



Senator Cathy Giessel

District N

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

February 19, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you for all your emails in the last week, related to the budget and its impacts on programs that you are of interest to you.

The Senate is not going to rubber stamp this budget. But we are also not going to discard it.

We will do exactly what you have asked us to do...carefully review it, dissect it, evaluate its impact on families, businesses and jobs.

The Alaska Constitution defines the Legislature, the representatives of the people, to be the appropriators, who hold the "power of the purse".

The Senate has been doing the budget background work since we convened on Jan. 15. We have now begun hearings on the proposal from the Governor. This newsletter contains the links to last week's meetings. I want you to have access to the same information that we do, as we do our work and make decisions.

I am attending all Senate Finance meetings. I am also attending Finance Subcommittee meetings. If I can't attend a meeting, I have my staff attend and brief me on the information. It is in the subcommittee meetings that the deep-dive work occurs.

I know the budget was a shock. At the same time, Governor Dunleavy told us that his budget proposal would spend only the money that the State had. There is no reaching into savings in this budget. (Our Budget Reserve savings account only contains \$2 billion.)

The budget returns government to its core services, pays out a "full PFD" (nearly \$3,000 to every man, woman and child), and uses no savings. The Governor's proposal is what a balanced budget, containing these elements, looks like.

The budget is a great opportunity for Alaskans to have that serious conversation about what we want our state to look like. Alaskans have been protected from this conversation for the last 40 years, because oil taxes have paid all the bills. Oil money has also built a very large endowment fund, with the long-term vision that the fund's interest and other earnings would fill the budget gap we have now.

What would you like to see done?

I look forward to hearing your ideas for solutions.

In this week's newsletter you'll find:

- Governor's Proposed Budget
- Honoring Lieutenant Governor Jack Coghill
- AVAP Bill in Senate Finance
- Influenza in Alaska
- Elizabeth Peratrovich Day
- Arbor Day Grants
- Kenai River State Park Advisory Board
- Girdwood Talent in Senate Calendar
- Constituents in the Capitol

Kind regards,

Cathy

[Click here to email me.](#)



Governor's Budget Proposal

Last week, Governor Dunleavy's proposed budget was released ([SSSB 20](#)). I have received a number of phone calls and emails from Alaskans, and encourage you to tune in to previous hearings, and upcoming hearings this week in Senate Finance.

[Thursday, Feb. 14th: Departmental Review](#)

[Friday, Feb. 15th: Departmental Review](#)

[Monday, Feb. 18th: Review of Education and Early Development, Statewide](#)

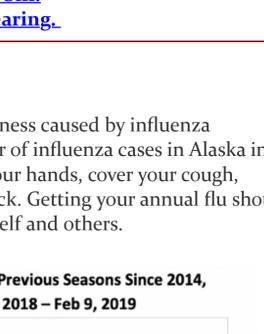
[Tuesday, Feb. 19th: Review of the University of Alaska, Transportation & Public Facilities, and Revenue](#)

To tune into upcoming hearings, you can visit [360 North](#), or the [Alaska State Legislature website](#). The upcoming Senate Finance schedule is as follows:

- Wednesday, Feb. 20th: Review of Fish & Game, Natural Resources, and Environmental Conservation
- Thursday, Feb. 21st: Review of Labor & Workforce Development, Administration, DCCED, Governor
- Friday, Feb. 22nd: Review of Health & Social Services

Honoring Lieutenant Governor Jack Coghill

Last week we lost a great Alaska statesman, Jack Coghill. A true entrepreneur, Jack and his wife, Frances, owned and operated a movie theater, a roadhouse, and a fuel distribution company selling fuel products to villages and towns throughout Interior Alaska. And that doesn't even include his illustrious political career. Alaska was fortunate to benefit from his wisdom and dedication to this state that he so dearly loved.



[Click here to read a statement from Senator John Coghill on the passing of his father, Jack Coghill.](#)



AVAP Bill - Senate Bill 37

The Alaska Vaccine Assessment Program bill, [SB 37](#), was heard in the Senate Finance committee last Wednesday, February 13th.



There was a good discussion about the program and its successes. The bill was heard and held in the committee until a later date.

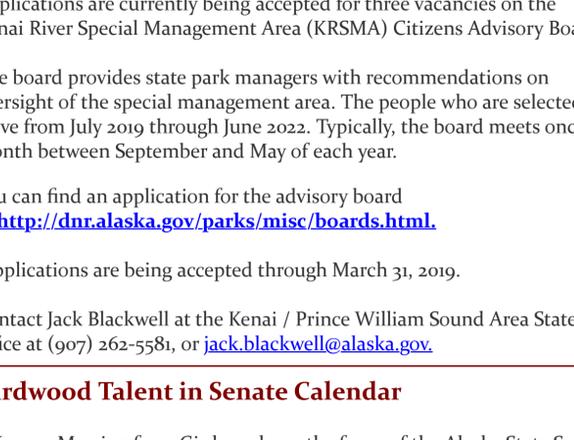
[Click here for documents relating to the bill.](#)

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

Influenza in Alaska

Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. There has been a significant number of influenza cases in Alaska in the last month. Please remember to wash your hands, cover your cough, and stay home from work or school when sick. Getting your annual flu shot is the best thing you can do to protect yourself and others.

Statewide Lab-Confirmed Influenza – Previous Seasons Since 2014, and Current Season, Sep 15, 2018 – Feb 9, 2019



Elizabeth Peratrovich Day



Elizabeth Peratrovich was one of the main driving forces in ensuring the passage of the Anti-Discrimination Act of 1945 in Alaska. This legislation became the first anti-discrimination law in the United States.

February 16th was proclaimed as "Elizabeth Peratrovich Day" in 1988. It is a day to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of the Anti-Discrimination Act, and to honor and celebrate the profound influence Elizabeth had on the state of Alaska.

[Click here to read Governor Dunleavy's Proclamation on Elizabeth Peratrovich Day.](#)

Arbor Day Grants from Alaska Community Forest Council

The Alaska Community Forest Council is offering grants to help celebrate Arbor Day in Alaska on May 20th.

Grants will be in the \$200-\$500 range, and are intended to fund projects that:

- Generate awareness of and participation in Arbor Day in Alaska
- Increase public awareness of the benefits of trees and forests and build support for planting and caring for public trees
- Provide a public demonstration of the benefits of trees and/or proper tree selection, planting and care
- Use trees to solve community problems. Examples include projects that reduce or treat storm water, create wind breaks or living snow fences, restore streams and rivers, plant fruit trees to provide healthy food, screen surfaces prone to graffiti, calm traffic, and beautify school yards



Applications are due by **4:30pm on Friday, March 22nd.**

For more information and application forms, you can visit: <http://forestry.alaska.gov/community/council>.

Kenai River State Park Advisory Board

Applications are currently being accepted for three vacancies on the Kenai River Special Management Area (KRSMA) Citizens Advisory Board.

The board provides state park managers with recommendations on oversight of the special management area. The people who are selected will serve from July 2019 through June 2022. Typically, the board meets once per month between September and May of each year.

You can find an application for the advisory board at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/misc/boards.html>.

Applications are being accepted through March 31, 2019.

Contact Jack Blackwell at the Kenai / Prince William Sound Area State Park office at (907) 262-5581, or jack.blackwell@alaska.gov.

Girdwood Talent in Senate Calendar

Keegan Messing from Girdwood was the focus of the Alaska Senate calendar on Sunday. Keegan is a constituent of mine and placed 12th in Olympic figure skating at the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics!

ALASKA STATE SENATE
Thirty-First Legislature
First Session

Keegan Messing of Girdwood competed in the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics for Canada and came in 12th place. Messing holds dual-citizenship in both the U.S. and Canada and is the first Alaskan to compete in Olympic figure skating. Messing landed both of his quadruple jumps and nailed a triple axel. (*Taney Empire, 1/19/18*)

Sunday February 17 th 2019	LEGISLATIVE DAY 34
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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:

Diane Kaplan and Angela Cox from the Rasmuson Foundation.

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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