

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## News from the Senate and House Majorities

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## **Legislature Overrides Governor's Vetoes** **Majority Vote Makes Disclosure, Ethics, Appointment Bills Law**

(JUNEAU) -- The Alaska Legislature enacted four bills into law today to improve campaign finance and political contribution disclosure requirements, give the public more time to review the appointment of a U.S. senator and encourage construction of a railroad into Denali National Park.

The bills had originally been passed by the House and Senate in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Legislature's first session, but were vetoed by the governor during the inter-session interim. Under the Uniform Rules, the Legislature may override non-spending bills with a two-thirds majority – 40 votes - within the first five days of the next regular session.

“Under the Alaska Constitution's system of checks and balances, the clear will of the people as expressed by a two-thirds vote of the Legislature is sufficient to overcome a governor's objections,” said House Speaker Brian Porter (R-Anchorage). “Our action tonight means Alaskans have had their voice heard, and have seen their desires become law through these important bills.”

“I look forward to turning our time and attention to the newer and more challenging issues deserving our attention in the second session of this Legislature,” said Senate President Rick Halford (R-Chugiak).

The bills passed into law over the governor's veto include:

- Senate Bill 103, which addresses conflicts and concerns with the state campaign finance and legislative ethics statutes, putting into law administrative rulings by the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC) and the Legislative Ethics Committee.
- House Bill 177, which extends state political contribution limits and disclosure requirements to “non-group entities.” Under a 1999 Alaska Supreme Court ruling, such entities may make independent political expenditures as long as they are not in business, have no shareholders and are independent of any business influence.
- Senate Bill 166, which requires a five-day waiting period before the governor can fill a vacant United States Senate seat vacancy for Alaska.

**(MORE)**

**Veto overrides**

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- House Bill 244, which authorizes the Department of Natural Resources to cooperate with the Denali Borough and a private holding company to begin the process of establishing a railroad and utility corridor from near Healy to the eastern end of the Denali National Park and Preserve, to spur economic development in the Denali Borough.

The Legislature's action came in a joint legislative session convened shortly before the governor's traditional annual State of the State address. By holding the override votes at a time when all legislators were already assembled, the Legislature was able to meet its Constitutional responsibilities for prompt override action, make efficient use of legislative facilities and staff time, and enable rapid progress on a range of other important issues facing state government, Porter and Halford said.

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