



# Senator Cathy Giessel

## District N

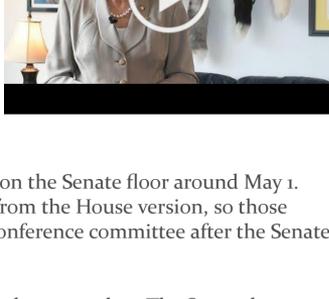
Northeast Anchorage, Anchorage Hillside, Indian, Bird, Girdwood and Portage

April 23, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

The Senate version of the Operating Budget will be up in Senate Finance this week.

The committee will be reviewing the bill and taking amendments. About half of the Senate members serve on the Finance committee, reflecting wildly diverse viewpoints and perspectives.



I expect the Operating Budget to be on the Senate floor around May 1. The Senate budget will be different from the House version, so those differences will be worked out in a conference committee after the Senate passes the bill.

The Alaska Psychiatric Institute is in the news a lot. The Senate has included \$43 million funding for API, which is an increase of \$8 million. The additional funds are to facilitate the opening of 20-30 more beds to serve patients. API provides services that are not available elsewhere for brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers who are in need of high level behavioral health care.

Wellpath is the company brought in to bring the hospital into compliance with federal guidelines. Just a couple weeks ago, API regained certification. Wellpath is contracted to continue to operate the hospital until December, giving the Department of Health and Social Services time to issue their RFP and receive proposals from any and all companies who are interested and qualified to move the hospital forward. The most important thing is that Alaskans who desperately need services have access to quality behavioral health care in Alaska and that the Alaskans who are employed at API have a safe work environment.

Crime legislation is moving along in the Senate. This is our priority and is urgently needed. You can see that property crime rates in our population centers exceed that of Chicago and New York. Sexual Assault crime rates in Alaska are even higher.

My Senate leadership team meets regularly with members of the House leadership. We share the same goal: to tighten sentencing guidelines to get criminals off the street. The crime wave is affecting all parts of our state and we agree with the Governor that it must stop.

You will see the crime legislation move by May 15.

In this week's newsletter you'll find:

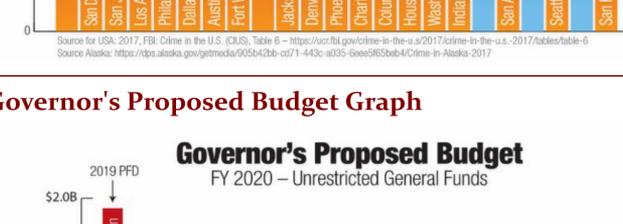
- Property Crime Rates by City
- Governor's Proposed Budget FY 2020
- Senate Finance
- Imagine! Girdwood Community Event
- Seward Highway MP 17-22.5 Rehabilitation
- Personal-Use Woodcutting Opportunities in Southcentral Alaska
- 150 Years of *The Alaska Times*

Kind regards,  
Cathy

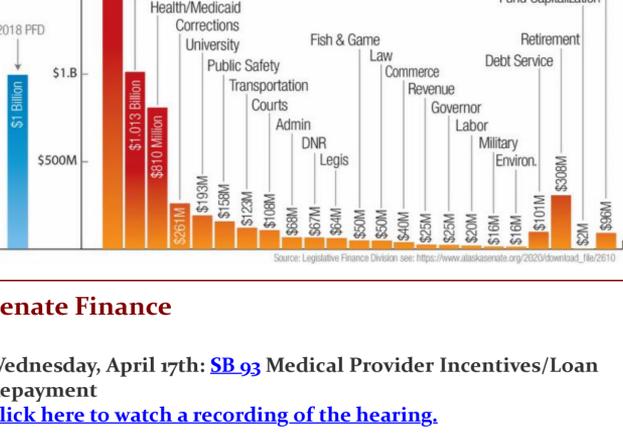
[Click here to email me.](#)



### Property Crimes by City



### Governor's Proposed Budget Graph



### Senate Finance

Wednesday, April 17th: **SB 93** Medical Provider Incentives/Loan Repayment  
[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)

Thursday, April 18th: Updated Labor Contract - Department of Administration  
[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)  
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

Friday, April 19th: No Meeting Held

Monday, April 22nd: **HB 39** Operating Budget, **HB 40** Mental Health Budget  
[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)

Tuesday, April 23rd: David Teal, Legislative Finance Director  
[Click here to watch a recording of the hearing.](#)  
[Click here for a link to the documents from the hearing.](#)

### IMAGINE! Girdwood Community Event

Help shape the community of Girdwood by attending a fun, family-friendly event on Monday, April 29th from 6:00-8:00pm! There will be live music, and activities for kids. View the 2019 community survey results, learn about the Girdwood Area Plan, and imagine the future of Girdwood.



The event will take place at the Girdwood K-8 School Commons (680 Hightower Road). The project presentation will begin at 6:30pm.

For more information, visit [www.girdwoodareaplan.org](http://www.girdwoodareaplan.org).

### Seward Highway MP 17-22.5 Rehabilitation

Project construction on the Seward Highway, Milepost 17-22.5, has been delayed as the project team works toward design completion and right-of-way acquisitions. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) aims to bid the project in Fall 2019, award the contract in Winter 2019, and begin construction in Spring 2020.

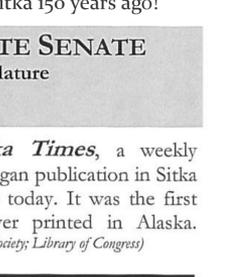


You can visit the project website at [www.sewardhighway7to22.com](http://www.sewardhighway7to22.com) for more information on the project, or email [info@sewardhighway7to22.com](mailto:info@sewardhighway7to22.com) with questions or comments.

[Click here for a map of the project area.](#)

### Personal-Use Woodcutting Opportunities

The Division of Forestry continues to make spruce bark beetle-killed trees available to the public to harvest as personal use firewood in the MatSu and Kenai Peninsula areas. The division has designated beetle-kill areas that are open to firewood cutting and is assessing whether to allow cutting in other areas with significant beetle kill.



Firewood cutting on any state land requires a permit, available at local state forestry division offices, or at the division's website at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/FPS/>. The permit costs \$10 per cord of wood, with a three-cord minimum and a ten-cord maximum per year.

If you're interested in harvesting firewood outside of established wood-cutting areas, you can contact your local Division of Forestry office for more information, or visit [www.forestry.alaska.gov](http://www.forestry.alaska.gov) and see the "Quick Reference" tab for firewood information.

### 150 Years of The Alaska Times

Today on the Senate Legislative calendar highlighted that *The Alaska Times* began publication in Sitka 150 years ago!



*The Alaska Times*, a weekly newspaper, began publication in Sitka 150 years ago today. It was the first newspaper ever printed in Alaska. (Alaska Historical Society; Library of Congress)

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| <b>Tuesday</b><br><b>April 23<sup>rd</sup></b><br><b>2019</b> | <b>LEGISLATIVE DAY</b><br><b>99*</b><br><small>*ASC ART. II SEC. 8 PROVIDES FOR A 120-DAY SESSION</small> |
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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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| Akis Gialopoulos | <a href="#">Alaska State Legislature</a>   | Senator Dan Sullivan<br>Anchorage Office<br>907.271.5915   |
| Kari Nore        | <a href="#">State of Alaska</a>            | Congressman Don Young<br>Anchorage Office<br>907.271.5978  |
| Emmie Jackson    |  |  |