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## Senate Judiciary Committee Senator Robin Taylor, Chair

**For Immediate Release:** Feb. 21, 2001  
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## Senate Ensures Timely Judicial Decisions

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska Senate passed legislation today that will encourage justices and judges to make decisions on their cases in a more timely manner.

Currently judicial officers are required by statute to file an affidavit that no case or matter before them has been uncompleted or undecided for a period of more than six months in order to receive their salaries.

Senate Bill 161, sponsored by the Senate Judiciary Committee, requires that judicial election pamphlets indicate any judicial officer not issued one or more salary warrants and explain the procedure for withholding salary warrants.

“There are currently Supreme Court cases that have been pending for over two years. The parties have completed their part of the process and are simply waiting for the presiding justice to make a decision,” said Sen. Dave Donley (R-Anchorage). “Justice delayed is justice denied. I greatly appreciated the court system working with us to draft a solution we can all support.”

By providing the public with information regarding the salary process and the names of those justices and judges who have failed to make timely decisions, voters will be better able to determine which judicial officers should be retained at election time, Donley said.

The bill would also require that the court system provide a report to the Legislature each January listing the number of matters in all of the state courts that have gone uncompleted or undecided for more than six months.

SB 161 passed the Senate with a vote of 15 – 5, and a notice of reconsideration was given.

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