

PRESS RELEASE

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**SENATE FINANCE PASSES OPERATING BUDGET**  
**Austerman Plays Key Role in Development**

(JUNEAU) –The Senate Finance Committee passed the fiscal year 2002 operating budget out last night, providing significantly increased funding for Alaskans' top priorities, including education and public safety.

Total budget spending in House Bill 103 is \$4.64 billion, including \$2.24 billion in state general funds, \$1.15 billion in federal funds and \$1.25 billion from other funding sources.

Sen. Alan Austerman (R-Kodiak) chaired three of the subcommittees and was a member on two others, including the Fish and Game subcommittee and the University subcommittee.

“From infant learning programs to the University level, we have tried to structure a budget that funds education at a level that will propel our youth into the 21<sup>st</sup> century,” said Austerman.

Here is a quick breakdown of the subcommittees Senator Austerman chaired and served on and their respective recommendations.

**Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

Adds \$90,000 for independent living rehabilitation.

**University of Alaska**

Increases total funding by \$33.5 million, including \$11.3 million in general funds.

**Department of Public Safety**

Increases funding for the Alaska State Troopers by \$1.44 million and provides 9 more officers.

Adds \$480,000 for Fish and Wildlife Protection and provides 3 more officers.

Provides funding for a new DNA testing specialist with the state crime lab.

Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Adds \$140,000 to the Military Youth Academy's budget.

Increases funding for the LEPC Grants program by \$21,000.

Department of Fish and Game

Increases the department's budget by \$10.6 million from all funding sources.

HB 103 moves to the full Senate today for consideration.

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