



Senator Mia Costello Alaska State Legislature



December 3, 2019

Dear friends and neighbors,

It's good to be back with you in the district! As we start preparing to head back to Juneau for session, I wanted to fill you in on what's been happening on the legislative front.

One achievement I'm thrilled about: we finally made some **progress toward fixing our criminal justice laws**, which were weakened by Senate Bill 91 in 2016. When crime spiked afterward, it was clear that weaker laws weren't the answer. That's why I pushed for a full repeal of SB 91- and with House Bill 49 this year, we've made a huge stride in that direction. We're not done, but this is a big step in the right direction.

Good news on the safety front: I'm pleased to announce that the Municipality has finally reached an agreement with the state about **the missing streetlights along Jewel Lake Road**. Ever since they were removed during the recent road expansion project, my staff and I have been working hard to make sure that those lights were restored. With this agreement, the lights will be replaced this spring.

Please check below for details on my upcoming pizza meet 'n greet with Rep. Sara Rasmussen - it'd be great to see you there! As always, please reach out to me with any questions or concerns - I love to hear from you.

Sincerely,



Great news on the public safety front: after two years of work, Senate Bill 91's terrible effects are finally on their way out. This is an outcome I've been working to achieve for over two years, and I'm thrilled that my efforts and those of my allies are finally bearing some fruit.

In October of 2017, I announced my support for full repeal of SB 91, and introduced Senate Bill 127 the very next session. At the time, repeal was not very popular with Senate leadership (only Sens. Wilson and Hughes co-sponsored my repeal legislation) and I had to dust off an arcane rule to force a hearing on my repeal bill.

Senate leadership blocked a repeal vote that session, but we were able to make some valuable in-roads – such as my amendment that successfully ended pretrial “catch and release” of criminals.

The elections that took place that fall showed unequivocally that Alaskans were fed up with feeling vulnerable and wanted a full repeal. This session, we were able to push the lion's share of SB 127's provisions through a reluctant House Majority, and to the governor's desk in the form of House Bill 49 – which was signed into law this summer. More needs to be done — but this is real progress toward safer neighborhoods.

Getting things done for Alaska

Despite the challenging session this year, there is some good news on the legislation front. My bill to lower the minimum age for getting a commercial driver's license from 19 to 18 was passed and signed into law.

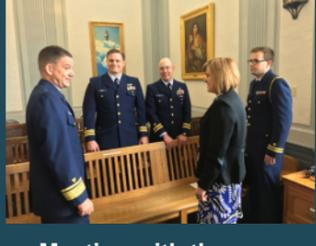
This bill brings Alaska law in line with other states' while preserving safety requirements. In an industry where driving hours matter, with this bill Alaskans just out of high school will no longer have to struggle to become competitive with drivers from other states — and that means more opportunities for Alaskans. We also made significant headway on education funding with my proposed constitutional amendment to forward fund education.

The timing of our current budget process means that school districts enter their budget process without knowing the levels of state funding for that year. My amendment would correct this uncertainty, letting our teachers focus on teaching — instead of having to worry about whether their jobs are funded.

Come join me and Rep. Sara Rasmussen to discuss the upcoming legislative session over a casual pizza dinner!

6:00—8:00 PM
Wednesday, December 4th
Kincaid Chalet, North Room

This is a family-friendly event — kids welcome!



Meeting with the troops: Mia talks with Alaska service members moments before taking part in the Joint Armed Services Committee of which she is a member.



Recognizing Alaska's young swimmers: Mia presents a legislative citation to the Dimond High School Swim and Dive Team to recognize their State Championship.



In the community: Mia stops by to see the hard work that the seniors at the Jewel Lake Plaza have done landscaping the gardens and planting flowers, tomatoes, and peppers.



Honoring Alaska's high school athletes and coaches: Mia was proud to welcome the incoming class of the High School Hall of Fame, of which she is a member. Legislative citations were presented to each inductee.



Helping military spouses: Mia hears a bill in the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee that would help spouses of active duty service members practice their trade without extensive wait times for license approval.



Stopping by at Sand Lake Elementary: Mia and Rep. Sara Rasmussen stopped by to visit Ms. Matsushita's 5th grade Japanese immersion class and speak a little bit on what we do in the public sector to help the private sector. Arigatou gozaimashita!

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