

Legislative Update



January 19, 2024



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## For Immediate Release:

Good afternoon,

Welcome to the second session of the 33<sup>rd</sup> Alaska State Legislature. The Legislature gaveled into session on Tuesday, January 16<sup>th</sup>. A top priority under consideration was if the House and Senate would meet in a joint session to consider a veto override vote on education. On day one, a Representative made a motion to invite the Senate to a joint session for the purpose of considering an override vote on the Governor's veto on education funds. The motion failed by majority/minority. On day three (Thursday), a Representative again made a motion to invite the Senate into a joint meeting. Considerable discussion took place. It was decided by both the House and the Senate to convene last night at 8:00 pm. A motion was made to override the Governor's veto on the education funding he vetoed. The vote was 33 yeas and 26 nays with 1 excused. I voted yea. The vote failed; 45 yeas are needed to override a veto.

Last session, I introduced Senate Bill 140: Internet for Schools, which increases broadband for eligible schools from 25 megabits per second to 100 megabits per second of download speed through the School Broadband Assistance Grant program. SB 140 was approved by the Senate and transferred to the House without any changes. Towards the end of last session, the bill was in the House Finance Committee where changes were made. The committee added an increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA) and an increase to pupil transportation formula. The committee moved the bill out but was not officially read across until we reconvened. The House Majority has decided to add more education items to this bill in the House Rules Committee. SB 140 now contains the following: 25 megabits to 100 megabits; increase Charter Schools in Alaska; increase funding for pupil transportation; boarding school increases; increase the BSA to \$6,260 (currently \$5,960); adding deaf and hearing impaired centralized program; Education tax credits and adds lump sum payment to retain teachers. These increases are projected to add \$191,108,300 to the \$1.3 billion education budget.

The House Rules committee will be accepting public testimony on SB 140 this Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup> from 10:00 am. If you would like to testify on this expanded education bill, you need to sign up by 12:00 pm. The off-net number is 907-586-9085.

The Governor has introduced new bills including Executive Order 126, which eliminates the Wood Tikchik State Park Management Council and reassigns the statutory functions, duties and powers to the Department of Natural Resources. E.O. 126 is referred to the Senate Resource Committee. I oppose E.O. 126 and will have a discussion with the co-chairs of the committee.

I am happy to report no changes to my staff, Tim Grussendorf, Patricia Walker, Maridon Boario and Sam Greely all continue in my office. I look forward to visitors to my office. If you plan on traveling to Juneau, please make sure to make an appointment.



**Apply for you 2024 PFD Deadline to apply is  
March 31, 2024**

[Welcome to the 2024 PFD Online Application  
\(alaska.gov\)](http://alaska.gov)

Senator Hoffman introducing his wife Lillian Hoffman on the Senate  
Floor January 16th, 2024