



34th Alaska State Legislature

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On August 2, the Alaska Legislature will reconvene in Juneau to respond to a special session called by Governor Dunleavy. While the Governor's proclamation lists a pair of issues that failed to gain traction during the regular session, the most pressing matter before us is overriding two deeply consequential vetoes, one that strips \$51 million from Alaska's public schools, and another that blocks legislative access to critical oil and gas revenue data.

The Legislature has a constitutional duty to address these vetoes. Article II, Section 16 of the Alaska Constitution states that bills vetoed after the regular session must be reconsidered within the first five days of the next session—whether regular or special. If we do not act during this special session, the vetoes will become permanent.

These override votes are not political. They are about providing teachers, parents, and students with the resources they need to succeed. It is not about us, but about our next generation, which will continue to move Alaska in the direction of opportunities and prosperity. We need to provide them with the tools today so they can make this great state even better.

For years, legislators have heard from school boards, educators, and parents across the state. The base student allocation, the core formula used to fund schools, has not been meaningfully increased since 2017. In the 2025 session, after extensive public input and bipartisan collaboration, the Legislature passed a funding and policy package that provided an increase that schools could count on.

That progress was undone when the Governor vetoed \$51 million in education support, citing concerns about fiscal restraint, despite growing state revenues and rising costs in every community. Districts from Kotzebue, Kodiak, Mat-Su, Anchorage, Southeast, and every other region in the state are once again left scrambling to restructure their already finalized budgets, retain teachers, and avoid further program cuts. This veto directly threatens classroom stability and educational quality across Alaska.

The Legislature worked hard to craft a compromise. We adopted reforms proposed by the Governor, including changes to charter school applications and renewals. We also established an Education Task Force to examine long-term solutions. But no amount of reform can succeed if our schools are underfunded. An override of this veto is essential, not just to restore dollars, but to restore trust with the communities we serve and to prepare for the future.

The second override at stake involves Senate Bill 183, a bipartisan transparency bill that passed the Legislature with a combined 49-10 vote. It was initiated by the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee to address a serious and ongoing problem, where the Administration and the Department of Revenue refuses to provide oil and gas tax data in a usable format to provide a proper audit.

Since 2020, the Department has withheld essential audit information from the Legislature, obscuring the accuracy of potentially billions of dollars in oil production tax revenue. This violates long-standing norms and hampers the Legislature's ability to ensure proper tax revenues. SB 183 simply clarifies the historical process, requiring the Department to provide data in a format our auditors can actually analyze.

Governor Dunleavy vetoed the bill in June. Oversight is not optional, especially in a resource-dependent state like Alaska, where a single percentage point in tax reporting error can result in tens of millions of dollars in lost revenue. Alaskans expect their representatives to verify, not just trust, that the state's largest industries are paying fairly and that public dollars are properly managed.

The Governor's call for a special session may have been unexpected, but the Legislature's duty is not. This is about two fundamental responsibilities of any Legislature: funding public education and maintaining oversight of public resources. If we fail to act, we risk weakening the very institutions we're sworn to protect.