

Alaska Women's Lobby  
Week Twelve Legislative Report  
March 26th - March 31st 2001

Report prepared by Caren Robinson

The pace of the legislature has picked-up. The next couple of weeks will show what bills will be part of the adjournment package.

Business and Professional Women visited the Legislature this week meeting with legislators regarding their priorities.

### **Action Alerts on Abortion Bills SB 91 and HB 160**

#### **SB 91 Informed Consent for Abortion-Second Hearing Monday Senate HESS**

The bill would not allow Doctors in Alaska to perform abortions without providing women with state issued information on abortion risks and have dated the age of the fetus, referred to throughout the bill as the "unborn child".

The pamphlet would describe abortion procedures and include photographs of the "unborn" at two-week intervals.

Women would be required to certify in writing that the information was provided, except in medical emergencies - if the abortion was necessary to prevent death or serious risk to the mother.

#### **Action Needed on SB 91:**

If you have not already done so, contact your legislator by phone, fax, e-mail as soon as possible and urge them to oppose SB 91. Also contact members of the HESS Committee and ask them not to move the bill out of the committee.

Senate HESS Committee members are:

Senator\_Lyda\_Green@legis.state.ak.us phone: 1-877-465-6601

Senator\_Loren\_Leman@legis.state.ak.us phone: (907) 465-2095

Senator\_Gary\_Wilken@legis.state.ak.us phone: (907) 465-3709

Senator\_Jerry\_Ward@legis.state.ak.us phone: (907) 465-4940 \*\*

Senator\_Bettye\_Davis@legis.state.ak.us phone: 1-800-770-3822

#### **HB 160 - Abortion Reporting Bill**

HB 160, Abortion Reporting, received its first hearing last week in the House Health, Education and Social Services Committee.

At the beginning of the hearing, the sponsor, Representative Coghill, announced his intention to introduce a sponsor substitute incorporating almost all of the amendments that the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health had requested in a private meeting with him.

He plans to amend the three-day time period for doctors to report abortions, and was open to other changes. Specifically, he announced that he will remove the requirements of Section 1(e)(2) that asked a patient for information not required by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Representative Dyson and others indicated they thought Representative Coghill was caving on certain issues too quickly.

The bill did not move out of Committee, but we anticipate Representative Coghill will be coming back to the Committee soon with a revised version of the bill.

**Action Needed on HB 160:**

Thank Representative Coghill for listening to the concerns of the individuals and organizations who testified and to the Division of Public Health and encourage other members who supported his original bill to support Representative Coghill amended version.

House HESS Committee members:

Rep. Fred Dyson 1-800-342-2199 , Chair of House HESS Committee and(co-sponsor of the bill); fax 465-4587 [Representative\\_Fred\\_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us)

Rep. Peggy Wilson 1-800-686-3824 I, Vice-Chair of House HESS Committee and (co-sponsor of the bill); fax 465-3175 [Representative\\_Peggy\\_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Peggy_Wilson@legis.state.ak.us)

Rep. John Coghill, Jr. 1-877-465-3719, (Sponsor of the bill); fax 465-3258 [Representative\\_John\\_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_John_Coghill@legis.state.ak.us)

Rep. Vic Kohring 1-800-468-2186; fax 465-3818 [Representative\\_Vic\\_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Vic_Kohring@legis.state.ak.us)

Rep. Gary Stevens 1-800-821-4925 ; fax 465-3517 [Representative\\_Gary\\_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Gary_Stevens@legis.state.ak.us)

Rep. Sharon Cissna 1-800-922-3875 ; fax 465-4588 [Representative\\_Sharon\\_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Sharon_Cissna@legis.state.ak.us)

Rep. Reggie Joule 1-800-782-4833 ; fax 465-4586 [Representative\\_Reggie\\_Joule@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_Reggie_Joule@legis.state.ak.us)

You may also e-mail your legislator at [Representative\\_First Name\\_Last Name@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Representative_First Name_Last Name@legis.state.ak.us)

**Senate Hears From Public at Weekend Budget Hearing**

Members of the Senate Finance Committee heard numerous pleas Saturday for increased funding for substance abuse programs and for education. The hearing included statewide testimony by teleconference and in-person testimony from Juneau residents.

Many citizens hoped that the alcohol treatment cuts will be balanced with passage of an increased alcohol excise tax. Senators, however, were also rebuked for using only \$1.2 million for a \$25 million tobacco settlement for efforts to prevent smoking.

The Senate bill contains about \$8 million fewer general funds than passed by the House and almost \$70 million under the request of the Governor.

**HCR 7 - House Passes Sexual Assault Resolution**

The Legislature this week gave final approval to a resolution aimed at raising public awareness of sexual abuse and sexual assault in Alaska, when the House concurred with Senate changes to HCR 7.

HCR 7, sponsored by Representative Meyer, designates April 2001 as "Sexual Assault Awareness Month." The resolution is designed to raise public consciousness about sexual

assault and its impacts on women, children and men. It is also intended as a way to acknowledge the efforts of counselors and advocates engaged in the struggle against such crimes.

### **SB 6 Amends Landlord-Tenant Act**

SB 6, sponsored by Senator Ellis, passed the Senate this week. Tenants of mobile home parks who face eviction will have more time to relocate or money to help them do so under a bill approved by the Senate this week.

SB 6 amends the Landlord-Tenant Act. Current law requires mobile home park owners to give tenants 180 days notice to move if they rezone their and for a different kind of development.

The bill extends the eviction notice to 365 days. However, park owners could evict tenants after 180 days if they pay relocation costs up to \$5,000.

The bill also bans winter evictions between October 15 and May 1.

The bill was approved 12-7 and now moves to the House for consideration.

### **SB 133 - School Exit Exam Delay**

The Senate unanimously passed SB 133 putting off the day students must pass a test to get out of high school until 2004. The bill also would let some students get diplomas through waivers or alternatives assessment.

The bill now goes to the House.

### **SB 137 - Continued Support for Vocational Education**

Adult vocational education programs across the state will continue to receive support under a bill passed by the Senate this week.

SB 137, sponsored by Senator Torgerson, extends the first year allocation provisions of a program enacted in the 21st Alaska Legislature.

Funds will be provided to three publicly operated institutions. The University of Alaska will receive \$3 million, the Alaska Vocational and Technical Center will receive \$1 million and the Kotzebue Technical Center will receive \$500,000.

SB 137 passed the Senate with a vote of 15-4 and now goes to the House for consideration.

### **HB 109 - Absentee Ballot Bill Heads to Governor**

In a action aimed at strengthening Alaskans' electoral rights, the Senate passed HB 109 on Wednesday to ensure absentee ballots cast in person will not be invalidated due to minor errors by elections workers.

HB 109, introduced by Representative Coghill, resulted from several instances in which Alaskans who had voted absentee in person got letters from the state Division of Elections disqualifying their votes because election workers had failed to fill out or properly sign the associated paperwork.

HB 109 simply provides protection against such mistakes for the poll workers and voters alike.

The Senate's passage represents the Legislature's final approval of HB 109, which now moves to

the governor for his signature.

#### **New Senate Bills:**

##### **SB 165 - School Head Tax Legislation**

Senator Austerman introduced legislation that would create an education head tax as part of a comprehensive approach to fill Alaska's mounting budget gap.

SB 165 would impose a tax of \$100 a year on each employed individual age 19 or older, including the self-employed. Under SB 165, the employer would deduct \$50 from an employee's salary on each of their first two regular payrolls after January 1 of the calendar year. A provision has been added to prevent this tax from being taken out more than once when the employee provides proof to the new employer that the tax has already been satisfied.

Preliminary estimates from the Department of Revenue collections of between \$35 and \$36 million a year in new revenue. Rough numbers from the department indicate that about \$2 million a year would be required to administer the increased workload.

##### **SB 166 - Five Day Waiting Period for US Senate Seat Vacancy**

Senator Donley introduced legislation this week that would require a 5-day waiting period before the governor can fill a United States Senate seat vacancy.

The Seventeenth Amendment of the United States Constitution grants state legislatures the exclusive authority to set the terms of temporary appointments to fill vacancies in the U.S. Senate.

Currently Alaskan voters would chose a new U.S. Senator by a special election if a vacated U.S. Senate term is longer than 30 months. However, there is no system in place for if the remainder of the term is less than 30 months.

This legislation simply provides a brief period in which Alaskans can express their opinions to the governor about who they believe is the best person for the job. The governor still retains the power of appointment, but Alaskans will be guaranteed an opportunity to comment before he/she does so.

SB 166 was referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

#### **New House Bills:**

##### **HB 203 - Study of School Cost Differences**

Representative Wilson has introduced legislation calling for a study of how the funding formula should compensate for the extra costs of running schools in remote areas.

HB 203 calls on the state to spend \$350,000 on an independent study to identify the actual basis for the cost differences in operating schools in different parts of Alaska, a factor known as the area cost differential (ACD).

The current area cost differential is not based on what it actually costs to teach children in rural schools. It just measures what districts spent in the past bringing that forward into the present.

The unfairness arises when districts may be doing without important but expensive goods or services, which the foundation formula interprets them as demonstrating no need for.

The Alaska Constitution obligates the state to provide free and appropriate public education to all Alaska children, regardless of where they live.

HB 203 calls for the Legislative Council to contract for a study of the actual costs of doing business in each of the state's 53 districts, including the costs of food, utilities, transportation, medical expenses. The study must be presented to the Legislature by Jan. 15, 2002.

The bill was referred to the House Special Committee on Education and the House Finance Committee.

### **HB 211 & HCR 11 - Two New Education Bills Introduced**

This week Representative Guess introduced HB 211 and House Concurrent Resolution 11, to inflation-proof the school funding formula and create a standing legislative committee focused on education issues.

### **Committee Meetings**

(S)FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE \*

Apr 02 Monday 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532

HB 103 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET TELECONFERENCED

HB 104 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET TELECONFERENCED

(H)JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE \*

Apr 02 Monday 1:00 PM CAPITOL 120

HB 3 DEPOSITS TO THE PERMANENT FUND TELECONFERENCED

(S)HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE \*

Apr 02 Monday 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

SB 149 TEACHER/HEALTH CARE PROVIDER INCENTIVES TELECONFERENCED

SB 155 STUDENT LOANS/ COMMISSION ON POSTSECONDARY ED. TELECONFERENCED

**SB 91 ABORTION: INFORMED CONSENT; INFORMATION TELECONFERENCED**

(S)FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE \*

Apr 03 Tuesday 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532

HB 103 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET

HB 104 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

(H)CHILDREN'S CAUCUS OTHER COMMITTEE \*

Apr 03 Tuesday 12:00 PM FAHRENKAMP 203

April, Child Abuse Prevention Month/TELECONFERENCED

Celebrating Families

(H)TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE \*

Apr 03 Tuesday 1:00 PM CAPITOL 17

HB 12 REDUCE PERCENTAGE FOR DWI TELECONFERENCED

(H)FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE \*

Apr 03 Tuesday 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519

HB 47 APPROP: GOVERNOR'S CAPITAL BUDGET TELECONFERENCED

(H)HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE \*

Apr 03 Tuesday 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106

HB 99 SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AND SAFETY TELECONFERENCED

(H)SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION SPECIAL COMMITTEE \*

Apr 04 Wednesday 8:00 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519

HB 204 STUDENT LOANS/COMN. ON POSTSECONDARY ED. TELECONFERENCED  
Bill rescheduled from 4/2/01>  
HB 203 APPROP: LBA STUDY OF SCHOOL COST FACTORS TELECONFERENCED  
HB 105 FOUNDATION FORMULA INCREASE TELECONFERENCED  
HB 71 EDUC. OF DISABLED OR GIFTED CHILDREN TELECONFERENCED  
Teleconference on above bill listen only

(H)FISCAL POLICY CAUCUS OTHER COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 04 Wednesday 8:00 AM FAHRENKAMP 203

(S)FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 04 Wednesday 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532  
HB 103 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET  
HB 104 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

(S)HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 04 Wednesday 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205  
Discussion of Medicaid Directions TELECONFERENCED  
SB 135 MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION AND RECORDS TELECONFERENCED

(H)STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 05 Thursday 8:00 AM CAPITOL 102  
HB 195 FREEDOM OF RELIGION  
HB 200 DRUNK DRIVING VICTIMS REMEMBRANCE DAY

(S)FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 05 Thursday 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532  
HB 103 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET  
HB 104 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET  
SB 154 REPEAL SUNSET OF MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE  
Bills Previously Heard/Scheduled  
(H)FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 05 Thursday 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519  
HB 172 THERAPEUTIC DRUG AND ALCOHOL COURTS

(H)HEALTH, EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 05 Thursday 3:00 PM CAPITOL 106  
HB 219 REPEAL SUNSET OF MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE TELECONFERENCED

(S)STATE AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 05 Thursday 3:30 PM BELTZ 211  
HJR 22 DIVERSE COMMUNITY/CONDEMN HATE CRIMES

(H)FISCAL POLICY CAUCUS OTHER COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 06 Friday 8:00 AM BUTROVICH 205

(S)FINANCE STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 06 Friday 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532  
HB 103 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET  
HB 104 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET  
SB 172 COURT SYSTEM ANNUAL REPORT

(H)JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE \*  
Apr 06 Friday 1:00 PM CAPITOL 120  
HB 125 UNLAWFULVIEWING TELECONFERENCED  
HB 196 RIGHT OF ACTION FOR LEGAL SEPARATION TELECONFERENCED

HB 121 CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES TELECONFERENCED  
HB 143 DNA DATABASE TELECONFERENCED

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"Defending and advancing the rights and needs of Women, Children and Families in Alaska"