



This Week in Juneau

The Senate Majority held a press availability this week about the introduction of Senate Bill 88. The introduction of this bill is part of the Senate Majority's priorities to address recruitment and retention issues for State employees. SB 88 creates a "Tier V" for state employees, returning to the defined benefit system, replacing the current defined contribution system. The bill applies to all state employees, including teachers.

Senator Cathy Giessel (R), Anchorage, is the primary sponsor of the bill, with nine other senators signing on as co-sponsors. Senator Giessel stated that the state needs workers to fill vacancies and is not able to compete with the current retirement system. She pointed out that the Department of Law had a 19% turnover rate last year and the Office of Children's Services lost 92 employees in 2022. The loss of those 92 employees will cost about \$5 million in the States investment in training. SB 88's pension system is different from previous defined benefit retirements from the state.

There will be a higher match from employees and there will be no healthcare provided after retirement. Senator Giessel looks forward to the committee process and working on the bill this session.

This week the House Finance committee finished with the department overviews and will now wait for the subcommittees to close out to begin working on the budget. The House finance subcommittees will be working on amendments to the proposed budgets and begin closing out the committees next week. The Senate Finance subcommittees have started meeting and will be working on department overviews next week. The Senate Finance committee will continue with its agenda with overviews on the state of Alaska's economy and comparing the retention of state employees in the different kinds of retirement systems.

In the lead up to the final decision for the Willow project a contingent of Alaska's Representatives and Senators went to Washington DC to aid the efforts to support the projects final approval. The contingent spoke at a rally on the Capitol steps in favor of the project while also meeting with members of the administration to voice their support and the positive impacts Willow have for the local communities and the state.

Bills of Interest Introduced this Week

SB 89 – AGE FOR TOBACCO/NICOTINE/E-CIG; TAX E-CIG

SENATOR STEVENS

Referred to Senate Labor & Commerce and Finance Committees

Upcoming Alaska CHARR Events

Regular ABC Board Meeting March 6

Hampton Inn Conference Room 433 Harold Bentley Ave, Fairbanks, AK 99701 & Zoom

Fairbanks Title 04 Roadshow - March 6

Hampton Inn Conference Room 433 Harold Bentley Ave, Fairbanks, AK 99701 & Zoom

Special Meeting to Consider for Public Comment RE: The Implementation of the Title 04 Reform Bill – March 7

Hampton Inn Conference Room 433 Harold Bentley Ave, Fairbanks, AK 99701 & Zoom

Legislative Summit - March 14 & 15

Juneau, Various Locations

[Learn More About Alaska CHARR's Government Affairs Team](#)

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