

# The Rokeberg Legislative

## SURVEY RESULTS



Sand Lake

May 2003

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Thank you for participating in my legislative survey process. Over 4,000 questionnaires were mailed out to constituents in House District 27. I received 266 in my office via mail and I also received 23 constituent responses to my on-line survey. Both surveys contained the same questions.

The Legislature is working hard on various issues -- many of which will impact you. If you want to keep advised of legislative activities, Gavel-to-Gavel coverage is on Channel 18, and audio streams of committee meetings may be accessed through <http://www.ktoo.org/gavel/index.cfm>. The Majority's web site is <http://www.akRepublicans.org> and the Minority's web site is <http://www.akdemocrats.org>. The Legislature's general website is <http://www.legis.state.ak.us>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

  
**Norman Rokeberg**

**YOUR IDEAS CAN HELP SHAPE ALASKA'S FUTURE**

Questionnaires Returned:

289

May 9, 2003

As I write this in early May, we are a few days from the end of session. My staff and I are looking forward to returning home. Our Anchorage office should be open by June 2, 2003 [our computers and equipment from Juneau will not be available until that time]. Please feel free to stop by my Anchorage office, 716 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 300, or call me there at 269-0117 after June 2nd.

The House and Senate have adopted their versions of the FY '04 operating budget.

The House's version of the budget calls for spending \$2,496.3 billion while the Senate's version calls for spending \$2,479.1 billion. The spending differences will be ironed out in a Conference Committee process. The budgets have differing amounts of new revenue based on passage of certain legislation proposed by the Governor.

Frankly, these measures include some tax and user fee increases.

We are continuing to work on further spending reductions by eliminating or cutting some programs. The most controversial is the elimination or reduction of the Longevity Bonus which currently costs \$47 million. I think a needs-based program or phase out over two or three years may have the support to pass. I am still considering the issue.

In my opinion, the Legislature, in cooperation with the Governor, must act before we fall off a fiscal cliff. The delay in addressing these difficult issues place our economy in jeopardy. If oil prices average \$22 a barrel, we will have no reserves left by 2006. If oil nose dives, our day of reckoning will be sooner.

The House Majority Caucus is working on a long-range financial plan for the state. This would include a new constitutional spending limit, budget reductions, my House Bill 11, user fee increases, some use of **earnings** from the Permanent Fund with a vote of the people, and a potential statewide sales tax.

I have worked hard to represent the people of our district. Please stay in touch.

**SPENDING REDUCTIONS:** The Governor's FY 04 Budget proposes to cut spending, including the elimination of some programs, as described below. Please advise if you agree or disagree with these reductions:

	AGREE	DISAGREE
1. Eliminate Longevity Bonus Program (serves 18,000 seniors, costs \$47 million)	133	153
2. Rather than eliminate the Longevity Bonus Program, should it be changed to a needs-based program?	134	136
3. Reduce Municipal Revenue Sharing Funds by 25% (savings \$7.4 million) (funds go to local governments)	120	143
4. Eliminate Alaska Science and Technology Foundation and transfer \$87 million in funds to general fund	177	89
5. Eliminate Human Services Matching Grants program that sends \$2.2 million to Anchorage and Fairbanks (which is then matched by local funds and distributed to local non-profits for services)	115	152
6. Eliminate Alyeska Correspondence School (savings \$1.2 million)	194	73
7. Reduce Learning Opportunity Grants by \$10 million (which would reduce funds to the Anchorage School District by \$3.4 million)	128	145
8. Reduce reimbursement for Pupil Transportation Services to 80% which would save \$10.7 million (Reduction in funds to Anchorage would be \$3.4 million)	160	122
9. Reduce reimbursement rate for School Debt Reimbursement program saving \$6.6 million (reduction in funds to Anchorage for bond reimbursement would be \$3.1 million)	132	138
10. Increase funding to the University of Alaska by \$10 million while decreasing K-12 education funding by \$27.6 million	47	200
11. Reduce public access to the State Archives, Museum and reduce State Library staff to save \$312,000	114	163
12. Eliminate the State Food Safety Inspection Program in four Alaskan communities that do not currently have a local program in order to save \$513,000 (Anchorage has its own program).	159	121
13. Transfer Habitat from Fish & Game to Natural Resources saving \$131,800.	146	127
14. Eliminate all General Community Mental Health Grants for a savings of \$600,000	133	125
15. Transfer the \$27 million in interest that has accrued on the Railbelt Energy Fund (the Fund was to pay for electrical interties in the Railbelt Area) to the General Fund	222	48

**PROGRAMS HELD HARMLESS OR INCREASED:** The Governor has proposed that the following programs be held harmless (i.e., funding continued at current level) or increased. Please advise if you agree or disagree with the following proposals:

	AGREE	DISAGREE
16. Public broadcasting funding held level at \$3.2 million	197	75
17. Power Cost Equalization funding held level at \$15.7 million	179	76
18. K-12 Education Formula Funding fully funded at \$670 million	217	45
19. Fund Village Safe Water Program in rural Alaska at \$20.9 million (in order to match \$62.8 million in federal grants)	218	48
20. Use \$3.54 million, generated by increased alcohol tax, to match federal Medicaid funding in order to make \$10 million available for increase alcohol treatment for parents of children in state custody and expand treatment options or adolescents in rural areas	190	65
21. Increase funding for Alaska Military Youth Academy by \$388,100 for "at risk" high school students	185	88
22. Fund Division of Oil and Gas with an additional \$340,000 to address increased workload from areawide lease sales and shallow gas leasing and exploration programs (anticipated this work will generate an extra \$8-10 million in bonus and lease revenues)	200	69

**REVENUES:** The Governor has proposed the following user fees and taxes. Please advise if you agree or disagree with the following proposals:

	AGREE	DISAGREE
23. Raise vehicle registration fee from \$34 per year to \$50 per year and vehicle title and lien recording fees from \$5 each to \$15 each. Combined total revenue would be about \$10.5 million:		
a. Increase vehicle registration fee	206	71
b. Increase title and lien record fees	202	70
24. Increase biennial (2-year) business license fee from \$50 to \$400 generating \$6.9 million in revenue	109	163
25. Eliminate the Oxygenated Fuel Program and the six cents per gallon credit which would generate \$2.5 million in revenue (this would stop the sale of ethanol blended gasoline in Anchorage)	169	94
26. Increase fee for non-resident big game tags, generating \$536,700	159	22
27. Institute a \$15 Wildlife Conservation Pass, to be paid by those persons using commercial services providers for outdoor activities, generating \$8 million in revenue (Alaska residents would be exempt)	233	59
28. Increase the fee on gaming to 5% of the gross revenue from pull-tab operations, generating \$11.5 million to the state. Charities would be held harmless.	273	10
29. Institute a \$10 per tire surcharge on all studded tires sold in Alaska	150	134

	AGREE	DISAGREE
30. Reinststitute the "school" head tax at \$100 per year per employed Alaskan, generating \$135 million	138	136
31. Instead of the "school" head tax described in #30, would you prefer a seasonal sales tax?	112	153

**OTHER AREAS:**

32. If, at some point, other revenues become necessary to address the state's fiscal gap. When that time comes would you prefer: (Select ONE)  
 Income tax 65 Statewide Sales Tax 91 Increased User Fees 27  
 Use Some Permanent Fund Earnings 92
33. When the Permanent Fund was established by the voters in 1976, one of the uses of the Fund's earnings was to be to pay for state government services as oil revenues declined and a "rainy day" appeared for Alaska. Do you think we are in a situation to use a portion of the earnings fund (keeping the dividend program intact) for our budget? Yes 125 No 148
34. Alaska's Constitution mandates that 25% of all oil and mineral leases, royalties and bonuses are deposited into the principle of the Permanent Fund (e.g., Prudhoe Bay and Kuparuk fields). In 1980, the Legislature increased this to 50% on all new leases (e.g., North Star, Alpine fields). Unless we repeal this law and go back to the Constitutionally mandated 25%, new oil revenues will not replace the declining income from the old fields. If we repealed this law and went back to the original 25%, an extra \$43 million a year would be generated to help close the fiscal gap and reduce the draw on the CBR. The impact on dividends would be minimal (no reduction in dividends because of this change for the first five years; then \$10-\$20 in the next five years). Do you support changing the law back to the Constitutionally mandated 25%? Yes 240 No 41
35. The Permanent Fund Corporation Board last year suggested the Legislature place a constitutional amendment before the voters creating an endowment fund from the Permanent Fund. This plan was also known as the Percentage of Market Value (POMV) idea and it would draw no more than five percent (5%) of the total value of the Fund and its earnings reserve. It would be self inflation proofing given the historical financial market returns. Do you support this concept? Yes 160 No 87
36. Should the money from the endowment described in #35 be used to: (CHECK ONE)  
 Fill our fiscal gap 96 Pay dividends 34 Both 79
37. Another concept is to use the POMV endowment to fund public education in Alaska. If the voters were to adopt a constitutional amendment to allow this, this could cover a portion of the fiscal gap, pay dividends, and provide education funds. Do you support this? Yes 140 No 116
38. Alaska's minimum wage is now \$7.15 per hour. According to the law, by September of this year, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development must adjust the minimum wage for inflation by taking either the most recent wage adjusted for 100 percent of the rate of inflation based on the Consumer Price Index for all urban consumers for Anchorage, or \$1 more than federal minimum wage (which is currently \$5.15), whichever is greater. Therefore, the minimum wage could change each January 1st.
- a. Do you believe the CPI inflation clause should be repealed? Yes 140 No 131
  - b. Do you feel that Alaska should have a training wage that would permit employees to be hired at a below minimum wage for the first 90 days of their employment in order to train them for a position? Yes 143 No 128
  - c. Should Alaska join 35 other states and put in place a tip credit with the current minimum wage being the floor (no one would earn less than the minimum wage)? Yes 132 No 139

39. Currently, an individual Alaskan who exceeds four hours of direct communications with legislators, administration officials, or staff within a 30-day period is required to register as a lobbyist. This means that if you fly to Juneau and spend more than four hours talking to all legislators or staff, you must register with the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC). This forces many citizens to become "lobbyists." Should we change the definition of "lobbyist" to allow for differences between "professional" lobbyists and "volunteer" lobbyists? Yes 190 No 86
40. Has the Municipality done an adequate job in investigating the ramifications of the potential Sand Lake Gravel Pit development? Yes 64 No 192
41. Has Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation done an adequate job in investigating the ramifications of the potential Sand Lake Gravel Pit development? Yes 76 No 136
42. Should Alaska spend capital dollars to make grants to install water mains (but not individual hookups) to those Sand Lake area residences (approximately 3,000) that are currently served by private wells or small water systems? Yes 139 No 133
43. Which route do you favor for the extension of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail?  
Orange Modified Route 120 Another route 18 No extension along the bluff 111
44. Would you rather see trail funds used to connect South Anchorage neighborhoods than extend the southern extension of the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail? Yes 129 No 123
45. Do you believe the public process for the trail design has been properly conducted? Yes 146 No 108
46. Alaska has a shortage of prison beds. We are currently paying a private prison \$66 a day per inmate to house 650 Alaskan prisoners. Which alternative do you prefer for housing 1,200 Alaskan prisoners (estimated to be the needed increased capacity in the next few years):  
New state facility at \$110 to \$120 a day per inmate 40  
New private facility at \$91 to \$94 a day per inmate 38  
Send additional prisoners to private prison Outside at \$66 a day per inmate 204

Thank you for participating in my legislative survey.

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Keeping In Touch...

### **Representative Norman Rokeberg**

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Anchorage Fax 269-0119

E-Mail: Representative\_Norman\_Rokeberg@legis.state.ak.us

Web Site: <http://www.akrepublicans.org>

**Public Opinion Message Line** 269-0111

**Assembly Members & School Board Members**

(note: not all have numbers and there is no single one number)

**Governor's Office** 1-907-465-3500 Juneau

269-7450 Anchorage

**Permanent Fund Dividend Office** 269-0370

**Ombudsman's Office** 1-800-478-4970

Keeping In Touch...

**Representative Norman Rokeberg**  
**State Capitol**  
**Juneau, AK 99801-1182**

**BULK RATE**  
**U.S. POSTAGE**  
**PAID**  
**PERMIT #574**  
**ANCHORAGE,**  
**AK**

## **Important Legislative Questionnaire**

**Representative Norman Rokeberg Wants To Know Your Views**

*Paid for by Friends of Norman Rokeberg, PO Box 221721, Anchorage, AK 99522-1721*

**Keeping In Touch...**

### **Representative Norman Rokeberg**

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**Keeping In Touch...**

**Return Address**

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**Place  
Stamp  
Here**

**Representative Norman Rokeberg**  
**State Capitol**  
**Juneau, AK 99801-1182**

**Fold This Side Out, Seal With Tape and Mail**