



Senator Charlie Huggins e-Newsletter

March 2011



Senator Charlie Huggins Senate District H

Senate Republican
Caucus Leader

Committee Assignments:
Transportation
Joint Armed Services

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Mid-January - Mid-April:
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Legislative Session Promises Debate on Crucial Issues

Since the start of the first session of the 27th Alaska Legislature on Tuesday, January 18, legislators have begun to focus on several crucial areas of public policy. With this periodic news-letter, I hope to keep my constituents up-to-date as the policy debates unfold.

First, ACES. Governor Sean Parnell has introduced legislation to make changes to the rate at which the State of Alaska taxes the profits of the North Slope producers. When the current tax structure became law in 2007, it set a relatively aggressive rate of progressivity, to capture more revenue as the price of a barrel of oil went up. The producers have asked to have the rates lowered because, as one of the highest in the world they say it is inhibiting investment in exploration and development in Alaska. The House Resources committee has begun hearings on this issue, and we in the Senate will, no doubt, take action on it before the end of session. While the governor's bill would reduce taxes by about \$5 billion over the next five years, I think we must consider what we would get for our investment. We need to look at our incentives, our tax rates, permitting issues, and regulations that may be holding up North Slope producers' exploration and development.

Second, AGIA. Some in the Legislature are not convinced the AGIA process will lead to construction of a gas pipeline, and, as such, have introduced legislation that would make the presumption that the project is not economically viable if we don't receive positive news by July 15. At a minimum, this effort calls for providing information to Alaskans on the progress of the recent open season.

Third, education funding. Both Senate and House members are concerned about the level of funding for school districts, as well as the quality of education our kids are getting, and whether increased funding will result in more graduates. We are also looking at how

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The Legislature has begun streaming live coverage of many of its committee meetings, which you can watch on your computer at home.



Go to:
<http://alaskalegislature.tv/#>





Above: Senator Huggins participated in the “Plug-In Dedication” ceremony at the Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center on January 6, 2011, with Representative Bill Stoltze, Lt. Governor Mead Treadwell, Dora Jones, and Anchorage Mayor Dan Sullivan. The plug-ins will make it possible for seniors and others visiting the Center to plug-in their engine block heaters on bitter cold winter days. (Photo courtesy of Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center).

Issues

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to fund merit- and needs-based scholarships.

Another issue we are considering is the FY2012 budget package. As submitted to the Legislature, the Governor’s budget was \$25 million over projected revenue. The debate will be whether to reduce spending (or, more accurately, reduce the increase in spending), and how to add legislators’ priority capital projects.

This session has the potential to give Alaskans the answers they are seeking to a number of important problems facing our society and supporting our economy. Since oil still provides the lion’s share of general fund dollars for state government (nearly 90 percent), it is more important than ever to pay attention to oil production and make sure the Trans Alaska Pipeline stays as full as possible for as long as possible.

With a cooperative attitude between the Senate, the House, the Governor, and the various caucuses, I firmly believe we will be able to reach those goals.

PFD Application Information

PFD Application Period

The Permanent Fund Dividend application period began at 12:01 a.m. on January 1, 2011, and will run through midnight on March 31. The online application will shut down promptly at midnight and paper applications must be postmarked not later than March 31. Hand-delivered paper applications must be dropped in the box by close of business on Thursday, March 31.

Booklets will not be mailed in 2011!

Applicants may apply online or obtain paper forms from designated distribution centers throughout the state. Or you can call: (907) 269-0370.

Apply online

<http://www.pfd.state.ak.us>

Alaska Out-of-State Students

To protect your PFD and eligibility status, do NOT vote, register your vehicle, or take any actions to establish residency in another state, because it could jeopardize your PFD eligibility. Click here for more information: <http://www.pfd.state.ak.us/students/index.aspx>

MUGSHOTS



Above: Palmer Mayor DeLena Johnson and her son, Sven Johnson, a graduate of the US Coast Guard Academy, now stationed at Seattle with the icebreaker "Polar Star."



Middle picture: CCS Early Learning/Head Start group, including Mark Lackey, executive director, and parents Kristen Kolb, Justin Davidson, and Ivy Spencer.

Right: Senator Huggins met with Lynn Gattis of the Mat-Su Borough School Board.



IN MY OFFICE, it is a long-standing tradition to present a coffee mug to constituents. The mugs salute the military in one way or another, by unit, service, era or otherwise. When you stop by to visit, be sure to have your picture taken with your mug!

Captain Chad Huggins to assume Company Command March 7



Captain Chad Huggins assumes Company Command at Fort, Riley, Kansas, on March 7, 2011. Chad, like many of your family members, has deployed to fight the war on terrorism and, thankfully, returned wiser and healthy.

Company Command is the most important leadership responsibility a captain can experience in the Army. Becky and I are obviously proud parents, and pleased Chad gets to train a company of young Americans as they prepare to sharpen their skills for future deployment to either Iraq or Afghanistan. We hope Chad gets to return to Alaska this fall to visit old friends, and bowhunt for bears.

Chad formerly was a member Jr ROTC and a graduate of Colony High School and the University of Nebraska. Chad asked us to tell everyone "Hi" and pass on his best regards.

RE-BAR CUTTING CELEBRATION

Senator Huggins took part in the Rebar Cutting Celebration on January 7 at Houston High School's new welding lab, housed at Houston Middle School. Watching in the background is welding teacher Scott Ruta. (Photo courtesy of Catherine Esary, Mat-Su Borough School District.)



Staff Contacts

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Links of Interest

Senate Minority Caucus Website
www.aksenateminority.com

Alaska Legislature
www.legis.state.ak.us/

Voter Registration & Elections Information
www.elections.alaska.gov/vi.php

Upcoming Townhall Meetings

Sat. Mar. 19 - 10:00-Noon Willow Elementary School
Senator Huggins and Rep. Neuman

Sat. Mar. 19 - 1:00-3:00 Lazy Mtn. Bible Church
Senator Huggins and Rep. Stoltze

Sat. Mar. 19 - 4:00-6:00 pm Eagle River Town Ctr. Rm 170
Sen. Huggins, Rep. Stoltze, Sen. Dyson, Sen. Giessel, Rep. Fairclough and Rep. Saddler

Get Connected

Want to participate in the public process?

As a constituent, you may want to stay informed of committee hearings on issues that are of interest to you. You can watch on cable TV (Gavel-to-Gavel is broadcast throughout Alaska on "Alaska 360"), or on the internet by going to <http://alaskalegislature.tv/#> or by going to www.aprn.org and follow the links. You can also participate in the public process by testifying through the Legislative Information Office (LIO) in Wasilla or Anchorage by teleconference. Or you can visit us during the legislative session at the State Capitol in Juneau.

To obtain information on the internet about committee hearings:

Go to <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/> If you want information about bills, committee agendas, or floor calendars, click on BASIS (the Bill Action and Status Inquiry System). BASIS will give you a menu of options, depending on your interests. If you are interested in testifying on a bill, contact the LIO and the friendly folks there will direct you further.

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