



Legislative Update

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Senator Click Bishop

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Greetings from Juneau!

Thank you to the many, many, many people who contacted my office this session about the budget, crime legislation, and more. In all my years of public service, I have never gotten so many calls, emails, and letters as I have this year. I'm still catching up on all the emails I got from constituents, and you will hear from me soon.

Special session

The regular session ended late last night with several things unfinished: the budget, agreement on the size of this year's Permanent Fund Dividend, and the crime bill. That's why the governor called legislators back for a special session that started today. He wants us to address five things:

1. Education funding
2. House Bill 39 operating budget
3. House Bill 40 mental health operating and capital budget
4. Senate Bill 19 capital budget
5. House Bill 49 crime legislation

Education funding

In April 2018, the legislature approved full funding for education for the Fiscal Year 2020 budget that starts July 1, 2019 – more than \$1.1 billion for education, a one-time increase of \$30 million, and \$78 million for pupil transportation. The governor believes this action was wrong and would like us to pass this spending under his watch – which started last December. Many of my colleagues and I disagree. I don't see why we need a do-over on something that's already done, but it's the governor's prerogative to ask legislators to consider this idea.

HB 39 operating and HB 40 mental health budgets

Most of the work on these budgets is done. The big thing still undone: agreeing on the size of this year's PFD. That's the heart of why we are now in special session. That and how to pay for it. Stay tuned for future updates.

SB 19 capital budget

This pays for things like road repairs, fixing up buildings, and more. As it now stands, there is money to renovate Barnette Middle School, fix a bad school roof in Chalkyitsik, and allow the use of snow machine licensing fees to maintain snowmobile trails.

HB 49 crime legislation

A conference committee today approved a compromise on the crime bill that will replace and repeal most of what's left of Senate Bill 91 criminal justice reform that was enacted in 2016. HB 49 increases penalties and sentences for criminals and adds more restrictions for bail, probation, and parole. The next step? Approval by the House and Senate.

Thanks again for all your input. It matters.

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