

HOUSE FINANCE

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET  
AND AUDIT

ETHICS (ALTERNATE)

FINANCE  
SUBCOMMITTEES:

Courts and Department of  
Law

Health, Family and  
Community Services

University

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



CAMPBELL PARK

DIMOND BUSINESS  
DISTRICT

EAST SAND LAKE

MIDTOWN

TAKU-CAMPBELL

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*REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON*

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**Date:** May 10, 2023

**To:** Midtown Community Council

**From:** Representative Andy Josephson

**Re:** Update on Session

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Hello Neighbors,

For my office, April was a month that saw little movement on the budget but significant movement on my bills. Below I will explain:

**Budget**

The Senate now has possession of the operating and mental health budgets. They have adopted a committee substitute with changes (although only a few in comparison to prior sessions). They have not, however, moved the budgets out of Senate Finance for a vote on the Floor. With 8 days remaining until the 121-day constitutional deadline, it is possible that either a 10-day extension of session or a 30-day special session is requested.

The current version of the Senate operating and mental health budgets result in approximately a \$90 million surplus. This is the case because they adopted a 75/25 dividend split (75% to the state budget, 25% to the permanent fund dividend). In comparison, the House majority passed a budget with an approximately \$400 million deficit that requires a draw from the Constitutional Budget Reserve. A conference committee will be called once the budgets pass out of the Senate,

and the final decisions on the budget will be made then before they are passed and the legislature adjourns for the session.

The capital budget (SB 41) is scheduled to be heard in House Finance Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. It is unclear how large the capital budget will be this session and what projects will be included in it.

### **Bills**

Progress on my bills has been steady. Here are the details about what has happened and what I anticipate to happen with my bills currently in committee:

#### HB 11: *Crime: Assault in the Presence of a Child*

A bill which makes it an additional crime when someone commits domestic violence and they do so in the presence of a child.

HB 11 was passed out of House Judiciary without being amended. It now awaits a hearing in House Finance.

#### HB 13: *Applicability of Human Rights Commission*

A bill which allows the human rights commission to investigate discrimination claims filed against non-profit employers.

HB 13 is likely no longer going to be moved but for good reason. A more comprehensive bill (HB 181) is in House Judiciary which addresses the changes in my bill but with other relevant additions.

#### HB 15: *Peer Support Counseling Program*

A bill which clearly allows police departments to create and develop a peer support counseling program which allows police officers to talk to a qualified counselor in confidence.

No progress has been made on HB 15, although the amendment deadline has already passed.

#### HB 22: *Peace Officers/Firefighters Benefits*

A bill which creates a new defined benefits retirement system for peace officers and firefighters.

HB 22 still sits in the House State Affairs Subcommittee. SB 88 is likely to pass the Senate before another hearing on HB 22 is scheduled.

HB 80: Incompetency; Civil Commitment

A bill which refines the competency to stand trial process and create a seamless transition to civil commitment.

HB 80 passed out of House Health and Social Services after the committee adopted a substitute of the bill. The new version adopts all the language of a prior version of SB 53 but with some changes. SB 53 passed out of the Senate and was read across the House Floor today. It will replace HB 80 and be heard in House Judiciary today.