



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We are over 40 days into the 2024 legislative session! In this update, I'll provide an overview of our efforts to increase education funding and the passage of the education omnibus bill (Senate Bill 140), a series of sweeping and unprecedented executive orders, Representative Peltola's legislative address, the governor's State of the State address and Chief Justice Peter Maassen's State of the Judiciary address.

As always, it is an honor to serve our community and I am here if you have questions, need assistance with an issue you may be facing, or to share your thoughts, ideas, or concerns. You can reach me by email at Rep.Calvin.Schrage@akleg, on my personal cell at 907-240-8986, or at our office at 907-465-4931.

Education Legislation Update

During our last update, we covered Senate Bill 140 and the significant changes and concerns that arose after the House Rules Committee created an omnibus education bill with drastic, and harmful, legislative changes. By holding together with members of the Bush Caucus (representing rural communities), including representatives Edgmon, Foster, and McCormick, we were able to vote down the unvetted version introduced by the House Rules Committee which included an inadequate \$300 BSA (a reduction from last year's \$680 in one-time funding which was vetoed to \$340 by the governor) and the elimination of local control in the creation of new charter schools. As a result and after significant negotiations between our Coalition, the House Majority, Senate, and Governor, we were able to reach a bipartisan deal that was ultimately adopted and provides much-needed support for Alaska's schools. Senate Bill 140 will now be sent to the Governor's desk to become law or be vetoed.

Senate Bill 140

The final version of Senate Bill 140 is a significant win for Alaska's students, educators, and schools! This bill provides much-needed support to our underfunded and undersupported school districts and educators. SB140 includes:

- A permanent increase to the Base Student Allocation of \$680 per student.
- \$500 in funding for each student identified as needing additional reading intervention by the Reads Act.
- Increases internet speeds for rural schools from 25mb to 100mb through the School Broadband Assistance Grant (BAG) program.
- An increase in funding for correspondence schools.
- A dedicated state employee who can help parents and educators navigate through the process of creating new charter schools as well as an appeals process for charter schools that have been revoked by local school districts.

Energy

Earlier this month, the House and Senate Resources Committee held a joint committee hearing on the looming energy shortage for South Central and the near-emergency shortage that arose during the recent Anchorage and the Mat-Su cold snap. In the hearing, the committee heard from various energy producers and utilities, including Hilcorp Alaska, Hex/Furie, Blue Crest Energy Inc., and Enstar Natural Gas company. The hearing demonstrated that there is ample energy available within Cook Inlet and the cost of importing liquified natural gas (LNG) would be extremely expensive for local residents. There are various proposals before the legislature this session to help ensure we have adequate, affordable, and reliable energy in Southcentral and I will continue to keep you up-to-date as this continues to develop.

Executive Orders

In an unprecedented action, Governor Dunleavy issued a series of executive orders (EOs) at the beginning of the session which would be the largest use of executive power in decades. Already, we have heard from hundreds of Alaskans concerned with the impact, the lack of process, and limited public testimony opportunities. The legislature has 60 days to disapprove of the executive orders which would require a simple majority of members during a joint session.

Unless rejected by the legislature, the twelve executive orders would make significant changes, including splitting two of the largest state organizations (Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) and Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA)) and changing or eliminating several boards and councils. Some of the more significant impacts would be the elimination of the boards of the: Barbers and Hairdressers; Massage Therapists (which have recently taken significant steps to crack down on human and sex trafficking in the industry); and Direct Entry Midwives. It would also eliminate the Wood-Tikchik State Park Management Council (which has been extremely active and is responsible for overseeing and protecting the nation's largest park), Alaska

Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Advisory Council, and Alaska Safety Advisory Council. There is also a drastic order to reorganize the Alaska Marine Highway Board which would eliminate the positions appointed by the legislature and consolidate the appointment power solely with the governor.

The Senate has taken the lead on executive orders and has introduced and began moving resolutions to reject them, some of which are now referred to committees in the House. Some committees in the House have been unwilling to hear these executive orders and we will continue working to ensure each executive order is heard in the House for transparency and to provide Alaskans a chance to weigh in. Regardless of the merits of the executive orders, they should be fully heard and vetted in the committee process and Alaskans should be offered an opportunity to share their thoughts on the proposed orders. A list of the executive orders, the committee of referral, and the committee chair if you would like to provide public testimony is below.

EO Number	Summary	Committee	Committee Chair
124	Live Capture authority to Commissioner of DF&G	Resources	Rep. Tom McKay
125	EMS Council to Dept. of Health	HSS	Rep. Prax
126	Eliminate Wood-Tikchik State Park Management Council	Resources	Rep. Tom McKay
127	Eliminate Massage Therapist Board	L&C	Rep. Jesse Sumner
128	AEA/AIDEA board separation	Energy	Rep. George Rauscher
129	Board of Barbers and Hairdressers elimination	L&C	Rep. Jesse Sumner
130	Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives elimination	L&C	Rep. Jesse Sumner
131	AMHS Board reorganization	Transportation	Rep. Kevin McCabe
132	Alaska Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve Advisory Council elimination	Resources	Rep. Tom McKay
133	Criminal Justice Information Advisory Board elimination	HSTA	Rep. Laddie Shaw
134	Recreation Rivers Advisory Board elimination	Resources	Rep. Tom McKay
135	Alaska Safety Advisory Council	L&C	Rep. Jesse Sumner

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Representative Peltola's Address to the Legislature

Earlier this week, we heard from Alaska's sole U.S. Representative, Mary Peltola in her annual address to the Legislature. In her address, the congresswoman struck an uplifting and optimistic tone and highlighted her bipartisan efforts since being elected as well as the importance of working together, regardless of political affiliations, to do what's right for Alaska. In the address, she celebrated the Federal Trades Commission's (FTC) decision to challenge the Albertsons / Kroger Merger. This merger would be the largest supermarket merger in U.S. history and has faced significant concern and opposition from Alaskan residents. The FTC's decision to challenge the merger would not have been possible without Representative Peltola's tireless work leading this effort and that of our full federal delegation as well as the public input from countless Alaskans. Representative Peltola also highlighted the continued work being done to protect Alaska's fisheries and efforts to curb illegal commercial fishing taking place largely by Russia.

Governor's State of the State Address

Earlier this month, Gov. Dunleavy provided his annual State of the State address to the Legislature. Despite an ambitious and optimistic theme for Alaska to start saying "yes", the governor failed to mention many of the most pressing issues facing our state. Of note, the governor did not mention the education funding crisis where schools across the state are closing, classes are continuing to increase (some with 40+ students per classroom), extracurriculars and sports are being cut, and more and more teaching positions are being eliminated. Even with the immense hard work by our educators, administrators, parents, support staff, and community members to provide quality education, the state is failing our constitutional obligation to provide a strong public education and our schools have been forced into an impossible situation. I am disappointed that the governor offered no solutions to the education crisis, nor the projected state budget deficits, nevertheless, I am determined to work together with colleagues in the legislature, the administration, and the people of Alaska to find meaningful, long-term solutions to the most pressing issues facing our state.

State of the Judiciary

We had the opportunity to hear from Chief Justice Peter Maassen during his annual State of the Judiciary address to the legislature. In his address, we heard about progress taking place in the judiciary and continued efforts to catch up on COVID-related court backlogs. Examples include upgraded equipment allowing prisoners to attend hearings remotely, expediting the process and saving state funds,

changes in the jury selection process, and moving certain procedural hearings to take place remotely instead of in person. He also urged courts across the state to further utilize restorative justice programs.

Below are some additional resources for staying up-to-date and engaged:

Watch Committee Meetings – Most committee hearings are broadcast on Gavel Alaska at 360north.org or through the Live Now tab on the AK Legislature's [home page](#). House and Senate floor sessions are also available on Gavel Alaska at ktoo.org/gavel.

Access Budget Materials – The Office of Management and Budget website has many helpful tools and presentations relating to the state budget. You can find these resources, and more, at omb.alaska.gov.

Keep Track of Bills – If you're interested in learning more about a bill from this session or from years past, you can learn more at akleg.gov/basis/Home/BillsandLaws. Just type in a bill number in the search bar (ex: HB 234) at the top of the page. You can also text a bill number (ex: HB 234) to 559-245-2529 to enroll in text alerts.

Use Your Legislative Information Office (LIO) – LIOs are a great local resource for navigating the legislative process. The staff at the LIO can help you research bills and issues, navigate the state computer system, and participate in hearings by providing public testimony. You can contact LIO staff Monday-Friday between 8:30 AM and 4:00 PM through their new chat interface, located in the lower right corner of akleg.gov.

Contact the Anchorage LIO – You can reach the LIO by phone (907-269-0111) or email: LIO.Anchorage@akleg.gov.

Warmly,
Representative Schrage

PS - I am honored to serve as your Representative. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or our office anytime.

Contact Representative Calvin Schrage

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