

Senator Gray-Jackson's Notes
Spenard Community Council
March 6, 2024

This Session

The following is a list of my current legislative priorities for this session.

Juneteenth (SB 22) - Make Juneteenth an observed legal state holiday. This bill was heard and held in House Finance Committee on February 6th. The bill will head to the Rules Committee then to the House Floor for a vote. Bill was passed by the Senate on May 3, 2023.

Public Schools: Mental Health Education (SB 24) - Amends existing health education curriculum to include mental health in K-12 health classrooms to adequately educate students on vital information pertaining to mental health symptoms, resources, and treatment. This bill was heard in the Senate Finance Committee on February 19th and was referred to Rules. The Bill is scheduled for a vote on the Senate floor on Wednesday, March 6th.

Asian American/Pacific Islander Program (SB 131) – Amends Section 14.30 to require teaching students in Kindergarten through 12th grade about the contributions of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities to the economic, cultural, social, and political development of the United States. Several other states across the country have passed similar bills which allow students to feel empowered and to understand their ethnic identities as well as their personal civic duty. This bill was heard and held in Senate State Affairs on February 8th.

Priorities for the Senate Bi-partisan Majority

- Education
- Returning to a Defined Benefit
- Energy
- Developing a comprehensive and sustainable fiscal plan

New Legislation

Stay at Work/Return to Work (SB 206) –This bill adds a Return-to-Work Coordinator to State Statutes to assist with planning for individuals who experience on the job injuries resulting in compensable time loss injuries. The program will help supervisors manage employee injury, illness and disability and ensure that employees can return to the workplace as quickly and safely as possible. This bill was moved out of Senate Labor and Commerce on February 21st and was referred to Senate Finance.

Chronic Kidney Disease Awareness Month (SR 3) -This Resolution aims to recognize March as Chronic Kidney Disease Awareness Month in Alaska to raise awareness of the need for research, screening programs and access to care for individuals who suffer from chronic kidney disease. The Senate passed the bill on March 1st and it now heads to the House.

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CPR Curriculum (SB 221) - Seeks to enhance the quality of health education within our state's public school system. SB 221 focuses on equipping our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to increase the number of CPR-trained bystanders. This bill is scheduled for its first bill hearing on Senate Education Committee.

Mammograms: Insurance Coverage (SB 222) — This bill impacts commercial insurance health plans under Title 21. It prohibits health plans that cover diagnostic and supplemental imaging tests for breast cancer from charging patient cost-sharing (co-pay, coinsurance, and/or deductible).

Internet/ Charter/ Transportation/ Funding/ Base Student Allocation (SB 140)

The revised bill was approved by both the Senate and House. Notable changes include:

- \$175 million increase to the BSA representing a permanent \$680 increase
- \$500 per K-3 Student for the Alaska READS Act implementation
- Provides for a Charter School termination appeal
- Creation of a Statewide Charter School Coordinator
- \$14.5 million increase in Correspondence School Funding
- \$ 7.3 million increase in Pupil transportation
- Includes funding increase for internet in rural and remote areas

Municipal Elections

Reminder to register to vote or update your voter registration on or before the Sunday, March 3, 2024, deadline to vote in the April 2, 2024, Regular Municipal Election!

- The April 2, 2024, Regular Municipal Election is a Vote at Home/Vote by Mail election where voters can vote in the convenience of their own home!

The deadline to apply to receive a ballot at a temporary address is March 26, 2024.

Voters can sign up at www.anchoragevotes.com for ballot tracking to get alerts when the voters' ballot envelope reaches various points in the election process.