

Senator Kevin Meyer

Serving Huffman, O'Malley, Abbott Loop, Independence Park, East Dowling



March 13, 2017

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Today marks day 56 and the beginning of the ninth week of the legislative session. This week, the House of Representatives will be considering the operating budget on the floor, and the Senate Finance committee will be taking public testimony on our operating budget on Wednesday and Thursday. To participate, you can find the schedule for testimony [HERE](#).

Below you can find more in-depth information on the Senate Majority's 3-part fiscal plan, as well as information on the three standing committees I am on: [Resources](#), [Labor & Commerce](#), and [Judiciary](#). To keep up to date in real time, you can check [BASIS](#) for the current committee schedule and sign up to follow particular bills [HERE](#).

As always, I welcome your comments, suggestions, and ideas. It is an honor to serve as State Senator for District M.

Sincerely,

2017 PERMANENT FUND DIVIDEND

Don't forget to apply for your **2017 Permanent Fund Dividend!**

You can go to the online application site [HERE](#). The instruction booklet can be found [HERE](#).

The deadline is March 31, 2017.

STATE BUDGET & SENATE MAJORITY FISCAL PLAN

At the beginning of the legislative session, the Alaska Senate Majority formulated a fiscal plan based on what we know needs to be done: 1) stabilize state spending, 2) stabilize state revenue, and 3) protect future reserves and Alaskans' Permanent Fund dividend.

The 3-Part Plan

- Reduce State Spending.** The Senate established a goal of \$300 million in budget reductions – this continues our mission to shrink the state government footprint. These reductions are in addition to the approximately \$3.5 billion we have reduced over the past four years.
- Reform & Establish a Spending Limit.** Pass a statutory spending limit that works first, then proceed to a constitutional spending limit for voters to consider on the November 2018 ballot.
- Protect our state reserves and the Permanent Fund.** Implement a structured, rules-based draw from the Earnings Reserve that will help fund essential and constitutionally required government services, and provide a reliable, steady dividend to qualified Alaskans. Use the Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR) to fill the remaining deficit, but only up to the overall state spending limit. This will draw out the life of the CBR, rather than deplete it in a few short years.

Senate Bill 26

This week the Senate is poised to take action on [SB 26](#), which contains two of the three parts of the fiscal plan – the statutory spending limit and the protection of our reserves and the Permanent Fund. SB 26 establishes a spending limit, sets the framework and the rules for utilizing a POMV draw from the Earnings Reserve, and provides statutory framework for the payment of an annual dividend to Alaskans. Documents pertaining to the bill can be found [HERE](#).

Spending Limit

A spending limit ensures that downward pressure is kept on the size and scope of government. The proposed spending limit in SB 26 is \$4.1 billion of unrestricted general funds (UGF). This amount is in range of historic spending levels, minus the peaks that have occurred due to the high price of oil. As a comparison, ten years ago in FY 2007, the UGF budget was \$4 billion. The current fiscal year (FY 2017), the UGF budget is \$4.3 (down from a high of \$8 billion in FY 2013). Not subject to the proposed spending limit are the annual payment of dividends, debt service and debt obligation of the State of Alaska, and future capital budgets.

Utilizing our reserves and protecting the Permanent Fund

SB 26 establishes a percent of market value (POMV) approach to draw annually from the five-year average of the Permanent Fund's value. This draw will come from the Earnings Reserve Account – not the Permanent Fund principal, or *corpus*. A portion of the annual draw will go to pay dividends each year, and the remainder of the draw will go to help pay for essential and constitutionally required government services such as education, public safety and health & social services. Based on the modeling of the POMV draw done by our non-partisan Legislative Finance Division analysts, this will provide each qualified Alaskan an annual dividend of roughly \$1000.

STANDING COMMITTEES & CONFIRMATION HEARINGS

Senate Resources: This week the Senate Resources committee will hear from the Governor's appointees to the [Board of Fisheries](#), the [Big Game Commercial Services Board](#), and the Commissioner-designee for the [Department of Natural Resources](#), [Board of Game](#) and the [Big Game Commercial Services Board](#). The Resources committee will also receive an overview of potential LNG opportunities in Houston, Alaska.

Senate Labor & Commerce: This week the committee will hear several bills: [SB 79](#) – the Governor's bill to stem the opioid addiction crisis in Alaska; [SB 37](#) – regarding the Board of Pharmacy, expanding its authority to license and inspect drug facilities located outside of Alaska, and establishing an Executive Administrator position to carry out the board's duties; [SB 64](#) – the Uniform Environmental Covenants Act; [SB 71](#) – increasing the limit of commercial fishing loans, and; [SB 75](#) – establishing limited teacher certificates in the areas of Alaska Native culture, military science, vocational or technical education, and any language other than English. On Thursday we will hear from the Governor's appointees to various boards and commissions (TBA).

Senate Judiciary: This week the committee will hear several bills, including [HB 77](#) – the revisor's bill that is introduced and passed annually to clean up existing state statute drafting issues; [HB 104](#) – eliminating the automatic reporting of information about civil case settlements; [SB 6](#) – defining hemp as an agricultural product and allowing for its commercial farming; [SB 69](#) – adding failure to disclose a concealed weapon within a vehicle to a peace officer upon contact to the misconduct involving weapons in the 5th degree statute, and; [SB 55](#) – the technical revisions to the omnibus criminal justice reform statutes.

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OMBUDSMAN & VICTIMS' RIGHTS ADVOCATE RECRUITMENTS

The Legislature is responsible for appointing the [Ombudsman](#) and the [Chief Victims' Rights Advocate](#), whose terms expire in 2017. The first step of this process is to get qualified applicants through Workplace Alaska during the application period, which opened on March 3 and runs through April 3. If you are interested in applying, or know someone who would be, you can find the recruitment [HERE](#).

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Senator Meyer's Web Page:



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2017 ASSIGNMENTS:

Senate Rules Committee

Chairman

Senate Resources Committee

Member

Senate Labor and Commerce Committee

Member

Senate Judiciary Committee

Member

Senate Committee on Committees

Member

Legislative Council

Member



Constituent Kristin Luby and colleagues/volunteers with the American Heart Association stopped by the office for a visit on issues important to heart health.



Legislators served food at an annual fundraiser for the Southeast Alaska Food Bank. Pictured above are myself, Senator Peter Micicche and Representative Chris Birch.



Azachorok Inc., CEO Loren Peterson, visited the Capitol along with Mountain Village City Council member Joyce Brown, Elders Advisory Committee members Matthew Waskey, Lucy Peterson, and Legislative Advocate Emil Notti.



U.S. Senator Murkowski visited with the Senate Leadership when she was in Juneau to give her annual address to the legislature in February.



The Key Coalition of Alaska came to Juneau to promote issues important to Alaskans with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

If you have moved out of the district, or would like to be removed from my mailing list, please click [HERE](#).