



Berta's Briefings

Beginning of Session Newsletter

27th Legislature

February 2011



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

On January 18, I took the oath of office to serve as your State Representative for Midtown Anchorage, House District 24. It's an honor and a privilege to once again represent you in the State House. As I have in the past six years I will continue to serve you, to be responsive and to address the issues to the best of my ability.

I am looking forward to the session and to the work we do. Although we face economic challenges, Alaska is a very fortunate and wealthy state with great opportunity as well. My goal is to look for ways to promote economic development and Alaskan employment. I believe this means both exploring new industries and supporting policies which strengthen our current industries. I will continue to work with my colleagues to make the best decisions I can to 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 share with me information about your needs and concerns.

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

P.S.- I send out a regular 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 Mead Treadwell on January 18, 2011. This is her fourth 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. Please let me know about important news or events. I will be delighted to attend your events or help you with an issue.

It's About Jobs!

Alaska is a resource state, but the question is, are we using all of our resources wisely and for maximum benefit to Alaskans? We have great opportunity for new economic growth if we start asking the right questions and work together to find innovative solutions.

This year, the legislature will revisit the important topics of oil taxes and how to get a gas pipeline that's good for both industry and Alaska so we can start construction. In each case, we will have to make sure we create a competitive atmosphere on the North Slope and do whatever we can to maximize job opportunities for Alaskans. We also must ensure a fair return on our resources so the state can put more Alaskans to work not only in the industry, but also in related efforts such as infrastructure preparation and workforce development.

We are mistaken if we assume oil and gas are our only valuable resources. There is growing awareness of and excitement about our own storehouse of rare earth minerals. Found in small quantities in a few places around the world, these are essential for national security, technology, and even for household and automotive goods. Additionally, we have vast renewable energy resources to develop, which if done successfully promise jobs, security in energy for our homes and businesses and invite other industry to our state. Our scenery and culture are valuable resources for tourism, and now for the film industry. Senator Ellis' innovations to bring the film industry have been wildly successful and promise future growth.



My Commitment to You

Every day in the Legislature, I work with colleagues to create good legislation and support good policy. Legislation requires some level of bipartisan support to successfully pass through the legislative process. I fully support the dynamic of the debate and appreciate differing points of view from my colleagues, stakeholders and members of the public. Treating each other with respect, listening carefully and working together, we can better craft solutions to the challenges facing Alaska.

Community Councils

One of the best ways you can have an impact on your community and see change you want is to participate in your local community council. Our neighborhoods include 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 find out.

Abbot Loop - Meets the last Thursday of every month at Abbot Loop Community Church at 7pm.

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

Midtown - Meets the second Wednesday of every month at Mt. Vernon Common 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 the First Church of God, 4317 MacInnes at 7 pm.

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

There are always events going on in Anchorage that impact our district. When I can, I let you know about these through my electronic newsletter and I provide legislative updates. If you would like to be on the electronic news list, please contact me at any time.

My Priorities for This Session

This year I am truly excited about the legislation I have introduced. House Joint Resolution 7 will turn our Constitutional Budget Reserve Fund into an endowment fund where we would not be able to tap into our reserves carelessly and spend our savings. The fund would generate roughly \$500 million annually that the Legislature would spend.

In 2008, the Legislature passed legislation to establish a grant fund from the PFD criminal fund to benefit children of incarcerated felons. Due to a technical problem, this grant program has not been implemented. House Bill 53 corrects this problem, allowing the children of incarcerated felons to get child support.

I will also reintroduce my bill to ban the use of cell phones for minors while driving. Some want to ban cell phone use for all drivers (except in emergencies). If that proposal does not pass, I want to see a ban at least for minors, who are in the process of learning and developing safe driving habits, and for whom the risks of a serious accident are greater.

I'm also working on consumer protection legislation to ensure the payday lending process is reasonable for the public.

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.

Alaska Legislature TV

Along with the online ability to track bills on BASIS and listen to live committee meetings through the Legislative website, the Legislative IT department is offering another way for constituents to follow state government and the process of making new laws.

Currently, the Capitol is equipped to live stream audio and visual committee meetings in all committee rooms. A new website: www.AlaskaLegislature.tv allows viewers to watch live committee meetings and follow the activities of the legislature.



Leadership and Committee Assignments

I was just elected to a leadership role and will serve as the House Minority Whip. In my new role, I will garner support for important legislation and help members resolve differences to find the best solutions for all Alaskans. I am honored to have been chosen for this key position.

I requested and received committee assignments which support those efforts: Resources Committee, Community & Regional Affairs, and Economic Development, Trade & Tourism. I will work to promote responsible production of our natural resources. I will defend Alaska's interest in maintaining our forward progress of TWO competing gas pipelines and promoting new job growth and economic development.



Representative Berta Gardner

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Together, we can make
Alaska a place of:

- **GOOD JOB OPPORTUNITIES**
- **THRIVING ECONOMY**
- **HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL**