

SENATOR
SCOTT KAWASAKI

ALASKA
STATE SENATE

As your Senator, I am here to listen and help. Contact me anytime.

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FROM THE DESK *of* SENATOR
SCOTT KAWASAKI

Autumn 2026

Dear Neighbors,

The second session of the 34th Alaska State Legislature ended on May 20. After the regular session adjourned, the Governor immediately called the Legislature back to three special sessions to focus on a gas line bill for which legislators were not given enough time to fully vet during the regular session. Even today, there remain very basic questions.

During most of the summer months, my office has been open and helping constituents. I have been walking and surveying the district—even though I do not have to run for re-election this year. Visiting my neighbors helps me continue to be grounded and accountable to the people I represent in the Senate.

In the newsletter, you will find information about the successes and shortcomings from the 34th Legislature. The budget, the PFD, education, election reform, affordable energy and more! Soon, Alaskans will have the opportunity to elect a new Governor, and elect Representatives and Senators to serve in the 35th Legislature to start in January 2027. I am excited that new leadership can bring about a brighter future for all Alaskans

Working Hard for Fairbanks Families,

Senator Scott Kawasaki
City of Fairbanks, Fort Wainwright and Badger

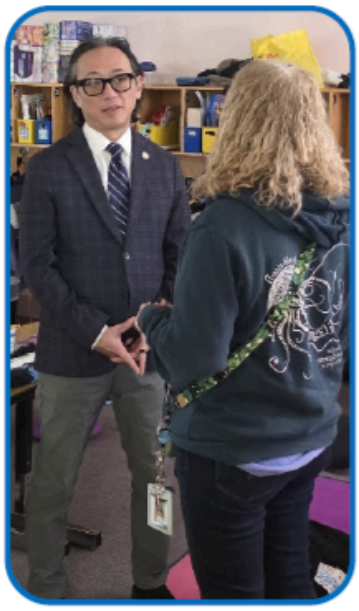


Investing in Our Children

Education is a high priority for me and the Bipartisan Senate Majority. Building off our success from the 2025 Legislative Session in which we passed the largest per-student increase in education funding in state history, the Legislature passed additional targeted investments in early education K-12. Here are some of the policies that passed the Legislature and that I was pleased to support!

- **SB 178 — Expanding Infant Learning Program:** The bill expands the infant learning program which is a family-centered early intervention service for children from birth to three with developmental disabilities. This bill passed in the final days of session and became law in June. Unfortunately, the funding necessary to implement this bill was vetoed from the budget so its full implementation will have to wait until 2027.
- **HB 28 — Energy Funding for Schools:** The bill was expanded in the Senate Education Committee to provide state investment to help offset school district energy costs — a significant and unavoidable cost for school districts.
- **Maintaining our Schools:** The Capital Budget included over $100 million in school major maintenance funding. That includes $8.3 million for North Pole High School mechanical and electrical upgrades, and $5.1 million for Arctic Light Elementary School exterior renovations.
- **One-Time Education Funding Increase:** Due to the high, war-driven oil prices, the Legislature passed a one-time funding increase for education of $149 million as a downpayment for future permanent funding increases. Costs have gone up and putting funding in to future education needs is a bipartisan Senate Priority.





Above and Right: *Sen. Kawasaki touring Fairbanks public schools and listening to teachers and students.*

On-Line Applications for Social Security Cards & Digital Drivers Licenses

At the beginning of the 2026 Legislative Session, I introduced SB 237 with Representative Nellie Jimmie (D — Toksook Bay). The original version of this bill included a provision to allow Alaskans to apply to replace Social Security Cards through an online portal. Previous methods were a major burden, especially on our rural neighbors and I was pleased to work with Rep. Jimmie to ensure this policy passed the legislature this year.

On the House Floor, several other policies were incorporated into SB 237. One of those policies is something that I first introduced as SB 194 in 2022. That bill would have allowed Alaskans to use a digital drivers license on their phone and other screened devices. In 2025, the Governor followed suit and introduced the same bill — despite initial opposition to this policy. On the House Floor, the Digital Drivers License Bill was added to SB 237.

I am pleased to see these two bills that I introduced became law! You can now go online to the *Google Play Store* or *Apple App* to obtain a digital license app.

Reduced Property Taxes for Volunteer Public Safety Personnel

I am a long-time advocate for reduced property tax burden for working families in our borough dating back to my days on the Fairbanks City Council! In 2022, I passed an amendment to double the residential property tax exemption.

During the 2026 session, I helped pass legislation to increase the property tax exemption for volunteer firefighters, volunteer emergency medical service providers, and volunteer mobile intensive care paramedics. This bill was originally introduced as HB 286 which was co-sponsored by my West Fairbanks colleague Rep. Ashley Carrick. Specifically, it removed the property tax exemption cap for these volunteer public safety officers.

As the Chairman of the Senate State Affairs Committee, I incorporated the language in HB 286 into HB 13 which passed the Senate in the final days of the legislative session. The bill became law in June and it is now up to the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly



Above: *Senator Kawasaki hosting a townhall with Rep. Maxine Dibert, Rep. Ashley Carrick. Rep Mike Prax, Borough Mayor Grier Hopkins and City Mayor Mindy O'Neall*

A Balanced Budget... for Now! War-Driven Oil Prices is Not Balanced.

In January of 2026, our state was predicted to have a very difficult budget process with declining oil revenues and market volatility impacting earnings from the Permanent Fund. That all changed at the end of February when President Trump launched a war against Iran that caused international oil prices to skyrocket.

Since changes to our oil tax structure in 2013 through SB 21, Alaska has had significant budget challenges constrained by a $2-billion structural budget deficit which has also resulted in cuts to the Permanent Fund Dividend. PFD cuts are the most regressive form of taxation and should be the last option for balancing a budget. Despite record high oil prices, the Legislature decided to focus our revenue windfall on other important issues like longstanding deferred maintenance at our schools and at the University. These investments in deferred maintenance are critical to ensuring that our schools are safe places for students to learn and grow and I was proud to support those investments. The remainder of the war-driven oil price boost has been placed into future savings.

I support a balanced budget with a full PFD to help families offset higher energy costs that come with living in Alaska. Unfortunately, the PFD that was included in the final budget was $1200. The PFD is more than just a check, its our rightful share of our states vast resource wealth. It is unfortunate that our state does not have a fair oil tax structure to help provide for necessary government services while ensuring that Alaskans get their fair share of our resource wealth through the PFD.

With a new Governor, we will have opportunity to work on a fiscal plan that is balanced, provides for services that the public needs and desires, a healthy PFD and builds confidence in our bright future. I look forward to working with strong bipartisan House and Senate colleagues.

Justice for the Fairbanks Four!

Since 2012, I have introduced bills to help those Alaskans who have had a previous criminal conviction overturned receive the PFDs that were withheld due to incarceration. The most famous recent case overturned relates to the Fairbanks Four. While the Fairbanks Four received their garnished PFDs as part of their settlement with the State, the bill will ensure that those who have their convictions similarly overturned will be able to receive their past PFDs without needing to have it be part of their settlement.

In 2025, I introduced SB 167 and it passed the legislature in the final days of the 2026 legislative session. I am pleased that the Governor allowed the bill to become law without his signature and this bill is now in effect. This long-sought effort, by groups like the Alaska Innocence Project, will help provide justice for the wrongfully incarcerated. Thank you to all the advocates who have advocated for this bill over the past dozen years and helped it get to this point!

Election Reforms Missed Opportunity

As the Chairman of the Senate State Affairs Committee, I have been a long-time advocate for election reforms. Over the past 10 years there have been various omnibus elections bills that have been within sight of the finish line but have unfortunately not crossed that line. During the 34th Legislature, the Legislature passed SB 64 which I helped pass through the process. This omnibus elections bill included many important provisions supported by a large majority of Legislators. There were many policies incorporated into that bill including:

- Required Voter List Maintenance.
- *Ballot Curing* to allow voters to correct simple clerical issues with their ballots like forgetting to include a witness signature.
- *Ballot Tracking* to know exactly where your ballot is at any time.
- Faster timelines to get elections results posted.
- Improved rural voting access by establishing a rural liaison to coordinate voting in remote Alaska and allow for the use of Tribal ID to vote.

The bill was not perfect and fell short in several important areas. The biggest policies that were left out of the final version of the bill were the removal of the unnecessary witness signature requirement, and expanded early voting opportunities. Nevertheless, in a compromise no one ever gets everything they want and I was pleased to support the final version of the bill. Importantly, this SB 64 passed the Legislature by an overwhelming majority. Unfortunately, the bill was vetoed by the Governor. Like so many issues, this will have to be taken up again during the 2027 Legislative Session.

P.S. On the next page, use the form to request your absentee ballot for the 2026 General Election!







Above: *The Joint Armed Services Committee, which Senator Kawasaki Co-Chairs, after a meeting during the Legislative Session.*
Left*: Senator Kawasaki speaking to community members at an education listening session.*
Lower Left*: Senator Kawasaki chairing a State Affairs Committee Meeting with Vice-Chairman Jesse Bjorkman (R — Nikiski).*

Helping Families Grieve—Reducing Probate Requirements

I introduced SB 104 to make it easier to transfer deeds of boats, cars and some motorhomes upon death rather than spending time in the lengthy probate process. As our population continues to age, the bill makes it easier for those who have lost loved ones to gain access sooner to vehicles of those late loved ones. The bill would reduce the burden during the grieving process and ensure that those vehicles do not fall into disrepair or could be utilized while probate is ongoing. The bill is good for our seniors and families, and I am pleased to report that it became law in June!

Alaska Absentee Ballot Application – For Federal and State Elections

Elections:	1	❑ All in Calendar Year ❑ Primary (August) ❑ General (November) ❑ REAA (October) ❑ Special
Eligibility: If you answer 'No' to either question, you cannot register.	2	Are you a citizen of the United States? (Noncitizen U.S. Nationals are not eligible) ❑ Yes ❑ No Are you at least 18 years of age or within 90 days of your 18th birthday? ❑ Yes ❑ No
Print your name:	3	**Last** **First** **Middle** **Suffix**
Other information:	4	**Former name** (if changed): **Voter number** (if known)
Alaska residence address: Provide an Alaska residence address. Do not use PO, PSC, HC and Box or out-of-state address.	5	**House #** **Street Name** **Apt #** **City** Alaska **State** ❑ *Keep my residence address confidential. Mailing address in 6 MUST be different than residence in 5.
The address where you receive mail (Permanent):	6	
Identifiers: You **MUST** provide **ONE**:	7	***SSN or Last 4** ***Alaska driver's license or State ID** ❑ I do not have a SSN or AK driver's license or State ID
Birthdate and **Sex**: You **MUST** provide **Birthdate**:	8	***Birthdate** **Sex** ❑ Male ❑ Female
Political party affiliation:	9	**Write political affiliation** (For options, see instructions):
Cancel registration in another state	10	**City:** **State:** **County:**
Military and Overseas Voters: Check your status.	11	❑ Active member of the Uniformed Services, Merchant Marine, or commissioned corps or an eligible spouse or dependent. ❑ OR I am residing temporarily or permanently **overseas** and I intend to return to Alaska.
Ballot Delivery Method: Select your ballot delivery method. Note: Military or overseas voters may select either Mail, Online, or Fax	12	Online or fax options are not available to civilian (non-military/overseas) voters until 15-days prior to election day. Prior to this date, if selected, your ballot will be mailed to you. ❑ **Mail** – Complete box 14 ❑ **Online** – Complete box 15 ❑ **Fax** – Complete box 15
In remote Alaska or overseas?	13	❑ Yes, I will be in remote Alaska or overseas where mail service is limited. If yes, a 45-day advance ballot will be mailed to you.
Ballot mailing address: Ballots **WILL NOT** be forwarded. Provide an address where you will receive mail.	14	
Contact information: Include all state & international prefixes.	15	*Phone: *Fax: *Email:
Certificate Read and Sign: Your signature must be handwritten. A typed or digital signature is not valid. ***Items are kept confidential and are not available for public inspection except that confidential addresses may be released to government agencies or during election processes as set out in state law.**	16	I swear or affirm, under penalty of perjury, that: The information on this form is true, accurate, and complete to the best of my knowledge and I am eligible to vote in the requested jurisdiction, I am not requesting a ballot from any other state, and I am not voting in any other manner in this (these) election(s). I further certify that I am an Alaska resident and that I have not been convicted of a felony involving moral turpitude, or having been so convicted, have been unconditionally discharged from incarceration, probation and/or parole. I am not registered to vote in another state, or I have taken the necessary steps to cancel that registration. **WARNING: If you provide false information on this application you can be convicted of a felony and/or misdemeanor. (AS 15.56.040; AS 15.56.050)** ***Signature:** **Date:**
For Office Use		Registrar or Official Name: Voter No. or last 4 of SSN:

www.elections.alaska.gov C06 (Rev. 01/12/2026)

Alaska Absentee Ballot Application for State and Federal Elections

- Check the status of your absentee ballot application at myvoterportal.alaska.gov.

Apply for a federal and state absentee ballot

Use this form at the same time to:

- Request an absentee ballot.
- Register to vote.
- Change your registration information.

To register you must be

- A United States citizen. Noncitizens and Noncitizen Nationals are not eligible to register to vote.
- A resident of Alaska.
- 18 years of age or within 90 days of your 18th birthday.
- When registering to vote, your identity must be verified. Submit a copy of your current driver's license, state ID, passport, birth certificate, hunting and fishing license or current and valid photo ID with your application.

Ballots will NOT be forwarded

- Provide a permanent mailing address.
- Provide a ballot mailing address where you will receive mail. If you do not provide a ballot mailing address, your ballot will be sent to your permanent mailing address.

Identifiers and contact

- You MUST provide ONE identifier and your birthdate.
- Provide a contact telephone number and/or email information. If there is a problem with your application, we will contact you.

Alaska residence address

- Provide an Alaska residence address. Your application will be denied if you provide an out-of-state address, PO Box, HC number and box, rural route, commercial address, mail stop address, etc.

Temporarily out-of-state and intent to return?

- You may maintain your Alaska residence address at the address you lived at prior to leaving Alaska or where you are currently registered in Alaska. *Active military members and spouses, you are exempt from the intent to return to Alaska requirement.*

Military or overseas?

- When requesting a by-fax or online delivery ballot, your application must be received by 5:00 p.m. Alaska Standard Time the day prior to a primary, general, or statewide election.
- Be sure to provide your fax number or email address when requesting a fax or online delivery ballot.
- Overseas citizens, if you do not intend to return to Alaska and wish to participate in federal elections, please contact our office listed under 'Questions?' to receive the correct application.

Ballot Delivery Method

- Military and overseas voters in box 11 can select any option at any time for primary, general, and statewide special elections.
- Civilian voters may not choose the online or fax option until 15 days prior to election day.
- If a civilian voter selects online or fax prior to 15 days, the ballot delivery method will automatically be sent by-mail.

Questions?

- Call us:
  907-270-2700
  877-375-6508 (toll free in U.S.)
- Email us:
  akabsentee@alaska.gov
- Visit our website:
  elections.alaska.gov

Deadlines

- Already registered? Your application must be received 10 days before an election.
- Registering to vote? To vote in an election, your application must be postmarked or received 30 days prior to an election, except in a presidential election.
- In a presidential election, you may register and vote the presidential race so long as your request for a by-mail ballot is received 10 days prior to the election.

Political Affliations

- You may indicate your political affiliation. If you do not choose a political affiliation, you will be registered as undeclared. Alaska political affiliation choices are as follows:
  - **Recognized Political Parties**: Alaska Democratic Party, Alaska Libertarian Party, Alaska Republican Party
  - **Political Groups**: Alaska Constitution Party, Green Party of Alaska, UCES' Clowns Party, Veterans Party of Alaska, Prohibition Party, Conservative Party USA, Reform Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend Party
  - **Other**: Nonpartisan (not affiliated with a political party or group), Undeclared (do not wish to declare a political affiliation)

Submit your application

- Mail your application:
  Division of Elections
  Absentee and Petition Office
  3651 Penland Pkwy, Floor 2
  Anchorage AK 99508-2034
- Fax your application:
  907-677-9943
  855-677-9943 (toll free in U.S.)
- Email your application:
  akabsentee@alaska.gov

The Fairbanks Office Is Open For You!

Between regular legislative sessions, my staff and I work from our Fairbanks Office located on the 3rd floor of the Global Credit Union Building across from Home Depot at 1292 Sadler Way. The office is open between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm until we relocate to Juneau in January for the next regular legislative session. Please feel free to swing by and say hello anytime!

Joe Hayes
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Fairbanks LIO
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Contact Information For Local Officials

Rep. Maxine Dibert
House District 31
907-451-4347
Rep.Maxine.Dibert@akleg.gov

Rep. Will Stapp
House District 32
907-452-1088
Rep.Will.Stapp@akleg.gov

Mayor Mindy O'Neall
City of Fairbanks
907-459-6793
Mayor@fairbanks.gov

Mayor Grier Hopkins
Fairbanks Borough
907-459.1300
Grier.Hopkins@fnsb.gov

Important Dates

Indigenous Peoples Day
Mon. October 12

Halloween
Sat. October 31

Veterans Day
Wed. November 11

Thanksgiving
Thurs. November 26

Last Day of School (Fall)
Fri. December 18

Christmas Day
Fri. December 25

New Years Day
Fri. January 1

1st Day of the Legislature
Tues. January 19

Important Voting Dates

Early Voting for FNSB Elections
Sept 21 to Oct 1 at Noel Wien Library

FNSB Election Day
October 6

Voter Registration Deadline (State)
October 4

Early Voting Starts
October 19 at the State Office Building

Absentee Ballot Request Deadline
October 24

General Election Day
November 3





***Above**: Rep. Ashley Carrick and Senator Kawasaki during a Joint House/ Senate State Affairs Committee meeting on elections.Sen. Kawasaki and Rep. Dibert on the House Floor during a joint floor session.*



SENATOR
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Gas Line Update: A Real Gas Line or a Fool's Errand?

Halfway through the session, the Governor introduced his secretive Gasline Tax bill. That is a very tight timeframe to properly vet any major bill, especially a complicated and nuanced Gasline Tax Bill. For context, previous attempts prioritized by Governors Palin, Parnell, and Walker were all multi-year efforts. The attempt to pass this Gasline Tax Bill was more difficult because of the lack of transparency by the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation and the proposed private equity firm Glenfarne. It is important to note that the company can start to build a gasline tomorrow as billions of state funds have already been expended. Instead, they are insisting on a massive 90% tax cut to proceed with construction.

The Gasline Tax bill the Governor introduced at the request of Glenfarne would remove local property taxes on Gasline infrastructure and replace them with only with a volumetric tax on gas that eventually goes through a pipeline. Property taxes that regular families pay would likely go up because of the demand on roads, healthcare and schools.

After the bill was introduced, the Senate Resources Committee dedicated the remainder of the regular session and over 40 meetings to get basic information. As the Senior Democrat on the Resources Committee, my priorities were to ensure Alaska fulfilled its constitutional obligation to receive the maximum benefit for our resources — in this case revenue from gas in the Gasline. Additionally, I prioritized the spur line for Fairbanks because there should be no natural gas exports overseas without first gas to Interior residents who are harmed the most by the high price for heat and electricity.

Throughout the summer, the Governor called three special sessions focused on the Gasline Tax bill. During the first special session between May 21 and June 19, the House passed its version of the Gasline Bill (HB 381) over to the Senate and after deliberation the Senate passed its version of HB 381. When the Governor threatened to veto that version of the bill, the House rejected the changes made to HB 381 in the Senate and the bill went to a Conference Committee to hammer out the differences and then come up with a plan that would pass both the House and Senate.

During the second special session, from June 20 to July 16, the Conference Committee, comprised of three Republicans, two Independents and just one Democrat, passed a bill that was to be voted on by each chamber. The Conference Committee version of the bill included every compromise that Glenfarne sought over the course of the month. On the last day of that session, after the Senate had passed the Conference Committee bill, the Governor again threatened to veto the bill — despite previously indicating support for the bill behind the scenes. The bill then failed in the House on a 19-19 vote.

After the bill failed again in the House the Governor called yet another special session which started on July 27. At this point, there is no appetite among Legislators to go back to Juneau and continue working on a bill that the Governor seems to keep finding reasons to oppose. Ultimately, I voted for the final version of the bill and to build the line. While the bill was by no means perfect, it included important provisions to protect Alaskans from price increases, and to ensure that Fairbanks got a spur line. Special shout out to my House-counterpart **Representative Maxine Dibert (D — Fairbanks)** who is the **Co-Chair of the House Resources Committee** who wrote the provision of the bill that mandated a spur-line to Fairbanks so we aren't left out in the cold.

There will likely be renewed effort around legislation to incentivize a Gasline in the 2027 Legislative Session. Throughout that process, I will continue advocating for the priorities of our community and also stand for the principles of the Alaska Constitution by obtaining the maximum benefit for all of our resources.