



Alaskans Working For Alaska!

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Legislative Update April 9, 2010

Quick notes:

1. This legislative session, the second of the 26th Legislature, convened January 18, 2010 and **will adjourn on April 18, 2010**.
2. There are approximately 9 days left in the session.
3. Session is scheduled for **90 days**.
4. As the second session ends, the 26th Alaska Legislature itself comes to a close and with it the bills and resolutions that did not pass through both chambers successfully.
5. Legislators, most of whom remember the 120-day sessions of years past, will remain busy attending to legislation whose time appears to be running out.
6. The operating budget (**HB 300**) has passed both chambers in different versions. A **conference committee has been appointed** to reconcile the differences.
7. After a conference committee is appointed for the operating budget, the legislature adopts a rule allowing **24-hour minimum notice** for all committee hearings. Bills are moving quickly though the legislative process under the 24-hour rule.
8. Check on all the PAC recommendations and see the status of any bill by visiting the Bill Tracking webpage <http://www.afscmelocal52.org/pac>.

Bills of Interest:

HB 300—Operating Budget → **Passed** (See notes above)

The following bills have been heard and await **floor action**:

HB 77—Public Employee Disaster Leave → House

The following bills have received hearings and await **further** committee action:

In the **Senate**:

HB 50 — Nurses Overtime → Senate Finance

SB 12 — Nurses Overtime → Senate Finance

SB 23 — Repeal DC, Return to Defined Benefits → Senate Finance

SB 79 — Med. Benefits for Disabled Peace Officers → Senate Finance

SB 278 — Leave for Military Spouses → Senate L&C

SB 298 — Geo. Diff. for Non-Union State Employees → Senate L&C

In the **House**:

SB 13 — Medical Assistance Eligibility → House Finance

HB 361 — CPR for Dispatchers → House Finance

HB 421 — Non-Union State Contracts → House Finance

Bill: HB 300—Operating Budget

Status: Passed/Conference Committee

Sponsor: House Rules by Request of the Governor

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: The passage of this bill in both chambers and the subsequent appointment of a conference committees mark the race to the end of the session-- 24-hour notice is all that is required for committee hearing on a bill.

The House Conference Committee is made up of Reps. Mike Hawker (chair), Bill Stoltze and Les Gara. The Senate counterpart includes Sens. Lyman Hoffman (chair), Bert Stedman and Joe Thomas.

The operating budget has sometimes been a vehicle for GGU contract funding. The 2010-2013 GGU CBA funding will most likely appear in either the supplemental or capital budget bill before the end of the session.

Bill Status: This bill has passed both chambers and waits for reconciliation of respective versions by a conference committee. (See notes above)

Action Needed: No action is currently recommended.

Bill: HB 77—Public Employee Disaster Leave

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Reps. Millett, Holmes, Dahlstrom

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: HB 77 would allow, with exceptions, state employees to take up to 15 days of LWOP per calendar year to volunteer with the American Red Cross for disaster relief in the state. The bill indemnifies the state from injury claims during such leave. Fiscal note indicates no impact.

Bill Status: This bill advanced through its House committees of referral (State Affairs, Finance) and waits in House Rules for action on the House floor.

Action Needed: No action is currently recommended.

Bill: SB 12—Nurses Overtime

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Sen. Davis

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill: HB 50—Nurses Overtime

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Rep. Wilson, Gara, many others

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: SB 12 and HB 50 would prohibit mandatory overtime for nurses working 14 consecutive hours without a 10-hour break. This bill is a legislative fix to address concerns for quality patient care that stem from chronically understaffed hospitals.

Dept. of Labor & Workforce Development submitted a fiscal note to the Senate Health & Social Services Committee (Mar. 27, 2009) anticipating the need to hire a fulltime investigator with associated costs approaching \$100,000 annually.

Bill Status: SB 12, sponsored by Sen. Bettye Davis (D-Anchorage), passed through two Senate committees of referral last session (Health & Social Services and Labor & Commerce) and is waiting for action in Senate Finance in the form of CSSB 12(L&C).

HB 50 sponsored by Rep. Peggy Wilson (R-Wrangell) and Rep. Les Gara (D-Anchorage) passed out of House Health & Social Services last session. The bill gained co-sponsors early in the second session and was amended in House Finance in the form of CSHB 50(FIN). HB 50 passed the House floor with only 4 dissenting votes. The bill was referred to Senate Finance where it waits for a hearing. HB 50 is expected to reach the Senate floor for final passage.

Action Needed: Contact your State Senator to encourage support for HB 50.

Bill: SB 23—Repeal Defined Contribution, Return to Defined Benefits

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Sens. Elton, Paskvan, many others

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: SB 23 would repeal the Defined Contribution (DC) retirement plan and resume a Defined Benefit (DB) retirement system for new public employees and teachers.

Bill Status: SB 23 has advanced further than any other bill to repeal the DC plan for new employees. However, it has been held in Senate Finance for the past year without a hearing. A public hearing on Pension Reform occurred on Monday, March 29, but Senate Finance remains uninterested in considering this proposal.

Originally introduced by Sen. Elton, SB 23 has several Senate co-sponsors and a new leading advocate, Sen. Joe Paskvan (D-Fairbanks).

SB 23 picked up another co-sponsor this session, Sen. Egan (D-Juneau), Elton's appointed replacement. The bill still waits to be heard in Senate Finance in the form of CSSB 23(L&C).

The two House companion bills, HB 30 and HB 54, have not been heard during the second session. They remain in their first committee of referral, House Labor & Commerce chaired by Rep. Kurt Olson (R-Soldotna).

Action Needed: Contact members of the Senate Finance Committee to encourage a hearing for SB 23. In particular, the Senate Finance Committee Co-Chair Sen. Bert Stedman (R-Sitka) should be encouraged to schedule a hearing on SB 23.

Bill: SB 79—Med. Benefits for Disabled Peace Officers

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Sen. McGuire

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: This bill would waive major medical premiums for peace officers disabled after 19 years of service by authorizing benefits equal to having served 25 years.

Bill Status: SB 79 picked up several new Senate co-sponsors this session, but remains in Senate Finance where it arrived near the end of last session.

Action Needed: No action is currently recommended.

Bill: SB 278—Leave for Military Spouses

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Sen. Wielechowski

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: This bill would allow certain teachers, public employees and private sector employees to take up to 10 days of LWOP per calendar year when their spouses are on leave from deployment in a combat zone.

Bill Status: HB 278 was introduced during the second session by Sen. Bill Wielechowski (D-Anchorage) and referred to two committees. Senate State Affairs heard the bill in early March and passed it with amendments. CSSB 278(STA) currently waits for action in Senate Labor & Commerce.

Action Needed: Contact members of the Senate Labor & Commerce Committee to encourage support for SB 278.

Bill: SB 298—Geo. Diff. for Non-Union State Employees

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Rep. Egan

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: SB 298 is a vehicle introduced by Sen. Dennis Egan (D-Juneau) to adjust geographic differentials attached to wages in certain areas of the state for non-union state workers. Geographic differential adjustments for GGU members have been negotiated as part of the 2010-2013 GGU CBA. (House companion bill: HB 420)

Bill Status: The bill was referred to two Senate committees, Labor & Commerce and Finance. SB 298 currently waits for a hearing in its first committee.

Action Needed: No action is currently recommended.

Bill: SB 13—Medical Assistance Eligibility

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Sens. Davis, Ellis, many others

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: SB 13 raises the medical assistance eligibility ceiling from 175% to 200% of the federal poverty line for young persons and pregnant women.

Bill Status: SB 13 passed the Senate last session on a 13-to-3 vote. The bill moved through the first of its two House committees of referral, Health & Social Services, with 5 'Do Pass' and 2 'Do Not Pass' recommendations from members in mid-March. SB 13 currently waits for further action in House Finance.

Action Needed: Contact members of the House Finance Committee to encourage support for this bill.

Bill: **HB 361—CPR for Dispatchers**

Status: Pending

Sponsor: Reps. Fairclough, Dahlstrom

PAC Recommendation: SUPPORT

Bill Summary: HB 361 would require 911 dispatchers to be trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Bill Status: HB 361 passed through its first two committees of referral (House Community & Regional Affairs and House Health & Social Services) and currently waits for action in House Finance.

Action Needed: Contact members of the House State Affairs Committee to encourage support for this bill.