



Interim Report
By
Senator Gary Stevens

Hello again. The eyes of Alaska's political world are focusing on Tuesday, November 6th, when voters will cast ballots in the General Election. As you know, the announcement that Governor Walker is suspending his reelection campaign means Alaska will have a new governor for the next four years. Additionally, our United States Congress seat, ten Alaska State Senate seats and all forty seats in the Alaska House of Representatives are up for election this year. With several lawmakers leaving office this year, we will have many new faces in the Capitol this coming January, along with the next governor's new commissioners and personnel.

The General Election ballot also asks for votes on the retention of several justices, and a "yes" or "no" on Ballot Measure 1, the citizens' initiative intended to protect salmon habitat through changes to the fish habitat permitting laws and protection standards.

Your vote matters, so please take the time to vote in this election.

If you need to know more about who and what's on the ballot, and have not already had the chance to review the Alaska Division of Elections election pamphlet for our region, you can do so online at:

www.elections.alaska.gov/election/2018/General/OEPBooks/2018%20AK%20Region%20I%20pamphlet_WEB.pdf

If you are not sure of where to vote, you can find that out on the Division of Elections' website at: www.elections.alaska.gov/Core/wheretovoteandhours.php

Please note that although Governor Walker and former Lt. Governor Mallott are no longer seeking office, their withdrawal from the race came too late for their names to be removed from the ballot. Therefore, any votes cast for them will count toward their total.

Thanks to all those who have stepped forward to run for public office. We may not agree on everything, but I appreciate your commitment to serving Alaska and its people.

Looking Ahead to Next Session

I will not know my committee and other assignments for the next legislature until organization meetings take place soon after the election. I will update you on those in the next *Interim Report*.

In the meantime, I am currently working on four bills for introduction.

One bill will ask the University of Alaska and the state's school districts to expand dual-credit opportunities to high school students through the Middle College program. This could particularly benefit students from low-income families who might not have the financial resources to attend college otherwise, as tuition costs would be paid by a student's local school district.

I have invited Senate and House Education Committees to a hearing on Middle Colleges on Tuesday, November 13th in Anchorage. At that time, we will find out more about what's already going on in Alaska and the nation, and what the legislature can do to help more districts move forward with Middle Colleges.

I am having a bill drafted to resolve issues involving transferability of credits between the University of Alaska system and its community colleges. The bill will ask the University's Board of Regents to oversee this process, and to provide the legislature with an annual progress report.

In anticipation of introducing legislation in January, I have asked the Permanent Fund Corporation for their input on the feasibility of managing municipal governments' funds. A similar bill was last introduced in the 1990s, but with the successful investment record of the Permanent Fund Corporation over the years, some local governments may find it advantageous to utilize these services.

I have pre-filed a bill to establish commemorative license plates honoring Alaska's Combat Veterans for their service. It will be assigned a bill number shortly before the first day of session, Tuesday, January 15th, and receive committee assignments when session begins.

Assistances with State Agencies

My staff is available throughout the year to assist you with issues involving state agencies.

Call us in Kodiak at (907) 486-4925.

You can reach us in Homer at (907) 235-0690.

My State Capitol office in Juneau can be reached at (907) 465-4925, or toll free at 1-800-821-4925.

E-mail me at Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov

My interim address is:

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(Please note that we are unable to assist you with legal matters. If you have a case involving a lawsuit or pending litigation and need help finding an attorney, I recommend contacting the Alaska Bar Association at www.alaskabar.org.)

Help with the Federal Government

Alaska's Congressional Delegation can aide you with matters involving the federal government, and all have offices in-state.

Congressman Don Young's Anchorage office can be reached at (866) 990-5979.

Senator Dan Sullivan's Anchorage Office can be reached at (907) 271-5915.

Senator Lisa Murkowski's Anchorage office can be reached at (877) 829-6030.

Thanks again to our local media for their assistance in sharing this information, and to you for reading this month's column.