



# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## News from the House Majority

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** May 3, 2006  
5446

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## **School Construction Bond Reimbursement Passes House**

(JUNEAU) – House Bill 13, legislation to reimburse communities for school construction bonds, has passed the House, 38 to 2. The bill, sponsored by Representative Carl Gatto (R-Palmer) would maintain current reimbursement levels.

HB 13 authorizes reimbursement of school construction bonds at 70% for projects approved by the Alaska Department of Education and 60% for projects that have not received the Department's approval.

"Last night's special election results reinforce and validate Mat-Su residents' strong commitment to Education and our children. The House Majority shares that commitment and I am happy to have played a small role in allowing voters to choose to build badly needed new schools for Mat-Su. The Valley delegation applauds your involvement," said Representative Gatto.

HB 13 was amended on the floor to add additional education funds to the Base Student Allocation and School Improvement Grants. There is currently an addition of \$96 million and the amendment adds \$35 million more. The amendment also included \$24 million more that will be distributed by ¼ of the ISER study at the \$5380 student base allocation plus \$10 million for School Improvement Grants that will be distributed by the average daily membership. The amendment is for one time funding and the ISER portion will be removed July 1, 2007. The amendment passed 37 to 3.

Representative Chenault has been working on the cost differential for at least six years. "While this is not the best solution, it is a good beginning for necessary changes in education funding," stated Representative Chenault. "I would like to thank everyone who supports our efforts. I plan to be back next year, and with the help of leadership, we will continue to work for our children and education funding."

"I represent 12 school districts, so this amendment is particularly important to my constituents. Every dollar counts and improves the education of our students," said Representative Bill Thomas (R-Haines).

"This is a great start. It doesn't solve the problem, but it is a step in the right direction," said Representative Gabrielle LeDoux (R-Kodiak).

"Years ago, when this funding mechanism was first put in place, they said we would fix it the next year. Eight years later we're getting one quarter of the funding. Sometimes in the legislature, we have to do things in small steps. Hopefully, in future legislatures we'll continue addressing cost differentials," said Representative Peggy Wilson (R-Wrangell).

HB 13 was held in reconsideration.

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