

# ALASKA LEGISLATIVE GUIDE

Tools for advocacy and lobbying



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# Your Voice Makes A Difference

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AML works to promote the interests and priorities of municipalities to both the State Legislature and Congress. However, the most effective legislative advocacy come from you, the local government official.

Local elected officials are in the best position to know the needs of their community and to share how legislation affects their city or borough. This guide from the Alaska Municipal League has something for every municipal leader, beginner to experienced, to help make your advocacy even more successful.

The guide has sections explaining the importance of self-governance, as well as information on contacting your legislators, crafting your message and building relationships with legislators. For those already experienced in advocating, the Guide has resources for you too, such as reminders on how to properly testify in front of legislative committees and keys to lobbying.

The Guide helps to ensure that your advocacy is as successful and impactful as possible.



## What is Self-Governance?

Local decision-making gives each city and borough the flexibility to craft its laws specific to its unique needs. It's the idea that our communities should be governed by the people who live in them. Alaska's founders put these powers and responsibilities in the Alaska Constitution more than 50 years ago. These powers state that any local government can adopt laws as long as the law doesn't conflict with state or federal law.



## Why Should I Care About Self-Governance?

Self-governance means local decision-making. If a city or borough wants to install a stoplight, add a traffic sign, build a water treatment pond, or hold a parade, it shouldn't need to ask the Alaska Legislature for permission.

As long as it doesn't violate state law, cities and boroughs have the flexibility and independence to meet their residents' needs and preferences. Residents trust local leaders like you to enforce laws "at home" and make necessary changes to improve their lives and the condition of their community.

## Successful advocacy starts at home, not in the Capital.

No one – including professional lobbyists – can tell your community's story better than you. Your involvement helps AML's legislative team turn the abstract into the concrete. It is essential for helping legislators understand how their decisions may impact their communities back home.

AML appreciates the individual advocacy efforts undertaken by municipal officials throughout the state.

## Other Ways to Participate Include:

- Testifying before a House or Senate committee on an AML or community priority.
- Participating in AML's Legislative Committee.
- Meeting with legislators in your district or when visiting the Capitol.
- Providing information and data about how proposed legislation could specifically impact your community.
- Communicating frequently and effectively with legislators and their staff and publicly recognizing them for their assistance.
- Attending the AML's Summer and Winter Legislative Conferences.

## How to Prepare for the Legislative Session

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Ahead of session is the best time for local elected officials to plan, build and strengthen relationships and educate legislators on what is going on in their cities and boroughs.

### Things city and borough officials can do before session begins:

1. Share a proposed budget with your legislators. Provide them with your budget summary, and then schedule a meeting to discuss your priorities for the next year.
2. Offer assistance to your legislators. Be sure to ask, “What can I do for you?” Don’t wait until you need their assistance on an issue. It will go a long way and strengthen these relationships.
3. Prepare a brief summary of important legislative issues that are important to your municipality. If your city or borough has a particular issue (or issues) that you wish to discuss, prepare a one-page summary of the issue that you can leave with the legislator. Don’t forget to also provide information for their legislative assistant.
4. Invite legislators to attend local/regional meetings. These meetings will give your legislators an opportunity to discuss their priorities for the upcoming session.
5. Become personally acquainted with legislative staff. Always be courteous. They are your link to getting an appointment and can help with your legislative issues.
6. Brief legislators on what is going on in your city or borough. Add legislators to your mailing list for important issues.
7. Invite legislators/staff to visit project facilities, such as water treatment plants, community development organizations, and transportation projects.
8. Meet with your legislative delegation to discuss municipal issues well ahead of session.
9. Publicly recognize legislators for good deeds.

## Advocacy Tips During Session

Tell your story as it relates to the issue.

- If you are meeting to ask for your legislator's vote, then ask for it. Don't assume they are going to support you because they were nice and you had a pleasant conversation.
- Don't mistake brevity for rudeness. Their schedules are very busy, and they just don't have the luxury of spending the same amount of time with you as they might back home in the district.
- Be polite to their staff when you arrive and when you leave. Legislators rely heavily on their staff and, more importantly, their staff's opinions.
- Don't act disappointed if the legislator is not available when you arrive and you have to meet with a staff member instead. Continue with the meeting as planned.
- If your legislator does not support your position, ask them to reconsider (if appropriate) and offer to provide them with additional information that might change their mind.
- If they are firm in their opposition, thank them for their time and their honesty and leave the meeting on a positive note. The fact that they disagree with you on some issues doesn't mean they will disagree on all issues. A memorable way to conclude your meeting is with a "How can I help you?" question. They may respond with, "There's nothing right now." But they won't forget that you asked.
- Send a follow-up thank you letter or email reiterating what you talked about and heard and/or agreed to during the conversation.

## Building Relationships

As a municipal official, you understand the effectiveness of your work often depends on the quality of your relationships. This statement is also true of relationships with lawmakers. You must develop relationships with legislators and their staff members long before you turn to them for an understanding of your point of view on an issue. Strong personal relationships are the best means of influencing legislative decision-making.

Personal visits, letters, phone calls, and emails also are important.

Building relationships takes time and careful effort, but it is the most effective way to shape the thinking of those who decide public policy.

How do you go about building such relationships? In much the same way that you cultivate friendships:

- Being friendly and personally helpful.
- “Personally helpful” cannot be emphasized enough.
- Become a useful and trustworthy source of sound information and insight.

Contribute your personal time to professional and political needs and interests. Your own party affiliation should not restrict you. Every elected officeholder represents an entire state, legislative district, or local government, Republicans, Democrats and independents alike. You do not have to be a member of the legislator’s political party to work together and even become friends. You will, however, need to do some homework about the key issues – for example, economic facts, population statistics, etc. – that are important to the interests and viewpoint you represent. In the same way, familiarize yourself with the legislators with whom you want to build relationships.

## Communicate With Your Legislator

- Be concise – Know what points you want to make and keep them brief.
- Be accurate – Make sure your facts and information are correct.
- Be current - Make sure you have your references for your data handy or be prepared to make references available if necessary.
- Be original – Personalize your form letter with local data and letterhead.
- Be courteous – Always be professional, even when unhappy with a vote.
- Be clear – Make a specific ask, such as vote “no”/ vote “yes”.
- Be persistent – Remind the legislator of your position – this also tells the legislator

that you are still interested in how they vote.

- Be timely – Gauge when to communicate based on where the bill is in the process.
- Be certain to follow up – Send a thank you or acknowledgment of their vote.
- Be involved in AML – Our staff and lobbying team can assist you and provide guidance on when and how to communicate, provide details and the status of legislation, and assist with meetings.

## Using Data to Tell Your Story

A variety of infrastructure, workforce and economic data are often essential to support your case regarding key issues. The data can be presented as a sentence or two in a letter to a legislator, as a brief paragraph in position papers and press releases, during personal visits or in a brochure for the public or government audiences.

Technical experts on policymakers' staff may comprehend and delight in complex tables and charts, but the decision-makers themselves have very low tolerance for such detail. When using charts to convey information, avoid using technical jargon. If such terms are required, you should explain them so that a nontechnical audience can understand.

## Personal Visits

Personal meetings with legislators and their key staff members are the most effective way to make your case on an issue. A personal meeting can be difficult to accomplish with a legislator's busy schedule but remember that you are offering an important perspective. You can arrange the meeting with the legislator directly or through staff.

## Make the best use of your time and the legislator's:

- Always make an appointment. Arranging the first meeting may require patience on your part, but be persistent. Later, as you become known as a resource, gaining appointments will be less difficult.
- Be prepared to meet with key legislative personnel or committee staff members if

the legislator is unavailable at the last moment. Briefing these people before your visit also may be useful so that they can prepare the legislator. Staff are often more knowledgeable about details of a specific issue.

- If several individuals join you in the visit, decide in advance who will be the principal spokesperson. That individual should encourage others to participate in the discussion to share specific expertise.
- If you want to discuss a specific issue, make sure you are thoroughly familiar with all aspects of it before going into the meeting.
- When talking to legislators, try to be concise, well-organized and mindful of the other person's time. State your view firmly, but be attentive to the policymaker's position also.
- Open the discussion by reminding the legislator who you are, who you represent, and why you are there. Know the issue and the bill number. Clearly state your concern about the issue and how it will affect you, your municipality and the surrounding region.
- Avoid harsh accusations. Be polite and respectful. Often, we forget how we sound when we are particularly passionate about an issue.
- Always be truthful, and never mislead. Your personal credibility and that of your city or borough is at stake. If you do not have the answer to a question, do not improvise. Promise to follow up with the necessary information and be sure to do so promptly.
- Come prepared with a brief (one-page) position paper that summarizes your points with facts, and leave it with the legislator or staff. If a lengthier document or answers to questions are relevant, send them later with a thank-you note.

## Follow Up After the Meeting

To gain favorable support, follow up with a letter(s) and calls to your legislators and their key staff advisors at appropriate points as the issue progresses.

Maintain the relationship. Get your name on legislative mailing lists. Find occasions to see your legislators again in appropriate circumstances, and write to them on the issues from time to time. If you obtain reports or data that will be useful to legislators and their aides and that you can share with them, send those documents with a brief personal cover note. Eventually, you may even find policymakers coming to you for information, help or your point of view on new issues.

## Write Your Legislator

**You can address and send a letter to your Legislator at:**

**State Senator:**

The Honorable...(Full Name)  
State Senate  
Alaska State Capitol  
120 4th Street Rm 3  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

**State Representative:**

The Honorable...(Full Name)  
House of Representatives  
Alaska State Capitol  
120 4th Street Rm 3  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

## Unsure Who Your Legislators Are?

With 60 Senators and Representatives in Alaska, it could certainly be confusing. Visit [akleg.gov](http://akleg.gov) and find the Who Represents Me block at the bottom of the page that provides your state Senate and House member. Just type in your municipality or street address. It will search their database and provide your legislators' names with links to their contact information, committees, bills and more! You can also use the House and Senate pages to view legislators and the areas they represent at [akleg.gov/house](http://akleg.gov/house) and [akleg.gov/senate](http://akleg.gov/senate).

## Keys to Effective Advocacy

**Identify the bill or issue.**

Many bills are introduced in each session. Be specific with the bill number and describe it by the popular title (ex: home-based business bill). Know the name of the bill sponsor.

## **Contact your legislators at the appropriate time.**

Sometimes a bill is out of committee or has passed the House before a helpful letter/ email or phone call arrives. Inform your legislators while there is still time to take effective action.

## **Concentrate on your own delegation.**

Contact the Representative and Senator representing you and ask for them to consider your municipality's views when voting in the Legislature.

## **Be reasonably brief.**

Many issues are complex, but your opinions and arguments stand a better chance if stated as concisely as the subject matter permits.

## **Take time to be specific.**

A personal letter or email is far better than a form letter/email or signature on a petition. Form letters/emails are readily recognizable and often receive form replies.

- What is your municipality's viewpoint?
- How is your municipality affected?
- These things matter!

## **Give your reasons for taking a stand.**

Statements like "Vote against H.B. 100; I'm bitterly opposed" do not help much. If a legislator does not realize all the possible effects of a bill, your letter/email may help him understand what it means to an important segment of their constituency. Be sure to provide specific examples.

## **Be constructive.**

If a bill deals with a problem you admit exists, but you believe the bill is the wrong approach, share a better approach. Be positive and courteous.

## **If you have expert knowledge, share it with your Legislators.**

Of all the letters/emails legislators receive, perhaps one in a hundred comes from a constituent who is an expert on the subject. The opinions expressed in the others are important, and will be heeded, but this one is a real gold mine for the conscientious legislator.

## **Say “well done” when deserved.**

Legislators are human, too, and they appreciate an occasional “well done” from people who believe they have done the right thing. Even if you think they were wrong on an issue, they would welcome a courteous letter telling them you disagreed. It may even help with another issue at a later date.

## **Do not berate your Legislator or make threats.**

You cannot hope to persuade a legislator of your position by calling them names. If you disagree with your legislator, give reasons for your disagreement. Try to keep the dialogue open. Be respectful.

## **Do not pretend to wield vast political influence.**

Write your Legislator as an individual.

## **Do not become a constant “pen pal” on every issue.**

Quality counts over quantity. Quality, respectful messages will help legislators and staff see you as a trusted resource.

## **Do not demand a commitment before the facts are in.**

If you have written a personal letter and stated your reasons for a particular stand, you have a right to know your legislator’s present thinking on the question. But writers who “demand to know how you will vote on H.B. 100” should bear in mind the complexities of the legislative process. Be reasonable.

## **Organize meetings with your Legislators.**

Many city officials organize a formal meeting in their city with their legislators, often a luncheon or a dinner to discuss their positions on legislation affecting cities. This is often done just prior to the start of the legislative session.

## **Develop a personal relationship with your Legislators.**

It is most helpful to have a personal relationship with your legislators. If they perceive you as a “friend,” rather than just another constituent who wants them to vote a certain way, they will be much more attentive to your views. Visit often with your legislators, not just when you need their vote on a crucial issue.

## **Understand the Legislative Process**

The Alaska legislative process can be very complicated. With a very compressed window of time and lots of rules, it is easy to get lost in the process. But understanding how and when your issue will be discussed allows you to have the biggest impact possible as you talk with state lawmakers.

## **Use Local Examples**

How is your community unique? What local issues has your city or borough successfully addressed, and what solutions are they working on? Being able to answer these questions will help you better understand local decision-making and be able to talk about it effectively.

## **Develop Relationships**

The most impactful messages come from familiar faces. The more lawmakers see your face and hear your message, the easier it will be to get a response from them when it really matters.

## **Be Friendly to Staff – They are The Gatekeepers**

Legislative aides and interns can have tremendous sway in ensuring your meeting requests, phone calls and emails get shared. Treat them with respect and kindness. Legislators are busy – especially during session. Meetings with their staff can be just as effective.

## **What do you want legislators to do?**

Do we want them to vote in a certain way, to lobby a fellow lawmaker or to ask a question during a committee meeting? Whenever you communicate with a lawmaker, be specific in what you are asking them to do. Even if you just want to discuss general issues, ask your state lawmaker to commit to determining the local impact of proposed legislation before considering a vote. And make sure to hold them accountable on the campaign trail, during committee weeks, and throughout session.

## **Hold your state lawmakers accountable**

Check back with your House and/or Senate members and ask them how they voted and what actions they took on the issue. Be prepared to hold them accountable during and after legislative session. This step can be done positively, respectfully and politely by assuring the legislator that because of this issue's importance, you want to know what actions occurred, if any, and want to fully understand.

## **Public Testimony 101**

Public testimony is an effective way to help legislators understand how an issue, policy or situation affects people across the state, presents difficulties or addresses needs. How should you prepare for your appearance? Before you testify, view the quick reference guide for how to talk with your state legislators. Using this resource is a great way to ensure you are prepared for your testimony or discussion with legislators.

Here are some tips to testifying successfully:

- Research the committee prior to testimony.

# Alaska Legislative Guide

- Who sits on the committee?
- Does a legislator from your area serve on this particular committee?
- Speak to members before the committee meeting.
- Prepare your remarks prior to the meeting.
- Avoid duplication.
- Most committees will limit the time witnesses have, so expect to have 1-2 minutes to speak.
  - Be brief and to the point. Often there are other witnesses present, and the Committee will appreciate your cooperation in allowing everyone to have an opportunity to be heard.
- Follow these tips for making your remarks:
  - Begin by introducing yourself to the chair and committee members and stating your purpose. For example, “Mister or Madam Chair and members of the committee, I am Mayor/Commissioner/Councilmember \_\_\_\_\_ from the City or Borough of \_\_\_\_\_. I support/oppose this bill because ... .”
  - Be brief and be sure your remarks are clear. Avoid being too technical and do not repeat previously made remarks. You do not need to be nervous or worried about how you present your testimony.
  - Be prepared for questions and comments from committee members. These questions are designed to gain additional information, but don’t answer if you are not sure of the answer. Tell the members you will send a written answer to the committee, and then follow through.

If you are asked to stay and answer questions from committee members, make sure to answer questions through the committee chair. When a legislator is finished asking their question of you, look to the committee chair for approval to begin your response. And start each response by thanking the chair for recognizing you to speak. “Thank you, (or Through the) Chair. I believe local government is important because...”

**Slow down and breathe.**

## About The Alaska Legislature

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The Alaska Senate and the Alaska House of Representatives together are the Alaska Legislature, a bicameral legislature. The Alaska Legislature is one of three branches of government in Alaska. The other two branches are the Executive and Judicial.

For the 34th Legislative session (2025-2027) the Alaska Legislature is comprised of two bodies. There are 40 members in the House of Representatives and 20 members in the Senate.

The House includes 21 Republicans, 14 Democrats, 1 independent, 4 non-affiliated. Of the forty Representatives, 21 are women and 19 are men.

The Senate includes 11 Republicans and 9 Democrats. Of the twenty, 5 are women and 15 are men.

### **Legislative Session**

The legislature convenes at the Capitol each year on the third Tuesday in January. Each legislature has a duration of two years and consists of a “First Regular Session” that meets in odd-numbered years, a “Second Regular Session” that meets in even-numbered years and any special session that the governor or legislature calls. The first and second regular sessions are limited in statute to 90 days (AS 24.05.150), but the constitution allows for 121 days (Article 2, Section 8).

### **Special Session**

Special legislative sessions may be called by the Governor, by a joint proclamation of the Senate President and House Speaker, or by a three-fifths vote of all legislators. During any special session, the Legislature may only address legislative business that is within the purview of the purpose or purposes stated in the Special Session Proclamation.

## **Composition**

The House is headed by a Speaker, elected by the members of the House to a two-year term. The Senate is led by a President, elected by the members of the Senate to a two-year term. The Speaker presides over the House, and the President presides over the Senate. Both appoint committee members and committee chairs, influence the placement of bills on the calendar and rule on procedural motions in their respective chambers.

## **The Role of the Committee**

The Legislature handles hundreds of bills a session by assigning bills to a special or standing committee. This committee is the initial hurdle for any bill. Committees hold public hearings to discuss bills and accept testimony from stakeholders and the general public on the pros and cons of bills. Whether a bill is considered and moved along in the process is dependent on a number of factors, most notably the advocacy efforts of supporters, the leadership of the chamber, the subject matter and policy it is addressing, and politics.

## **Consideration on the Floor**

Once a bill is passed out of a committee, it is sent to the House or Senate Floor for consideration. The Alaska Constitution requires bills to be read by title three times and on three separate session days before final passage by a chamber. A majority vote in each chamber is needed to pass a bill.

Once final passage occurs in one chamber, a bill is sent to the other chamber and the same vetting process begins again. If a bill is amended in the second chamber, it must return for approval or concurrence by the initial chamber. If the initial chamber does not agree, a conference committee is appointed. The committee is made up of five conferees from each chamber. No conference report shall be submitted to either chamber unless approved by a majority vote of the full committee with not less than three conferees

from the House and two conferees from the Senate signing the report. The conference committee works to find a compromise that can be presented to each chamber for adoption.

## Enactment of a Bill

After final passage by both the House and Senate, the leader of each chamber signs the bill and then it moves on to the Governor's desk. The Governor has three choices of action when a bill arrives. It can be signed into law, allowed to automatically become law without signature, or it can be vetoed. A vetoed bill needs a two-thirds majority in both chambers during veto session to become law. The Governor's course of action on any given bill will be based on policy and politics. The effective date of most bills is July 1 unless the bill has an emergency clause or otherwise specified effective date.

## Public Access to Bills and the Legislative Process

Public access to the Legislature, legislation and the legislative process is important. Legislation can be followed on the Alaska State Legislature website from introduction to enactment.

Meeting notices are posted along with member contact information. To help with your advocacy efforts, we recommend you use the [akleg.gov](http://akleg.gov) website in addition to the AML's Legislative Tracker site to stay up to date.

## Fiscal Notes

A fiscal note is a written estimate of the costs, savings, revenue gain, or revenue loss that may result from implementation of a bill. It serves as a tool to help legislators better understand how a bill might impact the state budget and individual agencies. It does not account for costs to local governments, school districts, or others outside State government.

It is important to respond to fiscal requests from AML that appear important to you or pertain to bills highlighted in the weekly AML Legislative Update, so that we may share this with Committees. By prioritizing the requests that affect your city the most, they become more manageable and therefore have more influence on important legislation moving through the legislative process.

## Turning Ideas Into Laws

The Alaska Legislature is authorized by the Alaska Constitution to create and amend the laws of the State of Alaska, subject to the Governor's power to veto legislation. To do so, legislators propose legislation in the form of bills drafted by a nonpartisan, professional staff. Successful legislation must undergo committee review, three readings on the floor of each house, with appropriate voting majorities, as required, and either be signed into law by the Governor or enacted through a veto override approved by two-thirds of the membership of each legislative house.

The Alaska Statutes are the codified statutory laws of the state. On average, the Legislature passes about 10 bills into law annually. Legislators propose legislation in the form of bills, which are drafted or reviewed by the Bill Drafting Services of the Alaska Senate and Alaska House of Representatives. Upon filing, Senate bills are designated SB and assigned an even number. House bills are designated HB and are assigned an odd number.

A bill is referred to one or more committees related to the subject of the bill. The committee analyzes the bill and may conduct hearings to obtain more information about the subject of the bill. After consideration, the committee votes to amend, pass or defeat the bill. If the bill is defeated in committee, it is dead for the rest of the session. The total number of committee references a bill has can determine its fate. The lower the number of references, the fewer committees it will appear in front of and the more likely it is to pass. The higher the number, the more opportunities for it to be debated and possibly run out of time for it to pass.

If the bill passes in the committee, it moves to other committees or the full chamber. If a bill passes in either the Senate or the House of Representatives, it is sent to the other house for review. The bill goes through the same process in the second house as it did in the first. A bill can go back and forth between the Alaska Senate and the Alaska House of Representatives until a consensus is reached.

If a bill is approved by both chambers of the Alaska Legislature and sent to the Governor during the legislative session, it is called an act. The Governor has seven days to act if passed during session. If the Governor receives the approved bill after the conclusion of the session, the Governor has 30 days to act.

A bill must make it through the entire process before the end of the session. If a bill fails at any step, it is dead and must begin the process again in the next session.

## Tracking a Bill

### **How do I find information about a bill if all I know is a general topic?**

From the akleg.gov home page, click on the left side bar menu “Bills and Laws”. Select “subject summary” under bills. There will be a list of general topics to choose from, you can read the short titles of the bills and find the one that best matches your inquiry. You can also contact your local Legislative Information Office.

### **You can track bills on your own two ways.**

**By Email:** Visit the Legislature’s Bill Tracking Management Facility (BTMF), and create an account. After doing so you will need to create a folder and add bills you would like to be notified on. Make sure the box to receive email notifications is checked on each bill that you add.

**Local Legislative Information Office:** Some LIO offices contact interested persons when a bill they are following is scheduled for public testimony. Legislative Information staff are also happy to assist you in understanding the legislative process.

## Glossary of Legislative Terms

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### A

#### **Adjourn**

The act of closing business, done by a committee or the House or Senate. See also *Sine Die*.

#### **Adoption**

A preliminary action of the House or Senate or of a committee in considering amendments and substitutes. Amendments are adopted. Committee substitutes are adopted before they are voted do pass by a committee or perfected by the House or Senate. House or Senate substitutes are adopted before they are perfected or third read by the House or Senate. Conference committee reports are adopted before the bill or amendments they recommend are third read. Ordinarily the final action on a House or Senate resolution is adoption.

#### **Amendment**

A modification of a bill or another amendment, offered in committee (a House or Senate committee amendment), on the floor (a House or Senate amendment), or in conference committee (a conference committee amendment). See also *Perfecting Amendment*.

#### **Appropriations Bill**

A bill to appropriate state and federal funds to the uses of state government. The first 25 House bill numbers are reserved for appropriations bills each session.

### B

#### **Bill**

An enactment of the Legislature that (1) changes the law either by adding new statutes,

repealing old statutes, or modifying current statutes or (2) appropriates public money. A bill introduced in the House is called a House bill and a bill introduced in the Senate is called a Senate bill. Bills are numbered consecutively upon introduction starting with the first regular session and continuing through the second regular session.

## C

### **Calendar**

The order of business of the House and Senate. The calendar contains bills, resolutions, and reports in various stages of consideration.

### **Caucus**

A voluntary organization of members of the House or Senate. Each chamber has partisan caucuses as well as caucuses organized around geographical and interest groups. The partisan caucuses normally meet in closed session.

### **Chair**

The head of a committee or any person presiding over a meeting of a committee or of the House or Senate.

### **Chief Clerk**

An officer of the House, in charge of monitoring House proceedings and maintaining House records.

### **Committee**

A select group of members with a defined scope of responsibility. See Conference Committee, Interim Committee, Standing Committee, Joint Committee, Special Committee, and Statutory Committee.

## **Companion Bills**

Bills introduced in both the House and the Senate in identical form.

## **Concurrent Resolution**

A resolution that is passed by both the House and the Senate. It may originate in either body. If it has the effect of law, it must be handled like a bill. See Resolution.

## **Conference Committee**

A committee made up of five members of each chamber, appointed to resolve differences between the two chambers on a bill or joint resolution passed by both but in a different form.

## **Confirmation**

Approval of an appointment to office by the Governor. The Constitution gives this power to the state Senate.

## **Constitutional Majority**

The constitution requires approval by a majority of members elected to the Senate and to the House for a bill to be considered passed.

## **Co-Sponsor**

Used in place of “Sponsor” when two or more members of the House or two or more members of the Senate jointly introduce a bill.

## **D**

### **Do Pass (Voted or Reported)**

A bill that is voted “do pass” is approved by a committee. A bill that is reported “do pass” has been returned by the committee to the full House with this approval. A bill can also be voted and reported “do not pass”, indicating disapproval.

## **Division of the Question**

A dividing of any item of business before a committee or the House or Senate into parts, so that separate votes are held on each part.

## **Drafting Number**

A unique number assigned to a bill or amendment indicating the drafting source.

## **E**

### **Effective Date**

The date on which a bill takes effect. If no effective date is specified, the constitution makes the effective date ninety days after adjournment of the session in which the bill was passed.

### **Emergency Clause**

A clause on a bill declaring an emergency and making a bill or part of a bill effective sooner than 90 days after the session in which it is passed. It requires a two-thirds vote of each chamber.

### **Executive Session**

A meeting of a committee to conduct business, usually vote on bills referred to the committee.

## **F**

### **Filibuster**

A delaying of action by extending debate.

### **Fiscal Note**

An estimate of the effect a bill will have upon state and local revenues.

## **Fiscal Year**

A twelve month period by which financial planning and accounting is done. The fiscal year for Alaska state government begins July 1 of each year and is referred to by the number of the calendar year in which it ends.

## **Floor Leaders**

Each party selects a floor leader. The majority floor leader controls the order of business of the chamber. The minority leader represents the interests of the minority party.

## **G**

### **General Revenue**

State revenues that are not designated for a specific use but that may be appropriated for any legal use.

### **Germane**

Pertaining to the subject matter of the item of business being considered. Amendments are required to be germane to the bill to which they are offered.

### **Grandfather Clause**

A provision in a bill that exempts persons or entities from the bill on the basis of their status on a certain date, usually the effective date of the bill.

## **H**

### **Hearing**

A meeting of a committee of the House or Senate to receive testimony from the public on a bill or topic.

## I

### **Impeachment**

An indictment of a statewide elected official or a state judge for crime or misconduct in office.

### **Interim**

The period of time between the adjournment of one session of the Legislature and the convening of the next regular session (generally June through December).

### **Interim Committee**

A committee established to meet during the interim, usually to consider legislation on a particular topic.

## J

### **Joint Committee**

A committee made up of both members of the House and members of the Senate. These are normally interim or statutory committees.

### **Joint Resolution**

An enactment of the Legislature that places a proposed amendment to the state constitution before the voters for approval or that approves an amendment to the Constitution. If introduced in the House it is a House Joint Resolution. If introduced in the Senate it is a Senate Joint Resolution.

### **Joint Rules**

Procedural guidelines adopted by the House and the Senate to govern interaction between the two bodies.

### **Joint Session**

A session of both the House and Senate. Joint sessions are held in the House chamber

and are normally called to hear the Governor or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

## **Journal**

The record of the proceedings of the House and the Senate.

## L

### **Line Item**

A specific appropriation within an appropriation bill.

### **Line Item Veto**

A veto by the Governor of a line item.

### **Lobbyist**

A person who attempts to influence the legislative process as a part of his or her job or under hire by someone else.

## M

### **Majority**

One more than half of any body. See also Constitutional Majority.

### **Majority Party**

The party holding a majority of the seats in the House or the Senate.

### **Minority Party**

A party holding less than a majority of the seats in the House or the Senate.

## P

### **Personal Privilege**

A right of a member to speak on a matter of personal concern.

### **Point of Order**

A challenge to the procedure that is being followed or to the germaneness of an amendment or substitute.

### **President Pro Tem**

The leader of the Senate, elected by the Senate. The full title was originally President Pro Tempore, which means Temporary President.

### **Previous Question**

A motion to end debate on the matter before the chamber.

### **Privileged Motion**

A motion that takes precedence over other motions and must be acted upon when offered.

## Q

### **Quorum**

The number of members required for a body to do business. The rules of each chamber set this number for committees. The state constitution requires a majority of members to be present for the House and the Senate to conduct business.

## R

### **Reading**

A term used to indicate a step in the legislative process. First reading occurs when a bill

is introduced, second reading when it is referred to committee, and third reading when it is approved by a constitutional majority of a chamber.

## **Reconsider**

A motion to reopen a question that has been previously decided.

## **Referendum**

A vote of the people upon a law already enacted by the Legislature or upon a proposal to change the law.

## **Referral to Committee**

The Alaska Constitution required that every bill be referred to committee. In the House, the Speaker and, in the Senate, the President make the referrals. Once a committee has a bill referred to it, it may hold a hearing on the bill and recommend the bill to the full chamber with amendments or a substitute.

## **Remonstrance**

Formal statement of protest.

## **Resolution**

An act of the House or Senate or of both together that ordinarily has no effect of law. It either commends some achievement, expresses an opinion, urges another entity such as Congress to take some action, or takes some internal action such as establishing a committee. See also Concurrent Resolution and Joint Resolution.

## **Roll Call**

The taking of votes by individual member either in committee or in the full chamber. The state constitution requires the House and the Senate to take a roll call vote (“a vote by yeas and nays”) on final passage of a bill, on adoption of conference reports, and on concurrence in amendments by the other chamber, but grants any five members the

right to have a roll call on any question House and Senate roll calls are recorded in the House and the Senate. Committee roll calls are recorded in minute books kept by each committee and filed in the Alaska State Archives at the end of each year.

## **Rules**

The procedural guidelines adopted by the House for its business and the Senate for its business.

## **S**

### **Session**

That part of the year when the Legislature may meet to conduct business. The regular session is January through May. The session in odd-numbered years is called the first regular session; that in even-numbered years is called the second regular session. See also Special Session and Veto Session.

### **Sine Die**

The final adjournment of a session of the Legislature, literally, without day. For a regular session, this must occur no later than 121 days after the beginning.

### **Speaker**

The presiding officer of the House and normally leader of the majority party of the House. The Speaker is elected by the House.

### **Speaker Pro Tem**

An officer of the House who presides in the absence of the Speaker. The full title was originally Speaker Pro Tempore, which means Temporary Speaker.

### **Special Committee**

In the House, a committee established by the Speaker.

## **Special Session**

A session of the Legislature called by three-fourths of the respective members of the House and the Senate to consider specific business.

## **Sponsor**

The member of the House or the member of the Senate who introduces a bill. The sponsor is sometimes called the author. Also see “Co- sponsor.”

## **Standing Committee**

A committee established by the Rules.

## **Statutory Committee**

A committee established by law.

## **Substitute**

A replacement for the item of business under consideration. There are substitute amendments and substitute bills. If a substitute bill is offered by a committee it is called a Committee Substitute. If a substitute is offered when the bill is being perfected, it is called a Substitute. If it is offered by a conference committee it is called a Conference Committee Substitute.

## **T**

### **Title**

A part of a bill that gives notice of the subject of the bill and the sections of current law that will be affected by the bill.

### **Truly Agree to and Finally Pass**

The final action on a bill, sending it to the Governor or to the people.

V

**Veto**

The rejection by the Governor of an act of the Legislature.



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