

Alaska's 29th Legislative Session Starts

The state budget has taken center stage in the first month of the Alaska Legislature as a profound deficit calls for uncomfortable reductions. The deficit, estimated to be \$3.5 billion, reflects the gap between what Alaska expects to spend and what it will receive for Fiscal Year 2016 (July 2015-June 2016).

The deficit is new territory both for the Legislature due to the magnitude of the gap and for the new administration that inherited this crisis only months ago.

The deficit is driven by low oil prices whose value in tax revenue to the state has now dropped below the producer tax credit incentives. Oil prices aside, the framework for oil production taxation itself had been criticized even before Gov. Walker announced last month that Alaska would be paying out millions of dollars more in benefits to oil companies than it would be receiving for the extraction of Alaska's oil.

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Pat Pitney and Legislative Finance Division Director David Teal have addressed the Finance committees in both chambers during hearings on the Governor's amended budget. The amended budget, released Feb. 5, replaces the Parnell FY16 budget work-in-progress that was transmitted to the Legislature as required by statute earlier this year.

Walker's amended budget calls for just over 6% in cuts to unrestricted general funds for state agencies, a full 5% more than the 1% in reductions in the Parnell placeholder budget.

The state operating budget bill in the State House is HB 72. The companion bill in the State Senate is SB 27.

Dir. Pitney addressed suggestions Thursday, Feb. 12 from members of the Senate Finance Committee during a hearing on SB 27 that the Governor had not gone far enough with his amended budget.

She said Gov. Walker had also instructed his commissioners to consider a 25% reduction to their departments over the next 3 to 4 years, adding that the currently proposed budget cuts are "a balance between the downsizing and the impact and maintaining a stable economy."

During a House Finance Committee hearing on HB 72 the same day, an exchange between Rep. Les Gara and Dir. Teal illustrated the futility of laying off state employees to balance a budget with a \$3.5 billion deficit.

Rep. Gara: "You can fire every state employee and you'd only save \$1.5 billion..."
Dir. Teal: "I guess [that's] factual, if you want to think about it that way."

While Alaska's fiscal situation remains the main topic of conversation, many other bills of interest have been introduced and are working their way through the legislative process.

HB 22 (Probation and Parole Officers' Caseloads, Sponsor: Rep. Tuck) would cap at 60 the number of caseloads to improve supervision and reintegration of parolees and probationers. This bill waits to be heard in the House State Affairs Committee and is supported by the ASEA Political Action Committee (PAC).

HB 47 (PERS Contributions by Municipalities, Sponsor: Rep. Foster) would exempt some communities from their

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Famous Words of Solidarity

"The test for whether foreign investment is good for America should be whether it is likely to improve the skills and productivity of Americans." - Robert Reich

"So far as power is concerned, does anybody believe the premiums of insurance companies are almost all uniform by accident? It is an accident that if the price of gasoline goes up in one company, all the other prices go up the same rate in a matter of weeks?"

- Jimmy Hoffa

"And, it seems to me just as proper to ask some questions about the role of the captains of American industry—those who pretend to be defenders of the enterprise—in seeking to destroy a labor movement that has always supported and promoted free enterprise."

- George Meany

Solidarity Update

Did You Know?

Did You Know That:

George Washington & Abraham Lincoln's birthdays, were moved as part of the 1971 uniform Monday Holiday Act. They are now celebrated on the third Monday in February and became Presidents Day, a day to honor all U.S. Presidents past and present.



Did You Know That:

Approximately 150 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged annually, making Valentine's Day the second most popular card sending holiday after Christmas. Valentine's Day is celebrated in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom, France and Australia.



Did You Know That:

The first Groundhog Day was celebrated on February 2, 1887 in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania. The groundhog comes out of his hole after a winter of sleep. If he sees his shadow there will be 6 more weeks of winter. If he does not see his shadow spring is on it's way!



Did You Know That:

On March 17th of every year the Irish celebrate St. Patrick's Day. The first celebration held in the United States was in Boston in 1737.



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obligations to make PERS contributions on behalf of former employees. Hearings have been scheduled in the House Community & Regional Affairs Committee. HB 47 is considered to have a destabilizing effect on PERS and is opposed by the ASEA PAC.

HB 66 (Insurance for Dependents of Deceased Teachers, Sponsor: Rep. Millett) would confer a medical benefit to some beneficiaries of teachers and public employees in the case of the employee's death. The bill waits for a hearing in the House Labor & Commerce Committee and is supported by the ASEA PAC.

SB 31 (Sexual Abuse/Assault Prevention Programs, Sponsor: Sen. Gardner) is also known as Erin's Law, requiring school districts to develop and implement programs to improve awareness and prevention of sexual abuse and sexual assault. The bill will be heard in the Senate Education Committee and is supported by the ASEA PAC.

SJR 3 (Constitutional Amendment: Membership of Judicial Council, Sponsor: Sen. Kelly) would diminish the influence of Alaska Bar appointees on the Judicial Council by doubling the Governor's appointees and making all subject to legislative approval. This bill will be heard in the Senate State Affairs Committee. SJR 3 is considered to be a solution in search of a problem and is opposed by the ASEA PAC.

The Alaska Legislature convened Jan. 20, 2015 and will remain in session for 90 days, adjourning Apr. 19.

Bill Tracking For Bills Of Interest To ASEA Members

The ASEA PAC (Political Action Committee) has identified the following bills to be of interest and have taken the position to support or to oppose depending on the effect that the bill would have on ASEA members .

ALASKA HOUSE BILLS OF INTEREST TO ASEA MEMBERS

HB 3—*Workers' Compensation Death Benefits*

SUPPORT: Health care benefit for families in case of work-related death of peace officer, firefighter, EMT.
STATUS: (H) L&C then (H) FIN
SPONSORS: Rep. Josephson & Rep. Lynn

HB 22—*Probation and Parole Officers' Caseloads*

SUPPORT: Sets reasonable limit on caseloads to improve supervision and integration of probationers and parolees.
STATUS: (H) STA then (H) FIN
SPONSOR: Rep. Tuck

HB 47—*PERS Contributions by Municipalities*

OPPOSE: PERS exemptions for some employers; increases liability for others.
STATUS: (H) L & C then (H) FIN
HEARING: Feb. 1, 2015
SPONSOR: Rep. Foster

HB 66—*Insurance for Dependents of Deceased Teachers*

SUPPORT: Medical benefit for beneficiaries of public employees and teachers.
STATUS: (H) L & C then (H) FIN
SPONSOR: Rep. Millett

Solidarity Update

2014 Holiday Events

Juneau Holiday Event

Approximately 400 plus attended the Juneau Holiday event on Friday, Dec. 12th.

Everyone had a great time. They got to see and have a picture taken with Santa Claus, ate good food, enjoyed the entertainment and won door prizes. There were 30 door prizes and if your name was chosen, you had the option to (1) choose the party's Christmas tree; (2) choose an envelope; (3) play a round of Let's Make A Deal™; or (4) play a round of Wheel of Fortune™. The person who chose the Christmas tree found a gas smoker underneath!

Thank you to the following volunteers for all their help: Kari Doran, Delly Stout, Nadine Lefebvre, Robin Park, Betty Neimi, Sandy Johnston, Linda Harris and her granddaughter Jamie Lynn.



Anchorage Winterfest Event

Successful Charitable Food Drive

The Anchorage Chapter Winterfest Event kicked off on Saturday, Dec. 27th in downtown Anchorage with a Children's Party in the afternoon and an Adult Party that evening. Both parties served as a wonderful FUNDRAISING Event for the Food Bank of Alaska.

At the Children's Party, one extra door prize ticket was given for every five cans and three extra tickets for every ten cans of donated food. At the Adult Party, one extra ticket was given for every three cans and three extra tickets for every eight cans of donated food. Members and guests of ASEA's Anchorage Chapter raised 1,382 pounds of food!

Children were greeted at their party by a jolly old elf handing out goodie bags. There were children's activity tables, bouncy houses, popcorn, cotton candy, door prizes and plenty of entertainment.

The Adult Party had lots of music, dancing, entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, door prizes and plenty of fun.



Bill Tracking For Bills Of Interest

To ASEA Members

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ALASKA SENATE BILLS OF INTEREST TO ASEA MEMBERS

SB 9—Election Pamphlets

SUPPORT: Removes political party advertising from election pamphlets.

STATUS: (S) STA then (S) FIN

SPONSOR: Sen. Michicce

SB 12—Paid Sick Leave

SUPPORT: Establishes paid sick leave program for most Alaska workers.

STATUS: (S) L&C then (S) FIN

SPONSOR: Sen. Wielechowski

SB 31—Sexual Abuse/Assault Prevention Programs

SUPPORT: Erin's Law requiring school districts to develop and implement awareness and prevention programs.

STATUS: (S) EDC then (S) FIN

SPONSOR: Sen. Gardner

SJR 3—Constitutional Amendment: Membership of Judicial Council

OPPOSE: Unnecessary change to independent appointee process.

STATUS: (S) STA then (S) JUD

HEARING: Feb. 19, 2015

SPONSOR: Sen. Kelly

Mat-Su Holiday Event

The Mat-Su Chapter Christmas Party was held Tuesday, Dec. 16th at Settler's Bay Lodge. Approximately 200 attended and had a wonderful time. There was a lot of good food and everyone who came won a door prize. The Mat-Su Chapter is already looking forward to next year's event.



For more legislative bill tracking go to: <http://afscmelocal52.org/bill-tracking>

Solidarity Update

ASEA HEALTH TRUST NEWS



It's Fast & Easy to Submit Health Trust Forms Online

Participant Questions	Your Health Trust Benefit Forms	What You Need to Do
Where do I find Health Trust forms?	All the forms you may need are available on the Health Trust website at aseahealth.org .	Go to the "FORMS" button at the top of the home page. Select the category, and then choose the form you need.
How do I submit forms online?	Many forms can be completed securely online. Your personal information is protected because you must login to use this feature. The forms with a blue arrow can be submitted online.	Click on the blue arrow.. The form will automatically fill with your personal information. Complete the form and click the submit button.
How do I turn in forms that cannot be submitted online?	Some forms are not set up to submit online, but you can still fill it out online and then either fax or mail it to the Health Trust Administrator.	Click on the PDF symbol to display the form. Save it as a document on your computer, then type in the required information.
How do I find and print an EOB on the website?	All enrolled members can view claims activity and an Explanation of Benefits (EOB) for each claim that has been processed.	Go to the "YOUR ACCOUNT" button at the top of the page and sign in to access your personal information. Select "Claims Summary" to view all claims activity. On the far right of each claim entry is an EOB link. Select this link to view the EOB.

Note: If you are using a newer version of Adobe Acrobat (e.g. Adobe Reader XI,) you may not be able to fill out PDF forms and submit them online. Please note that the website administrator is aware of this problem and is working on a solution. In the meantime, you can print and complete forms and then fax or mail them to the Health Trust Administrator.

ASEA Local 52 Election Information

The ballots are in the mail!



Election Date: March 19th

If you haven't received your Ballot by February 23rd, please contact one of the ASEA offices.

ANCHORAGE 1-800-478-2732/ 277-5200 JUNEAU 1-800-478-0049/ 463-4950 FAIRBANKS 1-800-478-2305



ASEA /WIC Has Pink Wear For Sale

ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 Women's Issue Committee Pink Wear is here! To order a Pink Hoodie or Pink Vest send email request to Dawn Bundick at: alaskawic@gmail.com or call 907-350-4964. Cost is \$35 each plus shipping.

