

September 19, 2025

When I learned of the horrific shooting of Charlie Kirk last week, like many others I was shocked. The same day, there was a tragic shooting at a school in Evergreen, Colorado. The next day was the anniversary of 9/11.

Over the past week, I have reflected on these tragedies and where we are as a country. I have been grappling with what causes people to resort to such senseless violence. It has also been disturbing to see people celebrating, promoting, and rationalizing violence over the airways and on social media.

As someone who regularly talks to people across the political spectrum and who receives a fair amount of public feedback myself, I am particularly alert to the consequences of perceived narratives.

Fear seems to have taken control of many. Whether by design, or incentivized by the "anger sells" mentality, I am concerned that there is a segment of the world's economic activity kept in motion by stoking fear of the "other." It drives day-to-day conversation, social media, talk shows, book sales, organizations, elections, and ultimately, more violence.

I believe Charlie Kirk's assassination stands out because he intentionally waded into the ring of public opinion seeking conversation. Charlie gave everything in his pursuit of closing ideological gaps with dialogue and persuasion rather than violence.

The week has further impressed upon me the importance of healing our divisions by communicating in a respectful and thoughtful way—whatever our political persuasion. I'm hopeful that we can find the silver lining within the storm.

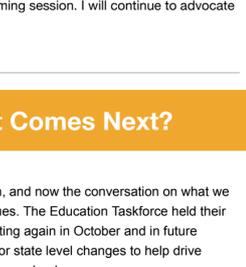
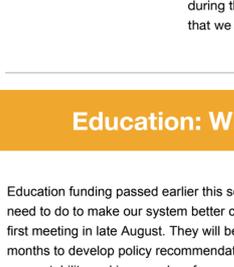
May God bless Charlie, his family, and all who have been touched by violence, and may God bless America as we continue to work on the noble pursuit of a more perfect, peaceful union.

As always, there's much more information below, so please take a look and let me know if you have any feedback or questions.

Best Regards,

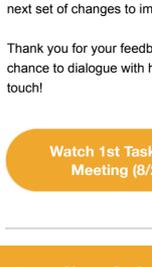
James

It Was Good to See You!



I enjoyed the chance to catch up with my Hillside neighbors at Rep. Coulombe and my 3rd Annual Community Gathering at the Zoo. We had folks from various state and local agencies, community councils, and even the Troopers there to answer questions. I enjoyed talking about the big issues of the summer, special session, and what is on the horizon for the coming session. Thank you for coming!

The August Special Session Ends



The August Special Session ended on the 31st. The majorities decided not to meet in Juneau again, so the session automatically ended as soon as the 30 day clock ran out that evening. I was hopeful that conversations on education policy and the Department of Agriculture would take place this month. However, it looks like we will have to wait until the coming Regular Session to make further progress on those issues.

The Governor has signaled that there will not be any further special sessions this year, but he asked the legislature to take action on more education reform during the coming session. I will continue to advocate that we do.

Education: What Comes Next?

Education funding passed earlier this session, and now the conversation on what we need to do to make our system better continues. The Education Taskforce held their first meeting in late August. They will be meeting again in October and in future months to develop policy recommendations for state level changes to help drive accountability and improved performance of our schools.

In the meantime, our school districts (who are the primary drivers of performance and accountability) need to be looking at foundational changes to raise the quality of education for our students. Now that stable and predictable funding has been provided, I am following closely to see that the money is put, as promised, toward stabilizing and reducing classroom sizes and making some real improvements to student outcomes.

I supported the funding increase across the finish line because critical programs and resources for students were threatened by policy decisions and budgets eaten away by inflation. However, parents and Alaskans across my district (and the state) are justifiably concerned about our schools concerning performance outcomes. Some of our districts have lost trust with the public who saw students and teachers caught in the cross-fire of the two year funding and policy debate.

We, the legislature, gave schools the stable annual funding that was possible within a balanced budget, and now the conversation needs to turn to outcomes. I certainly hope (and am regularly asking) ASD can rise to the challenge. In particular, I hope to see them engage meaningfully with the Education Taskforce and with those who are reasonably critical of the district's focus and performance. We are now at the state where citizens and parents engaging at the school board level is going to drive the next set of changes to improve outcomes.

Thank you for your feedback throughout this whole process. I greatly appreciated the chance to dialogue with hundreds of you on such an important issue. Please keep in touch!

[Watch 1st Taskforce Meeting \(8/25\)](#)

[Learn More About the Education Taskforce](#)

Danika Joins Our Team for the Summer!



This summer we have been hosting Danika Brandorff in our office! She is headed into her sophomore year at Dartmouth and chose to spend some time this summer in our office learning how the Legislature works. She is an incredibly bright young Alaskan with particular interests in resource management, oil and gas taxes, land use and management, education and general state level policy.

She worked on constituent correspondence, social media, had several meetings on her interests, and staffed me at the Zoo Gathering earlier this month. She has a bright future and I look forward to seeing how she will serve our state in the future!

Update on the Proposed Natural Gas Pipeline Project

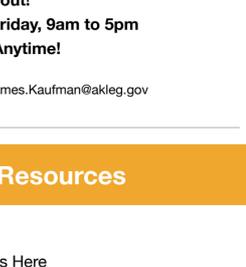
Since the end of session, there have been more developments in the Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline project. The proposed 800-mile pipeline would bring needed natural gas from the North Slope to Southcentral where it can help meet both state and international demand. It is a massive project, however, and requires significant investment from the private sector in order to move forward.

Glenfarne, empowered by an agreement with the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation, is engaged in negotiations with investors from around the world. So far they have a significant number of firms interested in the project, which is a good step in the right direction.

There is a lot more to do. First and foremost, this needs to be a viable project that is a good investment for the state of Alaska, so I continue to be watching it closely. Alaska has incredible resource potential. A well designed, well executed pipeline could stabilize natural gas needs in Southcentral and open critical new markets overseas for our high quality gas.

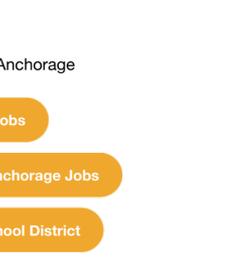
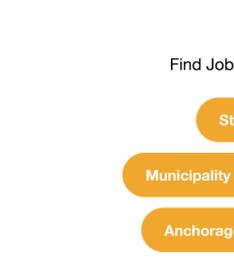
There is so much more that needs to happen, so please stay engaged. I remain cautiously optimistic about the momentum I'm seeing and will continue to engage with our state leaders on the project through each stage.

Workforce Technology Lab Opens!



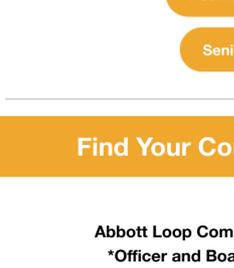
I was honored to help celebrate the opening of a new computer and technology lab at Nine Star's Center for Workforce Development! For years, the center has been a resource for Alaskans developing the skills they need to excel in the workforce, and this lab is a critical new resource. Workforce development efforts by Nine Star and others in our state are essential. We need to be growing (and keeping) our own talent. A big thank you to Nine Star for their work and congratulations on this exciting new center!

Fishing on the Kenai



The Kenai River Sportfishing Association put on another great Classic. It was good to get out on the water and better to get something in my freezer.

The Alaska Oil and Gas Association Conference



The Alaska Oil and Gas Association held their annual conference at the end of August. Oil and gas powers Alaska's economy, keeps the lights on, and puts food on the table for thousands of Alaskans. It was a great chance to catch up with the leaders who are helping to make it happen. Thank you to AOGA and the sponsors who made this event possible!

Bill Work Continues

Though bill presentations and floor votes are on pause until the beginning of the 2026 session, my team and I are working to refine each of my bills and prepare for their next hearings. My focus continues to be on crafting changes to our statutes that seek to make our government more efficient and accountable. Let me know if you have any thoughts!

Repealing Unused and Inactive Funds | SB 163

While we spend our time debating the big ticket items, many small expenses quietly draw on the state's coffers. A few years ago, my Senate Bill 25 repealed several long-dormant accounts that we were still paying to maintain and instituted a biennial review mechanism to identify more inactive funds for repeal. The [first report](#) came out at the beginning of this year and showed that there are 56 inactive funds currently on the books. SB 163 takes the first step toward cleaning up our books by repealing 12 of these funds. The bill will have its first hearing next session! This is the sort of good governance bills that I am always on the look out for!

The Executive Budget Act Rewrite | SB 37

Senate Bill 37 reorganizes the Executive Budget Act to integrate strategic planning and performance management into the state's budgeting process. This legislation would put state agencies on four year strategic operating plans, help the Legislature more effectively review budgets for each agency, and improve transparency for the public. SB 37 moved out of the Senate State Affairs Committee at the end of April. We will have our first hearing in the Senate Finance Committee early next session! In the meantime, I am working with the state Office of Management and Budget to ensure that this legislation can be successfully implemented.

GDP-Based Spending Cap | SB 36 / SJR 4

Senate Bill 36 is a functional state spending cap which constructively links our private sector performance (measured by GDP) and government spending. An effective limit like this one creates stability and predictability in our budgeting process - in economic boom years, extra revenues are pushed forward, preventing the need for drastic cuts in economic bust years. [SB 36/SJR 4](#) was [heard](#) in the Senate Judiciary Committee on April 25. I am looking forward to more hearings next session!

Permanent Fund Account Modernization | SJR 5

A little background, the Permanent Fund is broken into two accounts, the constitutionally un-erasable Principal (~70 billion) and the spendable Earnings Reserve Account (ERA) (~10 billion). In 2018, the Legislature began using a 5 Percent of Market Value (POMV) draw to manage withdrawals from the Permanent Fund. That 5% is based on best practices of other large endowment funds. Since then, yearly POMV draws and required inflation proofing have begun depleting the ERA.

There is a growing understanding by both the Permanent Fund Corporation and the Legislature that the two-account structure (where only the ERA is available for appropriation by the Legislature) could result in a fiscal crisis if the ERA is ever depleted far enough. At the end of last year, APFC's Board of Trustees produced "2024 APFC Trustees' Paper 10" which outlines in much more detail the problem and recommended solution. [You can read that here >>](#)

SJR 5 consolidates the Principal and the Earnings Reserve into one account managed for total return. It then constitutionalizes a "no greater than" 5.5% yearly POMV draw. The expectation is that a lower POMV draw would be put into statute. It also includes language ensuring that a Permanent Fund dividend is paid yearly according to a formula in statute. [SJR 5](#) is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Creating an Office of Information Technology | SB 38

Senate Bill 38 recognizes the fundamental role of Information Technology (IT) projects in innovative solutions that can move Alaska into a new era of management and operations. This bill establishes the Office of Information Technology within the Department of Administration. This legislation creates clear roles, guides development of structured processes, and standardizes management practices for overseeing IT projects across state agencies.

We envision the State Chief Information Officer (CIO) to oversee IT projects, ensuring adherence to best practices, ensuring budget compliance, and delivering results that align with legislative intent. SB 38 also requires state agencies to document IT project requirements in biennial information technology plans, promoting transparency and accountability. Advancing this bill helps to create a more efficient, responsive, and customer-driven information technology landscape in our state, ensuring that IT projects continue to play a crucial role in enhancing the lives of all Alaskans. [SB 38](#) is currently in the Senate State Affairs Committee and I am working to prepare it for its first hearing.

2025 Wildfire Preparedness

Before the snow flies, there are things you can do to prepare for and protect your home against wildfires.

- Here are some community resources and opportunities to get prepared:
- Familiarize yourself on what you can do to [harden your home to wildfire >](#)
 - [Wood lots](#) in Anchorage are open to accepting downed trees and wood fuel (open every Monday-Saturday 8:00AM-5:00PM)
 - Update your phone to receive communications via Smart 911/Rave (download the app "Smart911")
 - Get familiar with [READY-SET-GO >](#)
 - Have Anchorage Fire Department perform a [Firewise Assessment](#) of your home or do a [Self Assessment >](#)
 - Stay up to date on [current fuel reduction work](#) (WUI-CAT website)
 - Work with your local fire station captain and develop an emergency evacuation plan for your area and attending information sessions held in town to be up to date with all things wildfire preparedness (can find more information by going to the [WUI-CAT website](#))
 - If you would like, please fill out this Community Wildfire Protection Plan Survey [Here >](#)

I am Here to help!

As always, I want to hear from you! Whether you have an opinion you would like to express or if you need help with anything government-related, please reach out via email or phone call and I will do the best to assist you.

Reach out!

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

By Email: Anytime!

P: 907-465-4949 | E: Sen.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov

Community Resources

REAL ID Is Here

Since May 7th you need REAL ID compliant license or other form of identification (such as a passport) is needed to board domestic flights, access certain federal buildings, and certain federal facilities on and after this date.

Please check the link below for more information and FAQs

[REAL ID Update, Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles](#)

2025 Property Tax Assessments

[See Yours Here](#)

See if you have unclaimed property!

Thousands of Alaskans have unclaimed property (usually money) currently held by the state. Do a quick search and claim your property!

[Check for Unclaimed Property](#)

Find Jobs in Anchorage

[State Jobs](#)

[Municipality of Anchorage Jobs](#)

[Anchorage School District](#)

Student Resources

Millions of dollars available to Alaskans are left on the table every year! Help your college-bound student submit their FAFSA application today and see if they qualify for federal scholarships.

[FAFSA Federal Scholarship Application](#)

[Alaska Performance Scholarship](#)

Need Help with Bills?

[Food Assistance \(SNAP\)](#)

[Heating Assistance](#)

[Senior Benefits](#)

Find Your Community Council

Abbott Loop Community Council Meeting

Officer and Board Member Elections

Thursday, September 25, 6:30-8:30 PM

Available on Zoom: [Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 834 4646 7426 | Passcode: ALCC

[Full agenda will be available here >>](#)

Hillside Community Council Meeting

Wednesday, October 1, 6:30-8:00 PM

Alaska Conference of Seventh-day Adventists State Headquarters building (NOT the church itself) at 61005 O'Malley Road

Also available on Zoom: [Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 865 9049 3825 | Passcode: 372912

[Full agenda will be available here >>](#)

Huffman/O'Malley Community Council Meeting

Thursday, October 16, 7:00-9:00 PM

In-person at Huffman Elementary School at 4100 Lorraine St

Also available on Zoom: [Zoom Link](#) | Meeting ID: 941 5287 1929 | Passcode: 320438

[Full agenda will be available here >>](#)

Hillside Home & Land Owners (HALO)

Check online for meeting dates, typically the first week of the month at 7:00PM

[HALO Website >>](#)

[View email in browser](#)

[Get ahold of us!](#)

[Sen.James.Kaufman@akleg.gov](#) | 907-465-4949 | [Check out our Website](#)

We still like Snail-Mail:

During Session (January - May): Alaska State Capitol, Room 115, Juneau, AK 99801

During Interim (June-December): 1500 W Benson Blvd, Anchorage, AK 99503

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