



**Interim Report**  
**By**  
**Senator Gary Stevens**

About four months remain until the legislature gathers in Juneau for the 2019 session, and while some interim committee work has taken place in recent weeks, November 6th's General Election is occupying much of the attention right now. This year Alaskans will be asked to elect Alaska's lone member of the United States House of Representatives, the governor and several judgeships, as well as fill fifty legislative seats from around the state, including ten seats in the Senate.

**Ballot Measure 1**

In addition to electing candidates, voters will weigh-in on Ballot Measure 1. As you may know, this is a citizens' initiative that sponsors have put forth as a means of protecting salmon habitat through changes to the fish habitat permitting laws and protection standards.

Should the initiative pass, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) will need to apply new standards to permitting activities and development projects that have the potential to harm fish habitat. It would exempt existing projects, operations, or facilities that have received all state and federal permits until a new permit is needed.

There already has been, and there will continue to be a lot of advertising in both sides of the issue on Ballot Measure 1 as we head toward election day. Before you make your choice on this important issue, I encourage you to find out more about Ballot Measure 1 (as well as the candidates in your area). Some of this information is available on the Division of Elections' website at [www.elections.alaska.gov](http://www.elections.alaska.gov).

You can also register to vote, apply for an absentee ballot and find out where to vote in your community on the Division of Elections' website. The deadline to register to vote in the General Election is Sunday, October 7th.

**Looking Ahead to Next Session**

Although we will not know the makeup of the Thirty-first Alaska Legislature until after November's elections, we do know there will be at least four new members of the Senate and at least nine new House members. Caucuses, leadership roles and committee assignments will be decided soon after the election.

I look forward to updating you on next year's assignments in a future report. This past session, I served as Chair of the Senate Education Committee, and also served on the Senate Finance Committee and the Senate Labor and Commerce Committee.

### **Middle Colleges**

I will be introducing legislation next year asking the University of Alaska and the state's school districts to expand dual-credit opportunities to high school students. With tuition costs coming from school district, the Middle College concept, known in many states as Running Start, could particularly benefit students from low-income families who might not have the financial resources to attend college otherwise.

As part of the bill-development process, myself and other legislators will be getting input from education professionals at a meeting on Tuesday, November 12th at the Anchorage Legislative Information Office. Details of the meeting are still under development but should be finalized within a few weeks.

### **Your PFD**

The 2018 Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) amount is \$1,600. Applications in an "eligible" status on or before Sept. 21 will be disbursed on Oct. 4, 2018.

Enrollment for next year's PFD starts on New Year's Day and ends March 31st.

You can check the status of your dividend application online at: <https://pfd.alaska.gov>

### **Help with State of Alaska Matters**

My staff is available throughout the year to assist you with issues involving state agencies.

The Homer office can be reached at (907) 235-0690.

You can contact the Kodiak office at (907) 486-4925.

The State Capitol office number is (907) 465-4925, or toll free at 1-800-821-4925.

E-mail me at [Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov](mailto:Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov)

My interim address is:

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(Please note that we are unable to assist you with legal matters. If you have a case involving a lawsuit or pending litigation and need help finding an attorney, please contact the Alaska Bar Association at [www.alaskabar.org](http://www.alaskabar.org).)

## **Assistance with the Federal Government**

Alaska's Congressional Delegation can aide you matters involving the federal government, and all have in-state offices.

Senator Lisa Murkowski's Anchorage office can be reached at (877) 829-6030.

Senator Dan Sullivan's Anchorage Office can be reached at (907) 271-5915.

Congressman Don Young's Anchorage office can be reached at (866) 990-5979.

Thank you to our local media for their assistance in sharing this information, and you for reading this month's column.