

Alaska State Legislature  
House of Representatives  
Minority Leader



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News from Juneau

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Greetings from Juneau. I have often declared that the primary job of the minority is to enforce the Hippocratic oath – “first, do no harm.” So far, so good, but we also need to make tough decisions in order to right the list in the state’s economy, which begins with implementation of a budget plan.

Yesterday the House Finance Committee released its budget caps – the limits of General Fund agency budgets that Finance subcommittees must submit to the full Finance committee. These numbers are arbitrary and driven by the sole desire to “cut the budget” – and we’ll never solve the budget gap unless we address revenue needs. Fixing the gap requires a diversified approach – you can’t bake a cake with just one ingredient.

Reviewing the caps, I noted they included neither Municipal Assistance & Revenue Sharing nor the University budget. Upon further review I also noticed the caps only contained \$16 million of the \$30 million in cuts envisioned by the majority. I suspect this will make municipal and University of Alaska officials very nervous. A copy of the caps is available on the web at:

<http://www.akdemocrats.org/>

Meanwhile, my friends in the so-called “Conservative Republican Caucus” introduced legislation enshrining the Permanent Fund dividend and inflation-proofing programs in the constitution. Too bad that this invites the scrutiny and wrath of the IRS and would likely result in taxation of Permanent Fund earnings – before dividends are issued. A copy of the Legal Services memo detailing the problem is also on the web at:

<http://www.akdemocrats.org/>

Finally, this weekend the Anchorage Caucus will meet in the Anchorage Assembly Chambers (Loussac Library, 3600 Denali Street) on Saturday, February 12 from 9 a.m. to noon. The agenda includes discussion between the Mayor, Assembly, and caucus members, followed by public testimony until noon. Please come.

As always, I will do my best to keep you up to date on the latest events in Juneau with these irregular updates. If you have specific issues or concerns not addressed here, please drop me a line.

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