



### **This Week in Juneau**

On February 19<sup>th</sup> the legislature passed the first major procedural milestone with the personal legislation deadline. Representatives and Senators are no longer able to introduce legislation themselves. With the deadline came a flurry with over seventy pieces of legislation being introduced. For the rest of this session bills can now only be sponsored by a committee or the Governor.

This week the focus of the legislature was on two topics, the FY25 budget and education. The Senate Finance committee spent the week taking public testimony on the FY25 operating budget. Meanwhile education emerged to dominate the House. Outside of normal scheduling practices, the House had floor sessions every day this last week to work on SB 140, Internet for Schools. SB 140 was introduced to increase rural school district broadband. The House Rules committee amended the bill to include several educational reforms to create an omnibus education bill. The action taken by the Rules committee is out of the normal as well, with the Rules committee rarely, if at all, meeting during session. On Monday, the House was set begin floor debate on SB 140 but was unable to achieve the majority vote to bring the newest version of the bill to the floor. Several majority members from rural Alaska were unable to support the new version pointing to concerns with the process in which it came about. This sparked negotiations throughout the week between the Senate Majority, House Majority and Minority to generate a consensus path forward for the bill. Late on Thursday a compromise was made, and an amendment was adopted to create a new education package. The package deal includes:

- A \$680 Base Student Allocation increase
- Increased Alaska Reads Act funding
- Increased broadband for rural school districts
- New appeal process if a district terminates a charter school's contract
- A Charter school coordinator in Department of Education and Early Development
- Increased transportation funding
- Increased correspondence study funding
- Legislative intent language saying the increase in funding should be directed to educator salaries and bonuses, and that districts should report it to the legislature

SB 140 was passed by the House 38 to 2. The bill now goes back to the Senate for consideration of the changes made in the House. If the Senate concurs with the House changes, the bill will then go to the Governor's desk.

US Senator Dan Sullivan gave his annual address to the legislature this week. During his address Senator Sullivan shared his desire to ensure Alaska can continue to develop its natural resources with limited interference from the federal government and the need for the United States to remain vigilante with its foreign policy combating terrorism.

Next week the House Finance subcommittees will close out and complete their work on individual department budgets, which will allow the Finance Committee's work on the FY25 budget to begin. US Representative Mary Peltola will give her annual address next week to the legislature, concluding the congressional delegation's visits for the session.

## Bill Introduced this Week

### **HB 331 - Corporate Income Tax**

#### **SB 237 – TAX CREDIT CHILD CARE/UTILITY/HOUSE/FOOD**

2/19/24 – Introduced; referred to the Senate Labor & Commerce and Finance committees, by the Governor

The bill establishes a corporate income tax credit for certain expenditures on child care services, utility rates, residential housing, and food security. The tax credit may not lower an individual's tax liability under 50% for the year.

#### **B 333 – TAX CREDIT CHILD CARE/UTILITY/HOUSE/FOOD**

2/20/24 – Introduced; referred to the House Labor & Commerce and Finance committees, by the Governor

**This is the House companion bill to SB 237.**

#### **B 335 – CIVIL LIABILITY FOR PROVIDING ALCOHOL**

2/21/24 – Introduced; referred to the House Labor & Commerce and Judiciary committees, by Representative Fields

#### **HB 376 – DELIVERY NETWORK COMPANIES**

2/20/24 – Introduced; referred to the House Transportation and Labor & Commerce committees, by the House Transportation committee

HB 376 adds a delivery network company courier to the list of independent contractors.

## Committee Meetings Next Week

## House Labor and Commerce

**Feb 26 Monday 3:15 PM**

HB 200 – GAMING; ELECTRONIC PULL-TABS

HB 289 – BUSINESS LICENSE FEES

HB 179 – EMPLOYEE RIGHTS, EMPLOYER SPEECH

**Feb 28 Wednesday 3:15 PM**

HB 333 – TAX CREDIT CHILD CARE/UTILITY/HOUSE/FOOD

## Upcoming Alaska CHARR Events



### **SHE: Strength, Heart, Excellence**

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