



House Speaker Bryce Edgmon's *Legislative Update*



Volume XI, No. 15

April 28th, 2017

Our Personal Investment in Our Communities, Our State, and Alaska's Next Generation



On Tuesday evening the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee took public testimony on HB 115—the Education Funding Act—and afterward much was made of the fact that a majority of the more than 100 people who called in were in favor of this tax for schools. The testimony went on until after 10:00 p.m., and many people waited hours to put their views on the record.

While a marathon run of public testimony might not exactly qualify as a scientific sample of the entire Alaskan electorate, the stats were heartening. But what impressed me even more than the numbers was the tone and considerateness of those Alaskans in support of the bill.



Speaker Edgmon presiding over the House Floor earlier this week.

Testifiers spoke of their willingness to personally contribute to the most fundamental and important of state services—the education of the next generation of Alaskans. I was stirred by their sense of caring and responsibility for the wellbeing of their communities, and I was impressed by their understanding of how that moral and material investment is also essential for ensuring a thriving economic future for Alaska.

No one, including me, wants to pay tax on their income, but the majority of Alaskans who testified on Tuesday night had clear beliefs about what kind of Alaska they want for themselves and their children, and they know that with oil revenues a small fraction of what they once were, we will need to take more responsibility to maintain and increase the quality of our lives here.

I recently wrote to a thoughtful constituent of mine in McGrath:

“Our House Majority Coalition is offering a solution to the fiscal dilemma that we think is practical and as evenhanded as possible. As you clearly understand, there is nothing out of the ordinary about our proposals.

“Our cuts to the Operating Budget were modest compared to recent years because we’ve reached a point of diminishing returns. If you cut so much that you simply cripple programs and services, then you’ve removed the value from those dollars you do spend and you’ve set up government to fail.

“We believe that what state government currently provides is justified—legally and morally, as you say, but also according to what our constituents tell us they think is necessary and worthwhile. All the tools needed to pay for it are at hand, and as I mentioned above, in most parts of the country they’re considered pretty conventional methods.

“You’re right that there is a wide chasm between our plan and what the Senate is offering. The negotiations that need to happen in the coming weeks will not be easy. Still, I have some hope that reason and practicality will carry some weight.”

To “reason and practicality” I would also add “caring and responsibility.” I was moved by the dedication of those dozens of people who waited hours to put their views on the record Tuesday night. It heightens my pride in the people of Alaska, and it’s the kind of encouragement we need as the Alaska House Majority Coalition forges ahead in its effort to do what we know to be best for our constituents and our future economic prosperity.



Speaker Edgmon with members of the press in his office on Thursday. Earlier, the Senate Majority and the House Minority abruptly voted to adjourn a Joint Session of the Legislature before it could take up confirmations of Governor Walker’s appointees to boards, commissions, and departments. The Speaker was disappointed in the maneuver, noting that more than 100 Alaskans who have stepped up to do public service will needlessly have to continue to await their confirmation votes.

On Deck Next Week...

(S)FINANCE Standing Committee
Apr 29 **Saturday** 9:00 AM

**HB 111 OIL & GAS PRODUCTION
TAX;PAYMENTS;CREDITS**
Public Testimony <9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
Must be Signed up by 10:30 a.m.

(S)FINANCE Standing Committee
May 01 **Monday** 9:00 AM
HB 111 OIL & GAS PRODUCTION
TAX;PAYMENTS;CREDITS

(H)FINANCE Standing Committee
May 01 **Monday** 1:30 PM
Overview: The Economy & Fiscal Policy
+ SB 6 INDUSTRIAL HEMP PRODUCTION

(H)RULES Standing Committee
May 01 **Monday** 1:30 PM
SB 3 SMALL VESSEL WASTEWATER EXEMPTION; 1% ART
SB 51 EXTEND BOARD OF VETERINARY EXAMINERS
SB 55 OMNIBUS CRIME/CORRECTIONS
SB 88 AK MENTAL HEALTH TRUST LAND EXCHANGE
SB 100 MUNICIPAL LIENS: AUTHORITY FOR & PRIORITY
SCR 2 SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH:APRIL 2017

(H)LABOR & COMMERCE
May 01 **Monday** 3:15 PM
HB 230 TELECOMMUNICATIONS & INTERNET PRIVACY

(S)FINANCE Standing Committee
May 02 **Tuesday** 9:00 AM
HB 111 OIL & GAS PRODUCTION
TAX;PAYMENTS;CREDITS

(H)FISHERIES Special Committee
May 02 **Tuesday** 10:00 AM
HB 231 CFEC: BD. SALARY;STAFF CLASSIFIED SERVICE

(H)STATE AFFAIRS Standing Committee
May 02 **Tuesday** 3:00 PM
HB 200 NONPARTISAN OPEN PRIMARY ELECTIONS

(S)FINANCE Standing Committee
May 03 **Wednesday** 9:00 AM
HB 111 OIL & GAS PRODUCTION
TAX;PAYMENTS;CREDITS

(H)RESOURCES Standing Committee
May 03 **Wednesday** 1:00 PM
HB 238 REPEAL ROYALTY RELIEF: SHALE; COOK INLET

(H)FINANCE Standing Committee

May 03 **Wednesday** 1:30 PM
Overview: The Economy & Fiscal Policy
SB 32 PRESCRIPTIONS FOR BIOLOGICAL PRODUCTS

(S)FINANCE Standing Committee
May 04 **Thursday** 9:00 AM
HB 111 OIL & GAS PRODUCTION
TAX;PAYMENTS;CREDITS

(H)FISHERIES Special Committee
May 04 **Thursday** 10:00 AM
Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled

(H)FINANCE Standing Committee*
May 04 **Thursday** 1:30 PM
Overview: The Economy & Fiscal Policy
SB 28 MUNICIPAL LAND SELECTIONS: PETERSBURG

(H)HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES
May 04 **Thursday** 3:00 PM
HJR 20 MEDICAID EXPANSION

(S)FINANCE Standing Committee
May 05 **Friday** 9:00 AM
+= HB 111 OIL & GAS PRODUCTION
TAX;PAYMENTS;CREDITS

(H)FINANCE Standing Committee*
May 05 **Friday** 1:30 PM
Overview: The Economy & Fiscal Policy

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