

**Senator Gray-Jackson's Notes
Midtown Community Council
October 16, 2024**

On January 20th, we will begin the first session of the 34th Legislature. Before the new session begins, I want to brief you are some of our successes during this session.

Health and wellness-

- **Senate Resolution 9** calls on the health department and insurance companies to treat mental healthcare the same way it treats physical healthcare. This crucial step will help so many Alaskans' access mental health services.
- **SB 134** ensures that insurance companies have robust measures in place to protect their customers' sensitive information. Additionally, this law mandates that most insurance companies do not charge extra for mammograms, and related preventative screenings.
- **SB 147** makes changes to Alaska's workers' compensation laws. It helps injured workers stay at work or return to work, and it makes it easier for workers with post-traumatic stress disorder to get workers' compensation benefits.

Education-

- **HJR 18** allowed our legislature to ask the U.S. Congress to repeal the windfall elimination provision and Government pension offset that prevents our public workers, like teachers and firefighters from collecting full Social Security benefits.
- **HB 230** aims to address teacher and substitute shortages by repealing limits on out-of-state teaching experience, and increasing the days retired teachers can substitute.
- **SB 13** - the Textbook Cost Transparency Act is about making college more affordable by showing students where they can save money on textbooks.

Honoring our Heroes:

- **SB 103** establishes a peer support counseling program for law enforcement and first responders, providing a confidential and safe space to discuss traumatic work experiences. We hope this will help our peace officers and our community to heal.
- **HB 155** Alaska has lacked a dedicated military affairs organization despite our commitment to our military community. This bill will establish an organization to help fill knowledge gaps and facilitate effective planning and implementation of military missions.
- **SB 174** designates the Honor and Remember Flag and the Honor and Sacrifice Flag as official state symbols to honor members of the armed forces, firefighters, and law enforcement who have died in the line of duty.

September 30th was Orange Shirt Day

- Orange Shirt Day calls on us to recognize the traumatic effects of residential schools on our Alaska Native communities.

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- We must address these traumas which is why the legislature passed HJR 17 encouraging the US Congress to pass the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act.
- We also passed **SB 151** addressing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People crisis. The bill establishes a review commission and appoints additional peace officers to address this terrible crisis.
- Finally, we passed **HB 26** which recognizes three additional Alaska Native languages as official Alaskan languages, bringing that total to 23!
- **The interim was filled with conferences, constituent meetings, and facility tours. I also spent significant time assisting residents with government-related issues. As the 34th Legislature approaches, I'm preparing to reintroduce previous bills and introduce new ones, which I'll finalize after gathering stakeholder feedback. Stay tuned for updates closer to session starting.**
- *Please feel free to reach out to me anytime with questions or concerns. I'm here for you. Enjoy the rest of our short Autumn!!*

Always representing your interests!



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