

Alaska State Legislature

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SB 107 The Alaska Sunset Commission Act

SB 9, “The Alaska Sunset Commission Act,” will help ensure transparency, efficiency, cost-effectiveness, statutory adherence, and constitutional alignment in the operation of our state government.

The bill establishes the Alaska Sunset Commission as an apolitical, independent, and objective entity charged with reviewing, via detailed and robust audits, each department by division in the state on a rotating schedule.

The Commission will make recommendations for the performance and costs to the legislature. Along with the submission of the audit report to the legislature, the Commission will provide any recommended statutory changes necessary to accomplish the recommendations in the report. To prevent a division from sunseting and its statutory duties falling to the department’s office of the commissioner, the legislature will need to take up and act on the audit report.

The annual audit reports will also be available to the executive branch for performance and structural improvements within departments and for the construction of the governor’s budget each year.

The Commission will comprise seven individuals from the private sector with financial, budget analysis, accounting, operations management, and other areas of expertise appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislature. The Commission will serve without compensation but will be entitled to per diem and travel expenses authorized for boards and commissions. The Commission may employ staff as it determines necessary to perform its duties.

The size and scope of government can be difficult to grasp and understand, too often unwieldy and hard to control. Currently, the House and Senate Finance members are asked in a matter of a few months to figure out what is going on in each of the fifteen departments; essentially, their window is what the executive branch provides. With this limited information and in short order, legislators are tasked with making decisions each year involving spending billions of public dollars. Access to an extensive audit will help hold future governors accountable for building a responsible budget and aid legislators in wisely appropriating public dollars.

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