



Berta's Briefings

Beginning of Session Newsletter

26th Legislature

January 2009



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

On January 20, I took an oath of office to serve as your State Representative for Midtown Anchorage, House District 24. It's an honor and a privilege that, once again, you have chosen me to represent you in Juneau. As I have in the past four years I will continue to serve you and address your issues to the best of my ability.

Now that the 26th Legislature has convened, I am looking toward the future. Like most other states, Alaska is facing challenging economic times. The 2010 projected budget offered by our Governor is based on an average oil price of about \$74 per barrel. Many Alaskans will be greatly relieved if that turns out to be realistic but for now **it is crucial that we be smart and disciplined as we consider options for state spending.** I will continue to work with my colleagues to make appropriate decisions that best meet the needs our district and of the state.

As always, I value your input into the work that I do. My contact information is below and I encourage you to get in share with me information about your needs and options.

I'm Berta and I'm listening...

Berta

P.S.- I send out a weekly electronic newsletter during session. To be added to our list, please send us your email., or let us know you'd like a printed copy of our electronic newsletters.



Representative Gardner is sworn in by Lt. Governor Sean Parnell on January 20, 2009. This is her third term as your State Representative.

I am Honored to Serve *You!*

As many of you know, I am passionate about keeping in touch with my community. If you have news about important events or issues please let us know. I will be delighted to attend your events or help you with an issue. Also, please consider attending our constituent meeting in Anchorage in late February. More information will be coming soon.

My Bills for this Session

I am excited about some of the bills I'm working on this year. HB 14 will designate the Alaskan Malamute as the state dog. This bill is the idea of a second grade student at Polaris K12 School and the students have done thorough research. They are preparing the documentation, have solicited support from interest groups and will present the bill to the committee and answer questions. They are learning about the legislative process and more importantly that as citizens, even young ones, their voice and efforts can bring results.

I have also filed a bill to ban cell phone use by minors when driving. **Statistics from other states show that similar laws have decreased accident rates, making roads safer for all of us.** I fully expect that there will be an amendment to ban cell phone use by all drivers, which I may support it but think that will make the bill harder to pass (Don't we all love our own bad habits?). My original deci-

sion was to improve the likelihood of passage by choosing a narrow proposal.

Along with Rep. Peggy Wilson (R-Sitka) I am sponsoring legislation to prohibit mandatory overtime by nurses. **This is a practice which I believe helps hospitals keep their costs down** at the price of increased risk of mistakes and harm to patients.

I'm also working with Rep. Carl Gatto (R-Palmer) on a proposal to ban gift certificate expirations. This is a renewed effort on my part as I have previously tried to do get this legislation passed.

To see more bills I have filed and sponsored please go to <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/> and search for my name under the "Sponsor Summary" link.

Committee Assignments

For this session I am serving on three standing committees: Education, Rules, Community & Regional Affairs, plus University and Community/Economic budget subcommittees, and subcommittee for Legislative Ethics. In choosing committees I try to find a balance between my own passions and subjects I believe I should study to be a more effective and well-rounded legislator.

Education is my passion choice this year. I want to work for policies which will improve our abysmal graduation rates, policies which will help districts provide maximum opportunity to all Alaskan students and assure that every high school graduate is prepared for to be a competent adult.

I also look forward to work on Community and Regional Affairs, studying state efforts to promote strong communities and healthy economies around us.

Staff

Noah Hanson has been in my office since 2007. He is a political science graduate of UAA. This session Noah will be my aide for the Education and Rules committees. He will also be handling the Capital Budget and constituent issues involving roads and other infrastructure, and education issues.

Virginia Allen will be helping me with the Community & Regional Affairs and the Ethics committees, when needed. Virginia will also be handling constituent issues involving health related items and newsletters.

We are very fortunate to have **Roxanne Auge**, a UAA intern, in our office this year. She brings 25 years of state and local experience. Roxanne will staff me with the University Budget subcommittee budget, with newsletters and research.

In a few weeks Senator Ellis and I will be hosting our annual midsession constituent pizza party. We would love to see you when we return home!!!



Representative Berta Gardner

Beginning of Session Newsletter

PRST STD
US
POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #845
ANCH AK



I'm Berta and I'm Still Listening...

Community Councils

One of the best ways you can have an impact on your community and see change you desire is to participate in your local community council. Our neighborhoods includes all or part of seven different councils, meeting once a month at a designated time. Here is a list of the community councils I represent. If you do not know which is your specific community council, please feel free to contact me and I will help you out.

Abbot Loop - Meets the last Thursday of every month at Abbot Loop Christian Center at 7pm.

Campbell Park - Meets the second Tuesday of every month at Tudor Elementary School at 7:30pm.

Midtown - Meets the second Wednesday of every month at Mt. Vernon Commoun House at 7pm.

Rogers Park - Meets the second Monday of every month at Rogers Park Elementary at 7pm.

Taku / Campbell - Meets the second Thursday of each month at the Dimond Center Hotel at 7pm.

Tudor Area - Meets the first Thursday of each month at Rogers Park Elementary at 7 pm.

University Area - Meets the first Wednesday of every month at College Gate Elementary at 7pm.



Vic Fisher, a constitutional convention delegate, and Jane Angvik at the lighting of the cauldron during the 50th Anniver-

Alaska is 50 Years Old!!!

On January 3rd, Alaska celebrated its 50th year as a state. All over the state, thousands of Alaskan residents showed their pride and joy, braving the great cold, to join the festivities. I was among them, greeting the small parade of delegates invited from every community in the state and led by our own Arliss Sturguwelski, who ceremonially lit the cauldron.

Now that we have been through 50 years of statehood, it is time to reflect on the past and look towards the future to keep the state thriving economically. The key will be using education to add value to our abundant resources and diversity to our economy.