



JOIN US!

At the Alaska Zoo



Free Food!

Hosted by Rep. Julie Coulombe & Sen. James Kaufman

Join your Legislators, Assembly Members, community councils, State agencies, Fire Department, ASD, and more for a Hillside Community Event!

DON'T MISS!
Hillside Fire Mapping by Dr. Jen Schmidt

- Thursday, August 7th
- 5:00PM - 7:00PM
- Gateway Hall, Alaska Zoo

Come talk about the issues you care most about with the people who can help!

Coffee & Chat

Saturday, Aug 9th

9 AM - 10:30 AM

@ Kaladis on Brayton Dr

Come share your thoughts & questions with Sen. Kaufman



District F

You're invited: I am hosting two events in early August (the 7th & 9th)! Come on out and let's catch up. Tap on the above photos to go to the respective Facebook events for more details.

August 2, 2025

I hope you have been enjoying your summer! I'm writing today because the big news, of course, is that the Legislature met this morning for a special session.

The Governor is required to set the agenda, and listed education reform and the department of agriculture as the two topics for this special session. I'll go into more detail below, but in summary, the House and Senate met in joint session and voted to override the vetoes of the following two items:

1. The budget line-item of education funding, totaling \$51 million (the equivalent of \$200 of the Base Student Allocation).
2. Senate Bill 183, that grants the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee the powers it needs to properly audit the executive branch's handling of oil and gas taxes.

Quick Catch-Up

At the end of the Regular Session in May, we passed an education funding and policy package (HB 57) that made good reforms to our education system and fit into a balanced budget. After HB 57 was initially vetoed, a super-majority of my colleagues and I voted to override that veto. HB 57 included the following key provisions:

- A \$700 increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA)
- Policy enhancements for charter schools
- Class size targets for school districts
- Reforms to address cell phone use in schools
- School transportation funding
- Support for implementing the Reads Act and career and technical education
- A taskforce that will make recommendations to us for additional needed changes.

Every expense of the state (including all formula funds, like the BSA) is listed in the budget bill we pass every year. Once this year's budget passed the legislature in May, the Governor chose to veto \$51 million out of the education funding allocation. This is the first time the BSA formula has been reduced with a line-item veto.

What Happened Today

This afternoon, we gathered in the Capitol Building in Juneau to begin the special session. During the joint session I, along with 44 other members of the legislature, voted to override the Governor's budget line item veto of education funding. We also voted to override SB 183.

I believe the education funding still fit within a balanced budget given the current trajectory of oil prices.. The fiscal picture we are looking at for this year remains largely unchanged since we last adjourned at the end of May.

When I supported the HB 57, the education funding and policy bill, I was supporting both the policy and funding parts of it. Education policy on the state level needs some adjustment, and we took some good first steps. At the same time, we heard time and time again from school districts that one-time funding (which we gave them for two years) was impossible to rely on to make responsible budgets. So we updated the BSA number by \$700 to make those one-time funding amounts more permanent and reliable. This will allow them to stabilize the system and improve education for our children.

My vote today was a restatement of my commitment to improving education in Alaska and supporting the effort that went into crafting the reforms included in HB 57.

We also voted to override the veto of SB 183, a legislature powers and procedure bill. Let me know if you want to talk more about it!

While the majorities in the the House and Senate chose not to address the items requested by the Governor, or other vetoed items, it is my hope that my colleagues continue to work on improving our education system and take a serious look at creating a Department of Agriculture that can address food insecurity issues in Alaska in the near future.

What's Next?

Once these two big items were finished, the session was adjourned until August 19th. I am not sure what will happen in the coming days. Hopefully we will take advantage of this session and work on some more education reforms, but we will see what the majorities do.

For now, I am making my way back home to Anchorage. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to call or email me anytime or come out to one of my upcoming events—[August 7th](#) and [August 9th](#)! I would love to talk with you about any of this!

Regards,

James

Hope to See You There:

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Reach Out!

By Phone: Monday-Friday, 9am to 5pm

By Email: Anytime!

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[View email in browser](#)

Get ahold of us!

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We still like Snail-Mail:

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