



# Alaska State Legislature

## Senate Bipartisan Working Group News

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### **Senate Bipartisan Working Group Outlines Goals for 2010 Legislative Session**

(JUNEAU) – The State Senate Bipartisan Working Group outlined its goals and priorities for the 2010 legislative session, which began today in Juneau.

“Alaska is facing some major challenges this year, and we are anxious to get started working on solutions and long-term plans,” said Senate President Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak), leader of the working group. “We are committed to an agenda that will build, energize and protect Alaska.”

Senator Stevens said the Senate majority will focus on putting together a package to provide available, affordable and reliable energy for Alaskans’ homes and businesses.

“With only 90 days to complete a lot of important work in this legislature, we plan to hit the ground running,” said Senate Majority Leader Johnny Ellis (D-Anchorage). “I am pleased that our Group has worked and will continue to work in a bipartisan fashion to focus on our positive agenda including energy and education.”

Ellis and Stevens said their group will make a priority of keeping the state’s promise on forward funding of education, the area cost differential and special education. In addition, said Senator Stevens, “We will address merit and needs based scholarships for post-secondary education and vocational and technical training.”

“This year, we hope to do something that would have seemed impossible ten years ago,” said Senator Lyman Hoffman (D-Bethel), co-chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. “After twenty years of borrowing from it, we think we can fully repay the state’s constitutional savings account. Saving, not borrowing - this is a very tangible sign of our fiscal responsibility.”

The Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR) was created twenty years ago as a savings account to help balance the budget in lean times. Hoffman said the state is in a position this year to be able to finish repaying all of the money that was taken out of the CBR.

Senator Bert Stedman (R-Sitka), co-chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, said the Senate’s budget work will focus on keeping Alaskans working and making sound investments in the state’s economy.

“By investing in needed infrastructure and deferred maintenance, we can create jobs for Alaskans at a time when people all over the country are falling on hard times,” said Senator Stedman. “By wisely allocating state resources and encouraging private sector job growth, we can keep Alaska’s economy sailing smoothly.”

Senator Charlie Huggins (R-Mat-Su), chairman of the Rules Committee, said the Working Group will focus on passing a comprehensive anti-crime package, including legislation to combat domestic violence and sexual assault.

“One of the biggest concerns of Alaskans is keeping their communities safe,” said Senator Huggins. “We intend to provide maximum funding for municipal assistance and revenue sharing, so that communities can provide for public safety officials and technology to keep their citizens safe.”

“We have a lot to do in the next three months, but I know we are all looking forward to working with our fellow Senators, the House and the Governor to do what’s right for Alaska,” said Senator Stevens.

The Bipartisan Working Group is composed of all ten democrats and six republicans in the State Senate.

By law, the second regular session of the 26<sup>th</sup> Legislature will end, at the latest, 90 days from today, on Sunday, April 18<sup>th</sup>.

For more information, contact Senator Stevens at 907-465-4925 or Senator Ellis at 907-465-3704.

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## **Senate Bipartisan Working Group**

*Goals and Objectives 2010 Session*

### **BUILD ENERGIZE PROTECT**

#### **ENERGY**

- Comprehensive Energy Package - Available, affordable and reliable energy for Alaskans' homes and businesses

#### **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- Fully repay state savings account (\$400 million)
- Conserve to extend the life of our savings

#### **EDUCATION**

- Keep the promise on forward funding, area cost differential and special education
- Address Merit and Needs based scholarships for post-secondary education and vocational/technical training
- Work to improve High School and College graduation rates

#### **SAFE COMMUNITIES**

- Maximum funding for municipal assistance and revenue sharing
- Pass comprehensive anti-crime package, including legislation to combat domestic violence and sexual assault

#### **JOBS and ECONOMY**

- Infrastructure investment and private sector job growth