



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
SENATOR GRETCHEN GUESS

## Sponsor Statement

### Senate Bill 9:

*"An Act relating to the terms of legislators, to a 90-day regular session of the legislature, to the date of convening a regular session, and to procedures of legislative committees during the interim; and providing for an effective date."*

The purpose of SB 9 is to revise our Legislative process to improve its function and efficiency through the following four changes.

- **Change the legislative session from 120 to 90 days.** The salient purpose of this bill is changing the legislative session from 120 to 90 days in statute. Although the Alaska State Constitution calls for 120-day session, it allows fewer than 120 days by law. It is my belief the legislature can do its job in 90 days. Additionally, this change should save the state approximately \$1M annually.
- **Move the start of session to February.** As allowed in the constitution, this bill moves the beginning of session from the current second Monday in January (third Monday after gubernatorial elections) to the first Monday in February. This change allows sixty days after the March forecast for the legislature to finish the budget; the same amount of time with the current 120 day session. Since the Governor's budget will be presented at the same time (December 15), a legislator does have the option of reviewing the budget during the month of January.
- **Swear in Legislators in December.** This bill calls to swear in legislators at the same time as the Governor – first Monday in December. The purpose of this change is to allow newly elected legislators to start serving in their communities before session begins, to be able to complete basic office functions (e.g., hire staff, order stationary), and to receive any orientation or overviews he or she may want or need before the session begins.
- **Limited Committee Action during Interim.** Finally, this bill allows limited committee action during the interim. Specifically, with thirty days notice, a committee may meet and move a bill out of committee as long as it is not the last committee of referral. Additionally, the bill allows telephonic voting during these committee meeting to ensure the state does not incur any extra costs. This change allows the flexibility that may be needed with a 90 day session.

These changes allow the Alaska Legislature to better serve all Alaskans while simultaneously doing so more efficiently at less public expense.

Thank you for your consideration.