

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:** February 8, 2023

**To:** Midtown Community Council

**From:** Representative Andy Josephson

**Re:** Update on Session

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It has been nearly a month since I returned to Juneau for the regular session. Below are updates on what has transpired since session began.

### **House Majority Caucus**

Because of key election losses (Wells, Eischeid, etc.), the Democrats went into the first week of session with 13 party members and 6 non-partisan legislators. 19 is two members short of a 21 majority, and the pressure on both sides was building. Surprisingly, Bush Caucus members caucused with Republicans. Representative Cathy Tilton was elected Speaker of the House, Representative Eastman was not allowed to join either caucus, and the majority formed with 23 members. I am in the minority with 16 members, but progress is still being made.

### **House Finance**

As the most senior member of my minority caucus (and prior experience on House Finance), I was nominated by my caucus to be on House Finance. Alongside Reps Hannan, Galvin, and Ortiz, I plan to push for an adequate BSA increase, deferred maintenance for the UA system, funding for the Crises Now Continuum program, among a host of other critical state needs.

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*June-December:* 1500 W Benson Blvd, Room 432, Anchorage, Alaska 99503 • (907) 269-0265

Rep.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov

The majority did not give me voting powers in the Department of Law, Court System, Department of Health, and Department of Family and Community Services subcommittees. However, I do still have the power to recommend amendments to the budget and have them be voted upon by the other members. This I most certainly will do.

### **House Bills**

Being in the minority has not presented an obstacle so far for bill hearings. Within 3 weeks, I will have had six bill hearings. Bills heard or being heard are the following:

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

Arguably the most anticipated and talked about bill inside and outside the capitol. The desire to create a new pension plan for police officers, firefighters, and correctional officers is strong in the House minority and parts of the House majority. However, it was referred to four committees likely meant to slow the progress of the bill down. Yet, we were able to pass it out of Community of Regional Affairs within the first 3 weeks (a significant achievement even for a majority member). The next committee is House State Affairs.

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

A simple bill which grants the Alaska State Commission on Human Rights the power to take on discrimination cases filed by non-profit employees. Currently, over 44,000 Alaskans cannot have a complaint of discrimination heard by the state commission. My office is pushing to change that. On Friday, the House Labor & Commerce Committee plans to move it out of committee. This leaves us with only House Judiciary committee before House Floor.

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

A new bill this session, HB 11 would make it an additional crime for a person who commits assault to do so within the vicinity of a child. This bill was heard in House Judiciary committee and awaits a second hearing. It may likely be amended to only apply to domestic violence assaults. If we can get it out of committee, House Finance is the last step before the House Floor.