

JANUARY 2024

THIRTY-THIRD ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Report

BY SENATOR
LÖKI GALE TOBIN

BILLS WE ARE WORKING ON

- **Senate Bill 27:** Would allow you to get a 12-month supply of contraceptives because choice matters.
- **Senate Bill 46:** Let's make every March Brain Injury Awareness Month!
- **Senate Bill 100:** Nobody should be penalized for a crime that is now legal in Alaska. This bill removes certain low level marijuana crimes from public view on CourtView.
- **Senate Bill 101:** Alaska is the canary in the coal mine when it comes to the effects of global warming. We need bold action to make bold changes. This bill lays out a timeline for utilities to invest and transition to renewable energy technology.
- **Senate Bill 109:** This bill protects your right to leave any meeting held by your employer where the sole topic is your employer's personal beliefs about politics or religion.
- **Senate Bill 115:** It's past time to modernize Alaska's regulations regarding Physicians Assistants' scope and ability to treat patients.
- **Senate Bill 176:** This will provide a funding structure to backhaul recyclable electronics out of Rural Alaska.
- **Senate Bill 175:** Many hands make light work: this will help increase community representation on the parole board.

Stay up to date
with Senator Löki Tobin's
legislation.



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CONSTITUENT MEETINGS

(Virtual)

Saturday, January 20th - 1:00 pm

Register online at zoom.com

Meeting ID: 874 6427 0926

(In-Person)

Saturday, February 17th - 9:30 am

Downtown New Sagaya

(In-Person)

Saturday, February 17th - 1:30 pm

Muldoon (TBD)

Can't make these times?

*Visit Facebook.com/senatorloki to learn
when future meetings are scheduled.*

BUDGET

In December, Governor Dunleavy started the annual process to develop the state budget with a largely status quo budget. It is now time for the members of the Alaska State Legislature to dissect, discuss, and debate how best to fund state services. Budgets are often referred to as moral documents because they signal what's important enough to spend money on.

Here is a very brief overview of the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly in the Governor's budget proposal.

THE GOOD

More VPSOs and remote/rural State Troopers.

Effective community policing requires that public safety officers live in the communities they serve. I will be working to identify funding for culturally based training and de-escalation techniques.

Support for payroll staff.

Employers must pay their workers. Unfortunately, the State of Alaska is coming perilously close to not being able to pay state workers. Last year, I sat in horror as payroll staff for the Department of Administration showed photos of appalling working conditions and antiquated equipment. I am bolstered that the Governor has recognized the situation and asked for an increment to retain and recruit more payroll staff.

THE BAD

Flat funding for public education.

The Governor had the chance to provide the other half of the vetoed one-time funding for education in this budget, but that didn't happen. Nor did the Governor add any additional one-time funding for public education in his proposed budget. The Governor still has a chance to help Alaska's struggling school districts

through his supplemental budget request, which covers the changes needed to run state government in the current fiscal year, FY 2024. Going forward, please know that I will be fighting for every dollar we can spare to support public education in Alaska.

THE UGLY

Status quo is another word for reduction.

Every school district across Alaska is struggling to recruit and retain teachers, adequately support students with special needs, and keep the lights on. I know the Governor recognizes this and I hope he joins the Senate Majority in supporting a significant increase to the Base Student Allocation.

I look forward to working with my Caucus, the members of the House of Representatives, and the Governor to make education a statewide priority in the 2024 legislative session.

Public relations money for OCS.

Alaska's Office of Children's Services (OCS) has a massive turnover rate for employees. Rather than a flashy public relations campaign, I would rather see funding go to front-line OCS workers.

Crickets on crisis services.

Alaska has seen a significant increase in individuals experiencing behavior and mental health issues ending up in police custody. Now is the time to invest in evidence-based models of crisis stabilization and treatment. I'm surprised the Governor's budget does not include resources for communities to build out their crisis services systems. This is definitely something I will follow up on in the 2024 legislative session.

FOUNDATION FORMULA

Scan the QR code to get an overview of Alaska's Foundation Formula from the Association of Alaska School Boards.

The Foundation Formula is used to determine the amount of education funding that school districts across the state receive from the State of Alaska.



Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson and Senator Löki Gale Tobin standing in solidarity with striking union members.

SENATE BILL 101



Senator Tobin sitting in Committee.



Presenting Sen. Tom Begich with a citation for his dedication to the State of Alaska.

Climate change is real, and we are seeing the effects in Alaska. The only way to slow down or even stop this change is to keep global warming under 1.5 degrees Celsius. To meet this goal, we must move away from burning carbon-based fuels to produce electricity and embrace the use of renewable energy sources like wind, solar, geothermal, and tidal power.



Advocating to protect trans youth at every opportunity.



Sen. Tobin and the winners of the 2023 Council of State Governments 20 Under 40 Leadership Award.

To spur this transition, I am sponsoring Senate Bill 101 to set enforceable renewable energy generation targets for the electric utilities that serve the Railbelt. SB 101 and the companion bill in the House, HB 121, call for 55% of the electricity generation in the Railbelt to come from renewable energy resources by the end of 2035. Currently, only 15% comes from renewable energy sources. The target included in both bills is to reach 80% renewable energy generation by 2040. SB 101 and HB 121 have widespread bipartisan support that is most obvious by the fact that the Senate version of the bill is sponsored by me, a Democrat representing Downtown Anchorage, and the House version of the bill is sponsored by a Republican from Wasilla. As a matter of fact, both bills are based on similar legislation introduced last session by Governor Dunleavy.



Vice President Kamala Harris, Sen. Löki Gale Tobin, and Walker Gussie during a holiday reception on December 11 at the residence of the U.S. Vice President.



Sen. Gray-Jackson and Sen. Tobin presenting a legislative citation to South Addition resident and renowned state economist Neal Fried.

I believe it is time to follow a new path to meet the energy needs of modern Alaska. Renewable energy offers a stable and sustainable path forward that can also be less expensive, especially in the long run.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

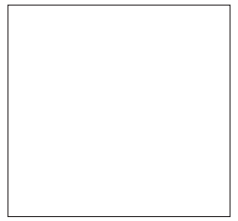
Last year, I was honored to be chosen by my colleagues in the bipartisan Alaska Senate Majority to serve as the Chair of the Senate Education Committee. In 2023, the Committee held some riveting meetings and passed some high priority legislation including bills to increase public education funding and to expand the very successful Alaska Education Tax Credit Program.

Here are just some of the planned meetings of the Senate Education Committee to start the 2024 session.

- **January 29** - The Committee will hear about youth homelessness and education.
- **January 31** - The Committee will learn about the best ways to support children from prenatal to age 3.
- **February 5** - The Committee will hear from school district superintendents and principals from across Alaska.
- **February 12** - The Committee will hold a listening session in conjunction with the Association of Alaska School Boards legislative fly-in.
- **February 21** - The Committee will hold a listening session to hear from participants in the Alaska Municipal League's 2024 Winter Legislative Conference.
- **February 28** - The Committee will hear presentations from the State Board of Education.

SENATOR LÖKI GALE TOBIN

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STAFF

Louie Flora

Louie Flora is the newest edition to Team Tobin. Louie is a lifelong commercial fisherman with over a decade of experience working in the Alaska State Legislature. I'm going to rely on Louie as we work to pass legislation to implement renewable portfolio standards for Alaska. Senate Bill 101 is needed to spur the transition to renewable and clean sources of energy.

Mike Mason

Mike Mason is a veteran staffer in the Alaska State Legislature who previously worked for Rep. Chris Tuck in several capacities. Prior to his work for the Alaska State Legislature, Mike was a public radio broadcaster in Dillingham and Homer.

Mackenzie Pope

In many ways, Mackenzie Pope is the face of Team Tobin. She's that cheerful person people first see when they visit my offices in either Anchorage or Juneau. Mackenzie is the office lead on capital budget requests, and she keeps the schedule. Mackenzie tries her best to bring order to my otherwise chaotic life.

And meet our constituent consultant Kayla Epstein

Kayla Epstein is well known in the Alaska State Capitol Building because of her late husband Max Gruenberg, who was a legendary member of the Alaska State Legislature know affectionately as "The Great Amender." Kayla is a skilled writer and political observer. Catch her at district community council meetings.

THE EMPTY OFFICE PODCAST

Need something to titillate your earbuds on your way to work? Tune in to the Empty Office Podcast. Join cohosts Senator Löki Gale Tobin & Mike Mason as they interview guests from across the political spectrum, breakdown state government, and give you the inside politico scoop into what's really happening in the halls of Juneau. Subscribe at lgtobin.substack.com, on Apple Podcasts, or Spotify.

