – Feb. 16th

(SENATE) STATE AFFAIRS Committee

9:00 AM Butrovich Room 205

SB 114 / Permanent Fund: Earnings, Deposits, Accounts

(SENATE) LABOR & COMMERCE Committee

1:30 PM Beltz Room 105 (TSBldg)

SB 131 / Electronic Tax Returns and Alcohol Tax

SB 133 / Electronic Tax Returns; Tobacco and E-Cigs Tax

(HOUSE) FINANCE Committee

1:30 PM H. Finance Room 519

HB 303 / Permanent Fund: Earnings, Deposits, Accounts

(HOUSE) HSS Committee

3:00 PM Capitol Room 106

HB 227 / Medical Assistance Reform

(HOUSE) Education Finance Subcommittee

6:00 PM Capitol Barnes Room 124

Department Budget Overview

(SENATE) LABOR & COMMERCE Committee

1:30 PM Beltz Room 105 (TSBldg)

SB 131 / Electronic Tax Returns and Alcohol Tax

SB 133 / Electronic Tax Returns; Tobacco and E-Cigs Tax

(SENATE) STATE AFFAIRS Committee

6:00 PM Butrovich Room 205

SB 114 / Permanent Fund: Earnings, Deposits, Accounts

WEDNESDAY – Feb. 17th

(HOUSE) HSS Finance Subcommittee

8:30 AM H. Finance Room 519

Division of Health Care Services Medicaid

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee
9:00 AM Senate Finance Room 532
SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies
SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

JOINT FLOOR SESSION

11:00 AM House Chambers
Annual Address by the Honorable Lisa Murkowski – U.S. Senator

(HOUSE) FINANCE Committee
1:30 PM H. Finance Room 519
HB 224 / Permanent Fund: Income; Distribution; PFD;
Distribution Flow Charts by David Teal, Director, Leg. Finance Division

(SENATE) JUDICIARY Committee
1:30 PM Beltz Room 105 (TSBldg)
Consideration of Chief Justices’s Nomination: Bill Gordon, for Select Committee on Leg. Ethics
HB 174 / Registration of Firearms/Knives by University of Alaska

(SENATE) HSS Committee
1:30 PM Butrovich Room 205
Presentation: Alaska’s Health Insurance Market by Div. of Insurance/DCCED

(SENATE) MEDICAID REFORM Finance Subcommittee
1:30 PM Senate Finance Room 532
SB 74 / Medicaid Reform/PFD/HSAS/ER Use/Studies
SB 78 / Medical Assistance Coverage; Reform

THURSDAY – Feb. 18th

(SENATE) STATE AFFAIRS Committee
9:00 AM Butrovich Room 205
SB 91 / Omnibus Criminal Law and Procedure; Corrections
Presentations: Office of Victims’ Rights - Alaska Court System – Implementation and Fiscal Impacts

(SENATE) LABOR & COMMERCE Committee
1:30 AM Beltz Room 105 (TSBldg)
SB 134 / Individual Income Tax: Credits; Returns

(HOUSE) HSS Committee
3:00 PM Capitol Room 106
HB 227 / Medical Assistance Reform

(SENATE) EDUCATION Committee
3:00 PM Butrovich Room 205
HB 174 / Registration of Firearms/Knives by University of Alaska

(SENATE) LABOR & COMMERCE Committee
6:00 PM Beltz Room 105 (TSBldg)
SB 134 / Individual Income Tax: Credits; Returns

FRIDAY – Feb. 19th

(HOUSE) HSS Finance Subcommittee
8:30 AM H. Finance Room 519
Department Wrap Up – Q & A

(HOUSE) FINANCE Committee
1:30 PM H. Finance Room 519
Overview of Dept. of Health & Social Services; Maintenance of Effort and Formula Programs

SATURDAY – Feb. 20th

(HOUSE) EDUCATION Finance Subcommittee
8:00 AM House Finance Room 519 <Note room change>
<Agenda to be announced>

WAYS TO FOLLOW HEARINGS

Website – Daily Committee Hearings - For: Feb. 8 – Feb. 14, 2016
http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_hearing.asp?session=29&Chamb=B&Date1=02%2F08%2F2016&Date2=02%2F14%2F2016&Comty=&Root=&Sel=1&Button=Display

Live on the Web [www.360north.org]

Streaming Video
<https://vimeo.com/aklty> or <http://alaskalegislature.tv>

Testifying
A toll-free number can only be used if you have had prior approval to call in from the appropriate committee chair. You can also testify by going to a state Legislative Information Office (LIO).

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

2016 2nd Session List of Legislators and staff
http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/session_phone_list.pdf

2016 House / Senate – Standing and Special Committees
<http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/commlist.pdf>

2016 House / Senate – Finance Sub-committee Members
<http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/HFINSubcmte.pdf>
<http://akleg.gov/docs/pdf/SFINSubcmte.pdf>

~ End of Report ~

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