



Senator Cathy Giessel

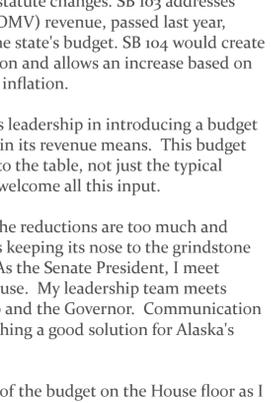
District N

Northeast Anchorage, Anchorage Hillside, Indian, Bird, Girdwood and Portage

April 10, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Crime bills in the Senate are moving forward. Two of the Governor's bills (pretrial, sentencing) are all in the Judiciary committee. One bill (probation/parole) is in State Affairs. Two bills on sexual assault are in the Finance committee.



The Governor's Constitutional Amendments have also been moving forward. SJR 4 requires a citizens' vote on any new tax or tax increase and is in the Judiciary committee. SJR 5, putting the PFD in the Constitution, is also in Judiciary. SJR 6 creates a new spending limit and that bill is in Finance.

Senate Finance has also introduced statute changes. SB 103 addresses how the Percent of Market Value (POMV) revenue, passed last year, should be split between PFDs and the state's budget. SB 104 would create a spending limit that is set at \$5 billion and allows an increase based on an average of the previous 5 years of inflation.

I continue to applaud the Governor's leadership in introducing a budget that challenges the State to live within its revenue means. This budget has brought real, working Alaskans to the table, not just the typical special interests/lobbying groups. I welcome all this input.

That said, I remain concerned that the reductions are too much and being pushed too fast. The Senate is keeping its nose to the grindstone every day to find a middle ground. As the Senate President, I meet regularly with the Speaker of the House. My leadership team meets regularly with the House Leadership and the Governor. Communication and collaboration are critical to reaching a good solution for Alaska's families, businesses and jobs.

The House is debating their version of the budget on the House floor as I write this. They expect to be working through amendments for the rest of this week.

Then the operating budget will come over to the Senate. We are prepared to receive it and work quickly on it. The Senate will make its changes to the budget, then send it back to the House.

The House will decline to agree to the Senate budget. Then a Conference Committee is appointed, composed of 3 House members (usually the two Finance co-chairs and a minority member) and 3 Senate members (the 2 Finance co-chairs and a minority member). The Conference Committee negotiates an agreement between the two versions of the budget.

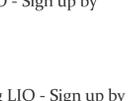
I hope you find the contents of this week's newsletter helpful. See you next week!

In this week's newsletter you'll find:

- Senator Spotlight with Senator Coghill
- Senate Finance
- Senate Finance This Week
- Senator Sullivan Honors Alaskan of the Week: John Sturgeon
- Drug Prevention Speaker, Ray Lozano
- Department of Health & Social Services - Opioids in Alaska
- Firewise Community Site Award Search for Rabbit Creek Area
- FEMA Disaster Relief
- Tree Grafting Workshop
- Community Meeting on Archives Site Rezone R-3 to R-4A
- Minnesota Drive Lighting Curfew Saves State Dollars
- Al Adams Young Political Leader Fellowship Opportunity
- Constituents in the Capitol

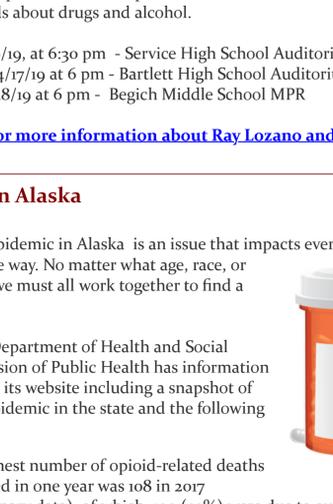
Kind regards,
Cathy

[Click here to email me.](#)



Senator Spotlight

Senator John Coghill joined me this week for the 'Meet a Senator' segment. Senator Coghill was born and raised in Alaska, and has served in the Senate for 20 years. It was a pleasure to talk with him about his upbringing as a third generation Alaskan, his background, and his path to the Alaska State Legislature.



Senate Finance

Wednesday, April 3rd: Education Data Analysis

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

Thursday, April 4th: [SB 65](#) Department of Labor Technical Education Programs, [SB 66](#) Labor Standards/Safety; Workers Comp, [SB 55](#) Temporary Appointments to Court of Appeals

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

Friday, April 5th: Deferred Maintenance Update: OMB & DOT

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

Monday, April 8th: Medicaid Cost Containment

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

Tuesday, April 9th: [SB 43](#) Extend Big Game Commercial Services Board, [SB 44](#) Telehealth: Physician Assistants, [SB 93](#) Medical Provider Incentives/Loan Repayments

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

Wednesday, April 10th

9:00 am [SB 103](#) PFD Appropriations, [SB 104](#) Appropriation Limit

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

1:00 pm Alaska Marine Highway System

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

Senate Finance This Week

There is a lot coming up this week in Senate Finance, including public testimony on the budget. This is your chance to weigh in on specific parts of the budget.

Thursday, April 11th

9:00 am [SB 20](#) and [SB 21](#) Budget Public Testimony.

- MatSu LIO & Fairbanks LIO: Sign up by 10am

1:00 pm Budget Public Testimony.

- 1:00-2:15: Capitol (Juneau) Room 532 - Sign up by 1:45pm
- 2:15-2:45: Nome LIO, Bethel LIO, Kotzebue LIO, and Unalaska LIO - Sign up by 2:30
- 2:45-4:45: Anchorage LIO - Sign up by 3:45

Friday, April 12th:

9:00 am Budget Public Testimony.

- 9:00-9:45: Kenai LIO, Kodiak LIO, Dillingham LIO - Sign up by 9:30
- 9:45-10:30: Glennallen LIO, Seward LIO, Homer LIO - Sign up by 10:15

1:00 pm Budget Public Testimony.

- 1:00-2:00: Ketchikan LIO, Wrangell LIO, Petersburg LIO - Sign up by 1:30
- 2:00-2:30: Utqiagvik LIO, Tok LIO, Delta Junction LIO - Sign up by 2:15
- 2:30-3:00: Sitka LIO, Cordova LIO, Valdez LIO - Sign up by 3:00
- 3:30-5:00: Offnets - Sign up by 4:15

You can tune into upcoming Senate Finance hearings by visiting [360 North](#) or the [Alaska Legislature](#) website.

Senator Sullivan Honors Alaskan of the Week

U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan spoke on the Senate floor on April 4th in Washington D.C. to recognize John Sturgeon of Anchorage as "Alaskan of the Week."



Senator Sullivan Honors Alaskan of the Week: John Sturgeon

[Click here to read the full press release.](#)

Drug Prevention Speaker, Ray Lozano

The Alaska State Elks Association has arranged for Ray Lozano from California to speak at three free public events about communicating with teens and kids about drugs and alcohol.

Tuesday, 4/16/19, at 6:30 pm - Service High School Auditorium

Wednesday, 4/17/19 at 6 pm - Bartlett High School Auditorium

Thursday, 4/18/19 at 6 pm - Begich Middle School MPR

[Click here for more information about Ray Lozano and his message.](#)

Opioids in Alaska

The opioid epidemic in Alaska is an issue that impacts everyone in our state in some way. No matter what age, race, or walk of life, we must all work together to find a solution.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Division of Public Health has information published on its website including a snapshot of the opioid epidemic in the state and the following statistics:

- The highest number of opioid-related deaths identified in one year was 108 in 2017 (preliminary data); of which, 100 (93%) were due to overdose.
- During 2010-2017, with 623 identified opioid overdose deaths, the opioid overdose death rate increased 77% (from 7.7 per 100,000 persons in 2010 to 13.6 in 2017).
- The rates of opioid-related inpatient hospitalizations were 28.5 per 100,000 persons in 2016 and 26.0 per 100,000 persons in 2017, with total inpatient hospitalization charges exceeding \$23 million.

The department points out several encouraging findings:

- Preliminary data suggest a 36 percent reduction in the number of people who passed from opioid-related overdose deaths, from 100 people in 2017 to 64 people in 2018.
- The rate of Medicare Part D patients who received opioid prescriptions has decreased annually since 2015, suggesting more judicious prescribing in Alaska.
- Naloxone use is increasing; this is likely due in part to the increased statewide availability of this life-saving overdose reversal medication.

[Click here for more information from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.](#)

[Click here to learn more about the State of Alaska's focus areas for the budget in the Statewide Opioid Action Plan.](#)

Firewise Community Site Award Sought for Rabbit Creek Area

The Anchorage Fire Department and Rabbit Creek Community Council are working together to prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters.

There are several events scheduled for this spring to assist homeowners in the RCCC area in preparing for fire season. There will be a kick-off event on **Thursday, April 11, 2019 at Golden View Middle School** parking lot from **6:00-7:00 PM** to give homeowners (and students) a chance to meet AFD firefighters, view the apparatus used to fight wildland fires and sign up for a free home inspection.

Other events include activities to recognize Wildland Fire Prevention and Preparedness Week, include:

- Chipper Day on Saturday, May 4, 2019. RCCC residents are encouraged to prune their tree limbs and remove dangerous brush and vegetation from around homes. Stack limbs in front of your home (clear of road right-of-way) for free pick up and recycling (the following week of May 6th).
- RCCC homeowners are encouraged to sign up for a visit by AFD firefighters to inspect their homes and property for outdoor fire hazards. Cost-share grants for tree removal will be available again this year!
- Firewise public service announcements will resume during the month of May to provide a reminder to all residents and visitors about being safe with fire.
- Wood lots will commence operation during early May, as well, to provide homeowners with a safe alternative to dispose of woody debris from Firewise treatments and other brush/tree removal. A schedule of opening dates and hours of operation will be announced by April 15th.

Please, be sure to check and adhere to local burning restrictions BEFORE you light a fire. **Call the AFD BURN HOTLINE FIRST! at (907)267-5020.**

Remove flammable materials like leaves, dry grass, and wood piles within 30 feet and spruce trees within 15 feet of your home or cabin. Create a "defensible space" around your home to give firefighters a safe environment to work.

[Click here for more information about Firewise Events for Rabbit Creek Area.](#)

FEMA Disaster Relief

FEMA specialists will be offering tips on rebuilding this week (April 8-13) at Walmart locations in Anchorage, Wasilla, and Eagle River.

[Click here for more information.](#)
[Click here to register for FEMA assistance.](#)
[Click here for locations and hours of FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers.](#)

Tree Grafting Workshop

The Alaska Pioneer Growers Association will be hosting a workshop on Tree Grafting. The workshop will take place on **Saturday, April 13th at 1:00pm at the Church of Love** (3502 Spenard Rd.).

[Click here for more information about the workshop.](#)

Community Meeting on "Archives" Site Rezone R-3 to R-4A

On **Thursday, April 11th** the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) will be hosting a community meeting on the "Archives" Site rezone. The meeting will take place at the **Loussac Library Learning Commons Room (3600 Denali St.) from 5:30-6:30pm.**

The undeveloped nine-acre "Archives" Site sits at the corner of Denali Street and 40th Avenue. The site is adjacent to Cuddy Family Midtown Park, the Loussac Library, within walking distance to offices and services, and just minutes from downtown. The Anchorage 2020 Comprehensive Plan and the 2040 Land Use Plan designate this site for Mixed Use Development - a mix of housing and commercial uses.

The MOA will be giving a presentation on the rezone from R-3-Mixed Residential District to R-4A-Multifamily Residential Mixed-Use.

[Click here to view the invitation with a map of the area.](#)

For more information contact: Wende Wilber, AICP PTP, Kittelson & Associates wilber@kittelson.com. (907) 433-8103.

Minnesota Drive Lighting Curfew Saves State Dollars

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) officials are reporting savings on the Minnesota Drive Lighting Curfew pilot program, launched in July 2017.

Electricity is a significant part of DOT&PF's Central Region operating budget, costing \$2.2 million annually for approximately 8,500 fixtures. Late night and early morning hours account for 50 percent of the department's electrical budget for lighting, but less than 5 percent of the traffic is on the road. After a year of monitoring, the department has documented approximately \$5,200 in savings, despite a significant rise in electrical costs. The savings can be applied to other regional maintenance needs.

Because of the continued need to save operating costs, the department is expanding the lighting curfew to additional sections of state roads and highways with an additional estimated savings of \$190,000. Sections of roadway that will be included in the next year include:

- Sterling Highway MP 80-83, 4.0 miles (implemented March 2019)
- Glenn Highway-Airport Heights to Parks Highway, 34 miles
- Minnesota Drive-International Airport to Tudor, 0.6 miles
- C Street-Tudor to O'Malley, 3.8 miles
- Trunk Road-Parks Highway to Seldon Road, 3.5 miles

The lighting curfew was implemented on the Sterling Highway mile 80-83 in March 2019. Sterling Highway mile 80-83 runs through the Sterling urban area. Plans to extend the curfew to additional highway sections will be developed later this year.

The department is also converting eligible roadways to LED lighting with federal funds as repair cycles occur. Future LED Lighting Retrofit Projects along the Glenn Highway from the Seward Meridian Highway to Lucas Road is estimated to generate another \$33,000 in annual savings. Combined LED retrofits and curfews have the potential to reduce state costs by up to 75 percent of the existing system costs.

[Click here to read the full press release from ADOT&PF.](#)

Al Adams Young Political Leader Fellowship

The First Alaskans Institute (FAI) has announced that applications are now being accepted for the 2019 Al Adams Young Political Leadership Fellowship to place Alaska Native and rural Alaskans in Washington, D.C. during congressional sessions. This opportunity is to place a Fellow in the office of Senator Dan Sullivan.

The Al Adams Young Political Leader Fellowship began in 2013 to honor the late Inupiaq statesman from Kotzebue.

[Click here for more information and to apply online.](#)

Applications are due on **Friday, April 19, 2019**. For more information, please contact Ella Sassuuk Tonuchuck at 907-677-1707 or ellatonuchuk@firstalaskans.org.

Constituents in the Capitol

It's always a pleasure to visit with constituents while I am here in Juneau. I appreciate the time and effort it takes to visit us during the legislative session. Here's who stopped by my office this past week:

Girdwood Fire and Rescue

It's a pleasure to serve and represent the wonderful people of district N!

I look forward to hearing your ideas, suggestions and comments.

[To email me, click here.](#)

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