

The House of Representatives adjourned at midnight on May 12 and the 23rd Legislature is history—unless we're called back for a special session.

Looking back 120 days at our expectations for this legislative session, we see a mixed bag of results.

We should give a *thumbs up* for the work on **education funding**. School districts across the state will see an increase in the base student allocation and state assistance for increases in retirement costs (PERS/TRS).

Thumbs down for failing to develop solutions to bring us to **long term fiscal certainty**. Proposals placed on the table by the Legislature and the Governor were left in the dust as oil prices began to rise to all-time highs.

Recommendations by the Conference of Alaskans and the Permanent Fund Board of Trustees for a change to the way we calculate earnings of the Permanent Fund (**POMV**) failed to garner the votes necessary.

The only new revenue source standing at the close of the legislature was a proposed **increase in the tobacco tax**, and it, too, failed as the clock ran out in the House.

Thumbs up in the capital budget for the **\$1 million appropriation for Yuut Elitnaurviat**, the People's Learning Center. Senator Hoffman and I worked with our colleagues all session long to garner support for Yuut.

Additional funding for Yuut to help with vocational programs was also approved in **HB 123** which I co-sponsored with Representative Moses from Unalaska.

Thumbs down on the Senate Majority's resistance to funding **school major maintenance** needs. The House proposed a bond proposition on the November ballot that would have taken care of most of our school districts major maintenance projects. The Senate didn't take up the bill.

Thumbs up to my colleagues who supported and voted for **HB 353**, the bill I introduced to allow **teachers to be exempted from jury duty** if they teach in a school that is on the "failure to meet adequate yearly progress" list under federal law. As students face the pressures of benchmark tests and classrooms are expected to be headed by educators designated as "highly qualified" we need to keep our teachers teaching.

Thumbs down for the Legislature's failure to work through the problems associated with the **High School Qualifying Exit Exam**. SB 248 by Senator Gretchen Guess (D-Anchorage) and HB 457 by Representative Peggy Wilson (R-Wrangell) proposed changes to current law to provide alternative routes to achieving a high school diploma. Only SB 248 received even one hearing—neither passed.

And a BIG *Thumbs Up* again to all of you who wrote and called in the closing days when it looks as though a new Public Interest Litigant bill was going to rear its head. **SB 97 died in committee** on the House side.

More analysis of action (and inaction) by this year's Legislature will come. Indeed, more work by this Legislature may lie ahead. On the heels of adjournment the Governor announced he is leaving the question of a Special Session to the Legislature. That question begs another: If two-thirds of the Legislature decides they don't want to come back to deal with the Governor's priorities left on the table, will the Governor issue a call himself? We'll keep you posted.

In the meantime, if you have questions about any specific bills or the session generally, please feel free to call my office (1-800-323-4942).

See you on the river!