



Alaska State Legislature

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Serving the Sand Lake, Spenard, and Turnagain Communities

September 2022 Community Council Update

Legislature Passes Budget — Following up on our June update, the governor approved the budget passed by the legislature that does not overdraw the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve Account and includes a \$2,550 dividend and a \$650 one-time Energy Relief Check. The approved versions of the budget contain approximately \$17.8 billion in total spending: \$9.5 billion came from the state's unrestricted general fund; \$972 million the designated general funds, and \$5.4 billion in federal spending. An additional withdrawal of approximately \$450 million from Constitutional Budget Reserve, which requires a $\frac{3}{4}$ supermajority of votes in the House and Senate, was not approved when 11 house members voted against the savings withdrawal. The state's operating budget is approximately \$13.4 billion — with \$7 billion from the unrestricted general fund — while the capital budget is \$3.7 billion with \$1.1 billion from the unrestricted general fund.

Claman-Sponsored Legislation Becomes Law — My office sponsored two pieces of legislation that recently became law without the governor's signature: HB 62, which eliminates child marriage under 16 years of age and reduces the number of marriage witnesses to one to help keep Alaska ready and open for business; and HB 99, which updates the governing laws for physical therapists, physical therapy assistants, occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants practicing in Alaska.

Other Important Legislation Becomes Law — My office assisted in crafting two important pieces of legislation that became law this summer:

- **HB 172: Crisis Stabilization and Residential Centers** – Medical and behavioral health agencies, social service providers, and the overall public safety and criminal justice system can now work together more effectively to connect people to care. HB 172 allows for improved quality of life and opportunities to thrive by creating a “no wrong door” approach to services stabilizing people in crises. It enhances options for first responders to efficiently connect Alaskans to the appropriate level of crisis care. Now, first responders can support people in crisis by linking them to care in a crisis stabilization center instead of an emergency department or jail. HB 172 creates 7-day Crisis Residential Centers that will serve as an intermediate care option for behavioral health treatment and expands the behavioral and mental health system for Alaskans.
- **HB 325: Public Safety Statute Rewrite** – HB 325 changes the statute to acknowledge the severity of “revenge porn,” in which an abusive individual distributes (or threatens to distribute) explicit images of their partner to control, humiliate, or otherwise harm that person. It redefines this type of behavior as domestic violence, as it has the potential to negatively impact the victim's life and future. Additionally, HB 325 modernizes Alaska's definition of consent for the crime of sexual assault to be a freely given, reversible agreement specific to the conduct at issue. Alaska's previous consent definition required evidence of the use of force to prosecute sexual assault. Finally, HB 325 criminalizes what is known as “rape by fraud,” in which an offender fraudulently impersonates another person to obtain sex when that individual would not have otherwise consented.