



Alaska State Legislature

Senator Matt Claman

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Serving West Anchorage

May 2024 Community Council Update

Operating Budget— On May 2nd, the Senate passed House Bill 268, the Operating Budget, and House Bill 270, the Mental Health Budget. Both pieces of legislation will not be sent back to the House for concurrence. The Senate’s Operating Budget is \$6.25 billion and leaves a \$196 million revenue surplus. The Operating Budget the Senate passed includes:

- \$175 million one-time bonus for public schools
- \$7.3 million for pupil transportation
- \$5.2 for the Alaska Reads Act
- \$5.2 million for Head Start, matching federal funds
- \$1.2 million for rural Public Broadcasting
- \$30 million for Community Assistance got FY25 and FY26 to help lower local property taxes
- \$4 million for MOA’s summer operation of the municipality’s homeless shelter
- \$3.7 million for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
- \$1,580 dividend (including a \$222 energy relief payment)

Pending Legislation —

- House Bill 66 is the crime package the Senate Judiciary Committee introduced at the end of April. There are various criminal justice proposals within HB 66:
 - HB 66: higher penalties for drug offenses involving fentanyl and methamphetamine.
 - HB 265: renaming “child pornography” to “child sexual abuse material.”
 - SB 53: closing a gap when a person committing a felony offense but is incompetent and requiring involuntary commitment proceedings because the person is a danger to themselves or others.
 - SB 65: making hearsay evidence admissible to grand juries and requiring out-of-state sex offenders to be listed in Alaska’s state’s sex offender registry when moving to the state.
- Senate Bill 91, regarding telehealth passed the Senate unanimously in March and is in its last committee in the House. This legislation will allow members of out-of-state multidisciplinary care teams to provide telehealth care to Alaskans who suffer from life-threatening conditions like ALS. This type of multidisciplinary care is not reasonably available in-state. Current Alaska law only allows out-of-state physicians to provide care via telehealth, so patients seeking care from non-physician members of a multidisciplinary care team are often forced to travel to access care. This legislation will allow Alaskans with life-threatening conditions to receive necessary healthcare while remaining at home in their local support networks.

Anchorage Municipal Election— The Municipality of Anchorage sent out vote-by-mail ballots for the Anchorage Mayoral runoff. If you voted by mail in the Anchorage Municipal General Election, you should receive your runoff ballot to the same address. Ballots are due by Tuesday, May 14th.