



March 1st, 2019

Dear friends and neighbors,

Thanks to those of you who have reached out to me to discuss the governor's budget proposal. I have read and listened to everyone who has sent in thoughts and concerns, and will carefully consider them as the Senate reviews and amends the budget. If you haven't already, please call or email me. I would welcome having a dialogue about your priorities for Alaska's future.

One of the most common concerns I've heard about the proposed budget are the cuts to education. As a former teacher myself, I have always made our education system a top priority in my time in the legislature. This session will be no different. The Senate is working together to build a budget that works for all Alaskans, while still applying downward pressure on the budget so that we can live within our means.

As we go into March, I'll be having multiple town hall discussions to hear your input about where we're going as a state. Tomorrow, the Anchorage Caucus will be held at East Anchorage High from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Turnagain Town Hall will be held on Friday, March 8th, at the Turnagain Social Club, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The West Anchorage Town Hall will be held on Friday, March 15th, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The tentative location is Lumen Christi High. I look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,



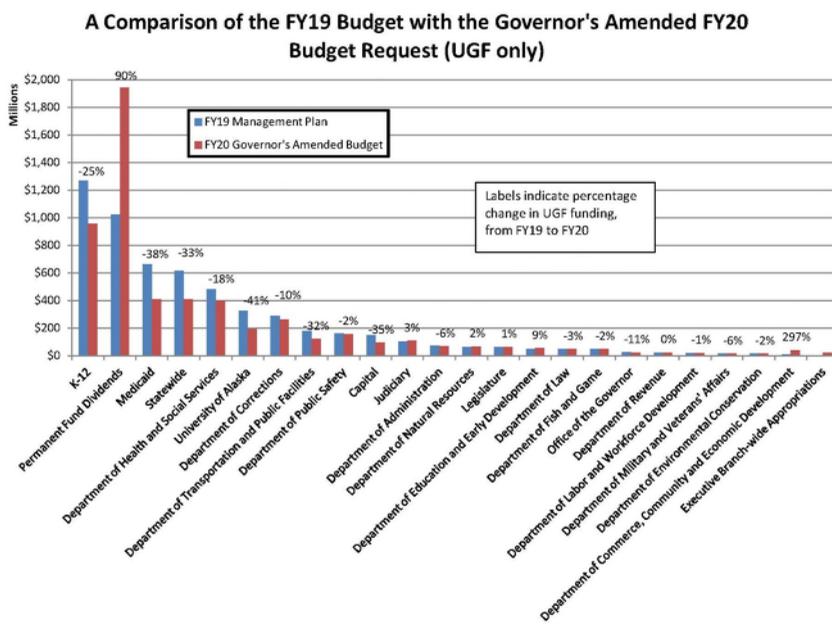
At the Innovation Summit, startups and jobs take center stage

I was proud to speak at the 2019 Innovation Summit last week where I introduced this year's Pitch Contest. Net job creation is driven by business start-ups with innovative ideas, like the young men and women pitching that evening. Innovation is the central driver of high-growth start-ups, allowing companies to form around new products and services.

With that being said, I'm so proud to be co-chairing the Innovation Caucus with Rep. John Lincoln, which is made up of a group of legislators who are committed to turning Alaska into an innovation hub. We are constantly exploring policy options to improve Alaska's competitiveness and create an environment where small businesses can flourish. The Innovation Caucus is very proud that Alaska is first in the nation for women owned businesses.

The budget moving forward

As the Legislature builds upon the budget, it's important to know where the funds are being proposed to be spent. Below is a graph from the Department of Revenue representing the expenditures from Governor Dunleavy's proposed budget and the previous fiscal year's budget expenditures.



As you can see, the largest expenditure is the dividend. The cuts being proposed are to account for the size of the dividend given out at the rate of the original formula. It's a conversation we need to have as a state - if Alaskans are committed to receiving a full dividend, the cost will be state services: education, health care, the Marine Highway, among others.

How to watch the legislature

Gavel Alaska is the best way to stay informed on the day-to-day proceedings of the legislature. You can watch the floor sessions, committee hearings, press conferences, and more, by visiting Gavel Alaska's website at www.360north.org.

You can also watch on the legislature's own website: www.akleg.gov. You can also download the Alaska Legislature app and watch on your smartphone.

If you are a veteran currently experiencing a crisis, please know that help is always available. [You can click here](#) to find local and national resources available to help keep you safe or get you back on your feet if you've been struggling.

- Sign up for my e-newsletter: www.AlaskaSenate.org/Costello
- Email me: Sen.Mia.Costello@akleg.gov
- Follow Legislation: [Alaska State Legislature Website, BASIS](#)
- Call me at 907-465-4968
- Text a bill number (ex: SB126) to 559-245-2529 to text alerts on updated bill statuses



Mia meets with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority: Here's Mia meeting with the Alaska chapter to talk about education and their priorities for Alaska.



Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education visits with Mia: It was a great visit with constituent and council executive director Ric Nelson during the KEY Coalition's annual Juneau fly-in.



Mia helps with a 4H breakfast: Here's Mia with her colleagues supporting the 4H program in Alaska giving youth valuable life skills in animal husbandry, farming, and working with their community.



Mia meets with seniors: Members of the American Association of Retired Persons came to Juneau to share concerns about the governor's proposed budget to eliminate the Senior Benefits Program.



Sharing across cultures: Here's Mia and the Consul of Japan who was visiting to talk about the importance of programs like the Japanese immersion program at Sand Lake Elementary School, home to the oldest language immersion program in the Anchorage School District.

Upcoming Community Councils



Sand Lake Community Council will meet this month on Monday, March 4th, 6:30pm, at Sand Lake Elementary



Spenard Community Council will meet this month on Wednesday, March 6th, 6:30pm, at the Spenard Recreational Center



Turnagain Community Council will meet on Thursday, March 7th, 7:00pm, at West High in the Career and Technical Education Building, Room 152

Stay Connected With Mia

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