

**Senator Gray-Jackson's Notes**  
**Spenard**  
**October 5, 2023**

- October is Filipino American History Month! It was an honor to introduce and carry legislation in the Senate to honor this incredibly important month! The bill recognizing October as Filipino American Month passed both legislative bodies on May 12<sup>th</sup> and is now recognized in State Statutes.

- **Permanent Fund Dividend**

The Alaska Permanent Fund is a state investment fund that was established in 1976 to invest a portion of Alaska's oil revenue for future generations. Each year a portion of the earnings from the fund are distributed to eligible Alaska residents in the form of the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD). Although the amount in the Governor's budget was more than what was appropriated, it was important to provide a PFD that was sustainable now and for future generations. State Statutes dictate that we are only allowed to use 5% of the Permanent Fund's earnings reserve. Half of that is for services and the other half is for PFD. I recognize that there are many of you who depend on the annual PFD for reasons such as paying bills, buying needed food and clothing, or medicine. But, if the statutory PFD was provided, the result would have been fewer services that would include senior and disability services, Medicaid, and more in addition to an unbalanced budget which is not allowed.

During the next legislative session which begins on January 16<sup>th</sup>, I'm hopeful we will finally address changing the PFD formula so that it is more aligned with reality today in 2023 and not 1980.

Although there are some who aren't very pleased with the \$1,312 PFD, I'm proud of the budget both the Senate and the House approved because it provided funding for services including much-needed childcare grants, school funding, Medicaid, and more. It also provided for a sustainable PFD and a budget surplus of \$84M instead of a deficit.

- Currently working with my staff on issues I will address during the next session to include bills previously introduced, use of infrastructure funding for the district capital projects, and other projects I intend to work on. Details will be provided in future community council reports.

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- **Legislative Town Hall**

Thank you for attending our legislative town hall meeting last month. It was great to meet with those constituents present and online to engage in an open dialogue about the issues facing our community. The discussion we had around education funding, infrastructure projects, and healthcare access was lively and productive.

I'm grateful for your participation and insight. Events like this are so important because they allow me to truly understand what matters most to you and help shape my priorities in the state legislature.

Thank you again for taking the time to be part of our democracy in action.

- **Interim Visits**

As the session approaches, my staff and I have been actively visiting various facilities and organizations throughout the community.

Most recently, my staff and I have visited the newly constructed Solid Waste transfer station and the Volunteers of America Adolescent Residential Treatment Center (ARCH) in Eagle River. The Program is for adolescents 12-18 that are diagnosed with substance abuse disorder and may also present with co-occurring mental health disorders.

Building strong relationships across our community remains one of my top priorities.

*Always feel free to reach out to me during the Session and the Interim. I'm here for you.*

*Always representing your interests!*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Gray-Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "P".

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