



Alaska State Visit

During the week of February 19, CSG West director, Edgar Ruiz, and accompanying staff arrived in Juneau amid a busy legislative session. The state visit coincided with the end of a historic 31-day process to elect leadership of the House of Representatives. Directly following the selection of the House Speaker, the legislature began to focus on this year's budget and the best way to strike a balance between revenue and spending. Additional focus was given to criminal justice reform, public safety, and education.

Throughout the visit, CSG West staff met with the leadership of the Senate - Senate President Cathy Giessel, Senate Majority Leader Mia Costello, and Senate Minority Leader Tom Begich, as well as the newly elected House leadership - Speaker Bryce Edgmon, and Minority Leader Lance Pruitt. The meetings focused on appointments for CSG West Policy Committees for the 2019-2020 biennium, the 2019 Annual Meeting, and other opportunities for Alaska legislators to engage with colleagues across the West.

In addition to CSG West related activities, Senate and House members received in-person updates from members of Congress and the Alaska Chief Justice. On Tuesday, February 19, U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (*WLA '00*) addressed a joint session of the legislature to provide her assessment of the impact of congressional action on Alaska. The Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, Joel Bolger, addressed the legislature on Wednesday, February 20 to provide a "State of the Judiciary" in which he identified enhanced cybersecurity for the Courts as a priority item. On Thursday, February 21, the Alaska Legislature welcomed U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan who also addressed a joint session to provide his perspectives on the congressional action and their impact on the state.

During the visit, Past CSG National Chair, Senator Gary Stevens (*WLA '01*), along with CSG West staff, hosted a lunch for Western Legislative Academy (WLA) Alumni and eligible legislators. Attendees were invited to discuss the academy and all that it offers to legislators - advanced leadership skills training, relationships with other western lawmakers, and the strengthening of legislative institutions in the West.

The CSG West staff would like to thank Senator Stevens and his staff for their hospitality and support. We look forward to seeing many Alaska members in Big Sky in July, and at the WLA in December.