



# Senator Cathy Giessel

## District N

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

May 18, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

The Crime Bill completion was delayed in the House, as they had concerns about the Senate version, but the negotiations with the House went well. The work is done, and the Senate will adopt the new bill version on May 21st.



As the Senate said at the start, it is very important that we get the criminal justice changes right. We are taking the time necessary for all

Senators to look over the new version, to understand its contents, and to approve it. There's a summary of the Crime Bill in this newsletter that shows the elements of the bill. It is definitely a "repeal and replace" of SB 91, with stricter penalties for sexual assault crimes.

I'm very proud of the Senate Conference Committee members who negotiated with the House members: Senator Shelley Hughes as the Chair, joined by Senator Mike Shower and Senator Bill Wielechowski.

We are now in a Special Session. The Proclamation is in this newsletter. We will have the Crime Bill completed soon. Work continues on the Operating Budget and the Capital Budget. The Permanent Fund Dividend is part of the budget discussions.

The Finance Committees will be working and I will keep you informed.

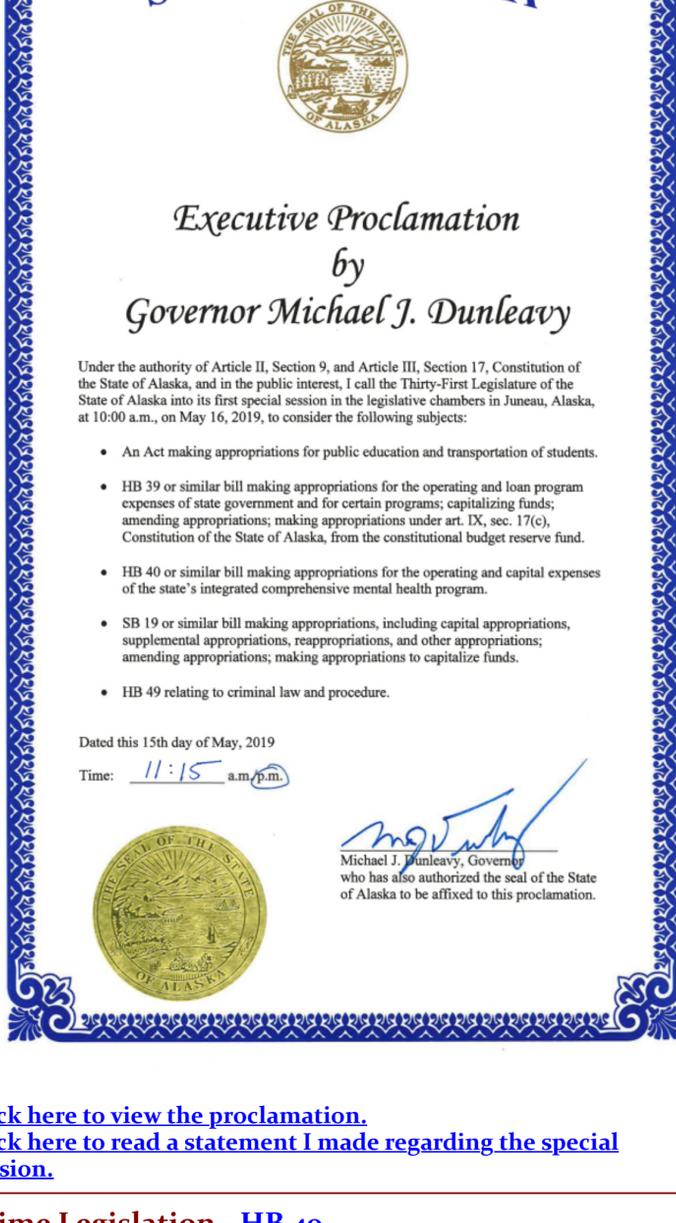
Best regards,  
Cathy

[Click here to email me.](#)



## Governor Calls Special Session

Thursday, May 15th, was the last day of the regular legislative session. Governor Dunleavy issued a proclamation calling the Alaska Legislature into special session to complete work on criminal justice legislation, the budget, education funding, and the protecting the permanent fund dividend for future generations. The legislature was called back in to begin the special session on Friday.



[Click here to view the proclamation.](#)

[Click here to read a statement I made regarding the special session.](#)

## Crime Legislation - HB 49

The Senate has put a considerable amount of time and effort into repealing and replacing Senate Bill 91. Specific changes that were made include:

- Increasing prison time for first time serious felony crimes. Repeat offenders also have lengthened sentences. (repeal SB91)
- Cracking down hard on sex offenses, increasing jail time and restricting probation options (repeals and goes beyond SB91)
- Targeting child pornographers with harsher sentences and updates laws to crack down on child porn-sharing services (beyond SB91)
- Adding additional jail time when drugs are sold or produced near children (beyond SB91)
- Requiring that anyone registered as a sex offender in another state must also register in Alaska (beyond SB91)
- Providing up to 1 year of jail time for first-time drug possession (repeal SB91)
- Giving judges full discretion to hold defendants pre-trial, ending "catch-and-release" (repeal SB91)
- Parolees may not earn credit for serious crimes including sex crimes and domestic violence crimes (beyond SB91).
- Broadening the crime of terroristic threats, such as calling in a bomb threat to a school (beyond SB91)
- Allowing a series of small thefts to be prosecuted as a single serious offense by combining the total value of items stolen over a 6-month period (beyond SB91)
- Criminalizing the possession of auto-theft tools, including electronic devices for intercepting remote entry key codes (beyond SB91)
- Criminalizing the repeated sending of explicit images, such as texting lewd pictures to someone else's phone (beyond SB91)
- Increasing the amount of jail time served, before a convicted murderer will even be considered for discretionary parole (beyond SB 91).
- Increasing penalties for indecent production of pictures of minors (beyond SB91)
- Removing marriage status as legal defense against a rape charge (beyond SB91)
- Making harsher penalties possible for violating terms of bail, parole or probation (repeal SB91)
- Establishing deadlines for the scientific processing of rape kits (beyond SB91)
- Creating new and harsher penalties for identity theft (beyond SB91)
- Requiring courts to now presume that domestic violence and sex offenders are ordered to have no contact with the victim (beyond SB91)

[Click here to read a letter of support from the Public Safety Employees Association urging passage of the Senate version of HB 49.](#)

## HB 49 Conference Committee

The Conference Committee on House Bill 49, made up of 3 Representatives and 3 Senators, met on Thursday. The committee compromised on a criminal justice bill that will lead to longer criminal sentences, and repeals Senate Bill 91.



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

## Senator Sullivan and Murkowski Fight to Protect Patients from Surprise Medical Bills

Too many times people (with even the best of healthcare coverage) return to their homes, following a traumatic medical event, only to later receive an additional "surprise" bill from their provider or hospital. That is because even though a provider may be "in network" with the insurer, other providers involved in the medical procedure or event are not, and they, by law, are allowed to issue a bill for the uncovered service. This can often be in the hundreds, or even thousands of dollars. Our U.S. Senators, Dan Sullivan and Lisa Murkowski, have joined in a bi-partisan effort with 5 of their Senate colleagues by introducing the *STOP Surprise Medical Bill Act* to protect patients from these unexpected medical bills.

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

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.](#)



Juneau: State Capitol, Room 111, Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Anchorage: 1500 W. Benson Blvd.,  
Anchorage, AK 99503  
Phone: 800.892.4843

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Staff Contacts	Quick Links	Congressional Delegation	
Jane Conway	Senate Republican Majority	Senator Lisa Murkowski	Anchorage Office 907.271.3735
Akis Giallopsos	Alaska State Legislature	Senator Dan Sullivan	Anchorage Office 907.271.5915
Kari Nore	State of Alaska	Congressman Don Young	Anchorage Office 907.271.5978
Emmie Jackson			