



# Alaska State Legislature

*Office of Senator Löki Gale Tobin*

---

## **Legislative Update**

Today is day 107 of this legislative session. As we head into the last two weeks of the legislative session, which is constitutionally limited to 121 days, there are a lot of things happening all at once in the halls of Juneau.

Yesterday, my teammate Louie Flora and I presented Senate Bill 229: Extreme Risk Protective Orders (ERPOs) to the Senate State Affairs Committee. This bill would allow law enforcement to petition a judge to remove a firearm from an acute situation with considerable due process protections. We heard from a Florida law enforcement official who uses Florida's ERPO policy to successfully to prevent gun violence, and studies show these limited protections can have up to a 13.5% reduction in gun deaths, which is about 16 Alaskans. I am proud to have this conversation about what possible policies we can enact to protect Alaskans without compromising second amendment rights.

In mid-April, a Superior Court judge ruled the 2014 correspondence school allotment language unconstitutional. This is an evolving issue, but the most important thing to remember is that Alaska's public correspondence programs pre-date statehood. Although things are in flux, I am confident that Alaska's robust system of public school choice will continue. Only this time, it will be in alignment with the Alaska Constitution. I highly recommend [this article from the Alaska Beacon](#) describing Judge Zeman's decision.

Also in April, the Senate Education Committee held a very informative hearing on a provision in federal law called "Maintenance of Equity." The goal of the "Maintenance of Equity" language in the American Rescue Plan is to ensure that state education funding to historically underserved groups of students remained at pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. Unfortunately, on March 27, the U.S. Department of Education alerted the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development that Alaska has not met "Maintenance of Equity." To achieve "Maintenance of Equity" the State of Alaska will need to make approximately \$17 million in

supplemental education funding payments to school districts in the amount of state funding reductions considered disproportionate under the FY 22 and FY 23 maintenance of equity requirement. The Senate Finance Committee inserted \$11.89 million into the proposed operating budget to satisfy these federal requirements, needed to not jeopardize the over \$359 million dollars in federal aid Alaska schools receive.

Today, the Senate took the Operating Budget (House Bill 268) after our work on the Capital Budget last month. I am proud to announce the balanced budget passed 17-3 today. I am proud to have worked to include dollars for Covenant House, Indigenous placemaking, the Anchorage Museum, Harvard Park in Government Hill, road resurfacing for Tyonek Dr, a new scoreboard for Barlett High School, and resources for the Alaska Native Heritage Center. This past week was National Library Week, so it is timely that I worked to include long needed funds for the Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED) and Alaska Library Catalog. These dollars are currently included in the draft budget which is now in the House and as it works through the process, I will continue to advocate for them to remain there. The budget process is a collaborative effort and I worked to jointly fund projects to make sure the impact every dollar allocated to Senate District I is maximized. Due to the internal politics of the legislature, districts with House Majority members received a higher allocation of capital dollars, so I worked with Senator Wielechowski and his House members to fund good projects in our neighborhoods.

I am also proud to announce that last week Senate Bill 46 was signed into law! My bill designates every March as Brain Injury Awareness Month in Alaska. Our state has some of the highest rates of these injuries, and we can all do more as a community to protect our brains. Please remember to wear your helmets this summer when you are out recreating!

Please reach out via email ([sen.loki.tobin@akleg.gov](mailto:sen.loki.tobin@akleg.gov)) or phone (907-465-3704) or subscribe to our online newsletter if you would like to receive more frequent updates between now and the next community council meeting. Subscribe at [lgtobin.substack.com](http://lgtobin.substack.com)!

To follow along, watch the Alaska Legislature live, you can tune into floor and committee hearings at AKL.tv.



For an in-depth look into policies, interviews with legislators, and conversations with stakeholders, please check out my office's podcast! Available on Apple Podcast, Spotify, Good Podcast, and anywhere else you listen to podcasts.

## **Personal Legislation**

**SB 27:** *Contraceptive Coverage* (Ability to receive 12-months of birth control).

**SB 100:** *Access to Marijuana Conviction Records* (expunging marijuana violations from court view from before personal use was made legal).

**SB 101:** *Renewable Portfolio Standards*

**SB 109:** *Employee Rights and Employer Speech* (prohibits an employer from requiring an employee to listen to employer personal beliefs or opinions in a captive audience meeting).

**SB 115:** *Physician Assistant Scope of Practice* (improving patient care and access).

**SB 229:** *Extreme Risk Protective Orders* (allows family members or law enforcement to petition a judge to remove a firearm from the environment of a person deemed at risk of harming themselves or others, also known as red flag laws).

**SJR 17:** *Urge Congress to Extend the Deadline for Expend Federal American Rescue Plan Children and Homeless Youth*

**SB 175:** *Establishing a manufacturer-funded system for electronic device recycling*