



# Senator Cathy Giessel

## District N

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

May 30, 2019

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

### The Operating Budget

The Senate has passed the **smallest Operating Budget** in more than a decade. The Senate Finance team reviewed reductions offered by Governor Dunleavy, going through an extensive evaluation on each budget item. The Senate agreed 19-1 on that budget.



The Operating Budget was then sent over to the House. The House made some different reductions. To merge the two versions, the Operating Budget went to a Conference Committee that negotiates which parts of the two bills to accept. There are three Senators and three House members on the Conference Committee.

Nearly all the differences have been resolved between the two budget versions. There's only one item left...the **amount of the PFD**. The Senate suggested setting the maximum PFD amount at \$3,000. The House suggested that the PFD amount be part of another bill, not in the Operating Budget.

So now we are vigorously negotiating on that last issue. Many different solutions have been suggested. When a solution is accepted, we will be able to move the Operating Budget on to the Governor.

But even then, the budget process won't be completed, as the **Governor has indicated that he sees room for more reductions** that could be made.

You will hear about "**pink slips**" which refers to the notices that state employees receive to notify them of a possible work stoppage on July 1st. This work stoppage would only happen if the Operating Budget failed to be signed, as complete, by July 1st. We are hopeful that an actual government shutdown will not occur. Alaska has never had that happen.

### School Funding

The Legislature **appropriated funds for the upcoming school year** during the 2018 Legislative session. We did this to provide stable, predictable funding for Alaska's public school system.

I completely agree with folks who point out that we have one of the highest cost public education systems, per student, in the U.S. Yet, sadly, we have the worst **outcomes** for our 4th graders and their ability to read at grade level. Many of us, myself included, worked with the Education Commissioner, teachers, parents, tribal leaders and others to identify ways to improve our educational outcomes. Changes are underway. But to get to those changes and improvements, there must be stable funding. That's where the **preauthorized funding** for the next school year comes in.

**The Governor believes that the Legislature can't do that** and says that he will not allow the funding to be released to the schools. **The Legislature believes we can preauthorize the funding** and we believe that the Executive branch must execute the law we passed. Both of us (the Executive branch and the Legislative branch) have legal opinions supporting our views. The only way to resolve this is to **ask the referees (the Judicial branch)** to make the decision on what the Constitution says about this subject.

Consequently the Legislature has exercised its authority by allowing the Legislative Council to oversee this judicial process. The media describes this process as "suing the Governor." That certainly sounds dramatic but the reality is that it is simply a question that needs judicial resolution.

In this week's newsletter you'll find:

- Legislature Passes Criminal Justice Bill
- Education Funding
- Anchorage Farmer's Markets
- Alaska Navigator

Best regards,  
Cathy

[Click here to email me.](#)



## Legislature Passes Criminal Justice Bill

On Tuesday, May 28th, the Legislature voted to take a stand against crime by repealing Senate Bill 91, strengthening the state's sex crime laws, and giving police and prosecutors the tools that they need to fight crime.



**House Bill 49** passed the Senate unanimously, and the House 36-2, for a combined vote of 54-2. The bill is now on its way to the Governor's desk for his signature.

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

## Education Funding

There have been questions surrounding the constitutionality of forward-funding K-12 education. On Tuesday, May 29th, the House and Senate voted to allow Legislative Council to take legal action to concretely resolve this matter. The **Legislative Council** is made up of members from both bodies - seven House members and seven Senate members.

[Click here to watch a recording of the press availability regarding education funding.](#)

[Click here to watch a recording of the Governor's press availability.](#)

## Anchorage Farmer's Markets

The South Anchorage Farmer's Market is up and running! The market is open on Saturday from 9am-2pm at the Subway/Cellular One SportsCentre (on the corner of Old Seward and O'Malley).



Stay tuned! The Muldoon Farmers Market will open on June 22nd at Chanshtnu Muldoon Park.

## Alaska Navigator

If you're looking for information on construction in Alaska, the Alaska Navigator is a wonderful resource. You can select a region to view road closures and traffic impact in your area. This site is updated daily during construction season to provide information you need for driving on Alaska roads.



[Click here to visit the Alaska Navigator site.](#)

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**

Copyright © 2019. All Rights Reserved.

Staff Contacts	Quick Links	Congressional Delegation	
<a href="#">Jane Conway</a>	<a href="#">Senate Republican Majority</a>	<a href="#">Senator Lisa Murkowski</a>	Anchorage Office 907.271.3735
<a href="#">Akis Gialopsos</a>	<a href="#">Alaska State Legislature</a>	<a href="#">Senator Dan Sullivan</a>	Anchorage Office 907.271.5915
<a href="#">Kari Nore</a>	<a href="#">State of Alaska</a>	<a href="#">Congressman Don Young</a>	Anchorage Office 907.271.5978
<a href="#">Emmie Jackson</a>			