



Senator Cathy Giessel

District N

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

February 5, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

It is a busy week, coming up here in the Senate. Feb. 4 was day 21. There are 14 Finance Subcommittees meetings this week to take deep dives into those Department budgets. We have heard from you that its time to reduce government spending and waste.



The Finance Committee has been having daily, robust meetings, examining spending, debt, credit and contracts. The links to the video and handouts from those meetings are linked in this newsletter.

In this week's video, I spend a few minutes talking with Senator David Wilson. I will be inviting different members of the Senate to join me for these short discussions about their work. I hope you enjoy hearing from some folks that you've never met before.

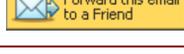
In this newsletter, you will find...

- Senator Spotlight
- Earthquake Contractors
- Seward Highway
- Finance Committee
- Judiciary Committee - Crime Bill
- Read by 9 Policy Brief
- Anchorage City-Wide Career & Job Fair

Kind regards,

Cathy

[Click here to email me.](#)



Senator Spotlight



I'm starting something new for my weekly newsletter called the "Senator Spotlight." This week I asked Senator Wilson from Wasilla to join me to discuss legislation, issues, and priorities.

Earthquake Contractors

As a result of the earthquake, there may be individuals and companies soliciting work to repair damage to homes or property. It is important that a person verifies the legitimacy of a contractor before signing any contract or paying any monies.



To verify that a contractor is properly licensed for the work being performed, you can call the Municipality of Anchorage Building Department at 907-343-8211.

[Click here to view a copy of the notice sent from the Municipality of Anchorage, Development Services Department.](#)

Seward Highway Mitigation Efforts

I have had a number of constituents express concern over the Seward Highway and the dangerous conditions that are present. School buses transport students daily, people drive to and from work and business in Anchorage, and something has to be fixed.



The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) project that is now in design is not scheduled for construction until 2020. In the meantime, we are moving forward with clearing ditches of rubble that have built up which will at least lessen the rocks that hit the ditch and bounce back onto the road. This is a high priority for the department, and several mitigation options have been explored. A few examples include:

- Concrete barriers installed near the edge of the pavement
- Targeted scaling of loose rock
- Temporary on-slope mitigation measures such as mesh, bolts, dowels, barriers, and rockfall attenuator barriers.
- Movable rock-fall barriers (MRBs) coupled with lane shifts.

I am going to ensure that the barrier of "no money to implement" does not happen in the upcoming budget.

Senate Finance

Supplemental Budget

On Tuesday, January 29th, the Senate Finance Committee heard from the Office of Management and Budget regarding the Governor's Supplemental Budget legislation ([SB 38](#) and [SB 39](#)).

[Click here for a link to the documents for the hearing.](#)

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)

Mental Health Trust Authority

On Thursday, January 31st, Mike Abbott and Mary Jane Michael from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority presented to the committee.

[Click here for a link to the documents for the hearing.](#)

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)

Indirect Expenditure Report

On Friday, February 1st, the Department of Revenue presented on Indirect Expenditures.

[Click here for a link to the documents for the hearing.](#)

[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)

Senate Judiciary Begins Hearing Crime Bill

The Senate Judiciary Committee will begin hearing [SB 32](#) next week which relates to crimes, sentencing, and probation of offenders.

On Saturday, February 9th, public testimony will be open. If you plan on testifying, plan to arrive to your local LIO office 15 minutes early to sign in. If you are part of a group with the same message, please select a spokesperson.

You can tune into the hearing by visiting [360 North](#) or the [Alaska State Legislature Website](#).

[Click here for a link to the documents relating to SB 32.](#)

Read by 9 - Proven Solutions Exist

This policy brief summarizes many of the things learned in the bipartisan, House & Senate Reading Working Group that met during the Fall of 2018.

- Alaska is 3rd in highest spending per student in the US (\$22,379 per student).
- Yet we are last, 51st, in 4th grade reading for both upper-to-middle income and low-income students.
- The top 10 highest-performing districts in Alaska in 2018 were actually rural districts.
- U.S. Census data for 2018 shows AK with a poverty rate less than the national average, so poverty can't be the reason.
- Florida ranks higher in reading proficiency yet has a much more diverse student population than Alaska.
- Florida has voluntary pre-K but that came after their reading reforms brought them to the top.



As the Reading Brief states, proven solutions exist. This policy brief summarizes those solutions...that can and will work in Alaska.

[Click here to read the full Read by 9 Policy Brief.](#)

[Click here to read the Read by 9 Executive Summary.](#)

Anchorage City-Wide Career and Job Fair

The 2019 Anchorage City-Wide Career & Job Fair is happening this week!



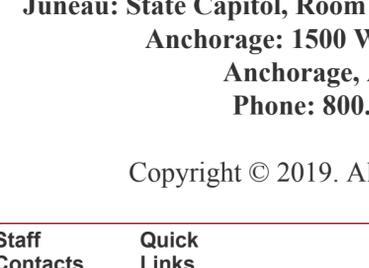
Friday, February 8, 2019 at the University Center.

The fair is free to attend, and open to the public. Doors open at 10:00 am.

Job seekers should attend professionally dressed with copies of your resume to give to employers.

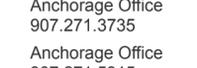
RSVP as a job seeker here: <https://ancjobfair.wixsite.com/2019>

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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