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RE: April 2004 Westside Pulse Article

BUSY SESSION

**By Representative Norman Rokeberg
House District 27**

Just what has the Legislature been doing, besides work on the budget and our fiscal situation? I thought I would report on some legislation that has passed the House. For a current status report on legislation, visit <http://www.legis.state.ak.us>.

Real Estate Transactions: My [House Bill 29](#) passed the House in March. This legislation outlines the steps that a real estate licensee must take to eliminate “dual agency” – a long-held legal concept wherein a licensee could represent both the seller and a buyer in a transaction. This legislation will provide for a notification process, an opt-in written agreement, and distribution of a written pamphlet describing the duties and rights of all parties.

Education Funding: After some long days negotiations, the House members agreed to early fund the education formula, increase the per student amount, fund the University programs, and provide increased funding for both. As the March 15 deadline for layoff notices loomed, the House adopted an education budget that provided an additional \$84.5 million for K-12 education and an additional \$15.8 million for University system. Adoption of another bill raised the per student funding amount \$419 per student to \$4,588.

Anatomical Gifts Registry: [This legislation](#), sponsored by Rep. Lesil McGuire (R-Anchorage), creates a donor registry program in which a donor's license/ID information can be transferred to Life Alaska Donor Services, the state's organ and tissue donor program. If the donor does not want the information transferred, the donor can choose not to participate or opt out of the program at any time.

Victims' Rights Package: A package of five bills was but forward by Reps. Nancy Dahlstrom (R-Eagle River), Lesil McGuire (R-Anchorage), Ralph Samuel (R-Anchorage) and Bill Stoltze (R-Chugiak/Mat-Su). All five bills have passed the House. The bills cover:

- a. [HB 349](#) is designed to promote honest testimony by criminal defendants and would allow prosecutors to use prior suppressed statements and evidence to cross-examine defendants who have changed their story.
- b. [HB 398](#) empowers municipalities and cities to create Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams. The purpose of these teams is to gain knowledge and insight to more effectively prevent domestic violence fatalities.
- c. [HB 357](#) requires judges to order restitution from criminals in all cases where a victim has suffered a financial loss and clarifies that a minor who has been ordered to pay restitution will be required to do so beyond his or her 19th birthday.
- d. [HB 348](#) provides that police and prosecutors are to notify felony and serious crime victims, at first contact and without request, about the Alaska Office of Victims' Rights and to provide victims with a printed brochure about the office.
- e. [HB 397](#), also known as the Brooke Act, would require criminal defense attorneys and investigators to first obtain the consent of a minor's parent or guardian prior to conducting a tape-recorded interview with a minor sexual assault victim or witness.

If you wish to contact me during the 2004 legislative session, please: write me at: State Capitol, Juneau, AK 99801-1182; telephone: 1-800-773-4968 or 907-465-4968; fax: (907) 465-2040; e-mail: Representative_Norman_Rokeberg@legis.state.ak.us; or call 269-0111 and send a public opinion message.