

Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education *Legislative Update*

February 14, 2007
Volume 1 - Issue 2

Tuesday, January 16th began the 25th Alaska Legislative session in Juneau. During this session, the GCDSE is keeping you up-to-date by monitoring legislative action and tracking bills that relate to issues concerning health, education, disabilities, and services in the State of Alaska.

Senate Joint Resolution 1: Medical Assistance for Children

This Resolution was first introduced and heard on Feb. 7th. It relates to the reauthorization of federal funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and encourages the Governor and Alaska's Congressional delegation to support additional funding and access to children's health insurance; Including funding for the Denali Kid Care Program.

Sponsor(s): Sen. Bettye Davis (D-K) Chair (S) HES Committee

Status: 02/07 referred to Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SJR1



Senate Concurrent Resolution 2: Brain Injury Awareness Month

This Resolution relates to establishing March 2007 as brain injury awareness month. It is estimated that approximately eight hundred people each year report a traumatic brain injury in the State of Alaska; Twenty percent of those injuries result in death. 12,000 people in the State of Alaska have suffered a traumatic brain injury and many live with permanent disabilities. Establishing each year in March as Brain Injury Awareness Month would create more public awareness in the State of Alaska.

Sponsor(s): Sen. Lesil McGuire (R-N) and Johnny Ellis (D-L)

Status: 01/24 referred to Senate Health, Education, & Social Services Committee; hearing will be held 02/14

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SCR2

Held Committee Referrals and Bill Hearings:

Senate Bill 40:

Longevity Bonus Reapplications

Wednesday, February 7th State Capitol
Held and heard in
Senate Health, Education &
Social Services Committee

House Bill 68:

Long-Range Fiscal Plan

Friday, February 9th State Capitol
Held and heard in House Finance
Ways and Means Special Committee

House Bill 18 (CSHB 18):

Post-Secondary Medical & Other Education

Wed. February 14th State Capitol
Read for the third time
and **PASSED** in the House

Senate Bill 1: Increase Amount of Base Student Allocation

This Senate Bill amends the current education formula for K-12 public education and establishes the per student dollar amount at \$5,810, which increases the current allocation by \$430. This Bill is meant to help mitigate the rising educational costs, which have caused a financial strain on school budgets in all of Alaska's fifty-three school districts. The eight percent proposed increase in the student dollar will allow school boards to direct more education dollars into the classroom.

Sponsor(s): Sen. Gary Wilken (R-E) Member of the Senate Education & Early Development Finance Subcommittee

Status: 02/09 held and heard in Senate Special Committee on Education, 02/14 Sen. Bettye Davis (D-K) added as co-sponsor

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SB1

Senate Bill 40: Longevity Bonus Reapplications

This Senate Bill would allow Alaskans to reapply for the Alaska Longevity Bonus, which was eliminated in 2003 by Governor Frank Murkowski. Longevity bonus recipients who were eligible in June 2003 would be able to reapply if they have maintained continuous state residency since that time. Reapplication must be filed before January 1, 2008 and the bonus amount will be the same as received in 2003.

Sponsor(s): Sen. Bill Wielechowski (D-J)

Status: 01/16 read for the first time and referred to the HES, Social Services, State Affairs and Finance Committees. 02/07 held and heard in Senate HES Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=SB40

House Bill 124: Intensive Services Education Funding

This House Bill would add a new subsection to read that if a student is counted for receiving intensive services funding by a district and transfers to another district in the State of Alaska, the transferring district will pay within thirty days after the transfer, the unexpended portion of the intensive services funding received for the student to the new district. The transferring district's payment must be based on a pro rata share of the amount received for the period in which the student attends school in the district.

Sponsor(s): Rep. Mary Nelson (D-38)

Status: 02/07 read for the first time and referred to House Health, Education & Social Services Committee

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=HB124



House Bill 125: Long-Range Fiscal Plan

This House Bill requires the Office of Management and Budget and the governor to submit to the Alaska State Legislature a fiscal plan that details the fiscal sources and uses of funding during the succeeding ten years.

Sponsor(s): House Special Committee on Ways & Means

Status: 02/08 read for the first time and referred to House Special Committee on Ways & Means; First hearing on Wednesday, February 14th by House Finance Special Committee on Ways & Means

Link to Bill Text:

http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_fulltext.asp?session=25&bill=HB125

Medicaid Funding Presentation in Senate Finance Committee

Tuesday, February 6th:

The Pacific Health Policy Group conducted a presentation on the study of Alaska's Medicaid Program during a joint meeting in the Senate Finance and Health, Education, and Social Services Committee. Two of the key findings illustrated in the study were:

- A number of reforms within Alaska's existing Medicaid Program structure can be taken to improve services in the State and better control costs. Alaska can save approximately \$100 million in general funds through an important federal waiver and not diminish services of eligibility to individuals.

- The changes that were suggested in the study were found to help build long-term sustainability for Alaska's Medicaid Program without statutory change.

Link to the Medicaid Program Study can be found on the State of Alaska Senate Website:

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

If you have any Questions or Comments, please contact:

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Upcoming Bill Hearing Schedule Details:

Date:

Wed. February 14th 1:30pm

SCR 2 - Brain Injury Awareness Month: March 2007

Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee hearing
Rm. 205 State Capitol

- Presentation by Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse
- Alaska Mental Health Board
- Presentation: Bring the Kids Home Initiative

Date:

Wed. February 14th 3:30pm

HB 125 - Long-Range Fiscal Plan

House Finance Special Committee on Ways & Means hearing
Rm. 519 State Capitol