

Legislative Update from Rep. Chuck Kopp

April 3, 2025

See You at Anchorage Caucus This Saturday

I hope to see many of you at **Anchorage Caucus** on **Saturday, April 5 from 2–4 p.m.** at **Lucy Cuddy Hall on the UAA campus**. Please share your ideas and hear from legislators representing our community.

Public Safety, Education & Responsible Budgeting

The House continues to work toward a **responsible, fiscally conservative operating budget** for the upcoming fiscal year. We're focused on funding core services Alaskans depend on:

- **Public safety**, including staffing correctional facilities and law enforcement.
 - **Education**, with sustainable support for students, teachers, and families.
 - **Road maintenance and snow plowing**, especially critical in Anchorage.
 - A **responsible dividend** that is mindful of our long-term fiscal health
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HB 69 – Supporting Strong Public Education

Last month the House passed **HB 69**, which includes a **\$1,000 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA)** to help districts avoid cuts to critical programs and retain quality staff.

- HB 69 supports **parental choice in education** and **streamlines charter school approvals**.
- Encourages school districts to expand support for alternative and homeschool options.

We're now working with the Senate to see this bill through and improve education statewide.

HB 78 – New Retirement Option Could Save the State Money

Today, the **House Finance Committee** heard a presentation on the actuarial analysis for **HB 78**, which would offer a new defined benefit retirement option for public employees.

- The analysis shows that **retention is significantly better** under defined benefit plans—especially for teachers, public safety officers, and general workers.
- Under realistic assumptions, **HB 78 could save the state over \$76 million per year** due to lower turnover, reduced training costs, and better investment returns. This

reduction in costs will offset the approximately \$6 million present value cost per year of the plan.

- A more stable workforce supports **safe communities, quality schools, and reliable infrastructure.**

HB 56 – Responsible Supplemental Budget Passed

Today the House considered a **supplemental budget** to cover priority needs for the current fiscal year, without growing the size of government:

- **\$29 million** for the disaster relief fund and **\$13 million** for wildfire suppression.
- **\$40 million for plugging orphaned oil wells** — protecting the environment while creating jobs.
- Support for **agriculture, flood mitigation, energy assistance, and transportation maintenance.**
- Meets our **debt obligations** and avoids unnecessary draws from savings.

This is a **targeted, fiscally disciplined budget** that reflects conservative values: maintaining public safety, investing in core infrastructure, and protecting the state’s financial stability.

HB 136 – Defending Private Property Rights

I **recently introduced HB 136** to protect the rights of private landowners whose property is crossed by an Alaska Railroad easement:

- The Alaska Railroad **does not own the land** along much of its tracks but has acted like it does—blocking access, charging homeowners, and restricting development.
- HB 136 **clarifies that an easement does not allow the Railroad to unreasonably exclude landowners** from using their property.
- This bill defends **private property rights** and ensures that **state agencies cannot overreach** their legal authority.

Whether or not you live along the Railroad, this is about ensuring **the government respects your rights as a property owner.**