

**JUDICIARY**  
**FY20 - Summary of Significant Budget Issues**

**Governor's Budget Items Approved as Requested**

Item #	Approp/Allocation	Description	Amount/Fund Source	Comment
1	Alaska Court System/ Trial Courts	Facility Leases, Maintenance, and Operating Expenses	\$393.8 UGF	The Court System requested additional funding for lease and maintenance expenses associated with the Bethel Courthouse (\$164,400), the Juneau Dimond Courthouse (\$116,500), the Kotzebue Courthouse (\$15,000), and the Seward Courthouse (\$39,300). An additional \$58,600 is needed to fund scheduled inflation-based lease increases for other facilities, increased utility costs, and increased costs of janitorial and snowplowing contracts.

**Governor's Budget Items Denied**

Item #	Approp/Allocation	Description	Amount/Fund Source	Comment
2	Various/ Various	Re-open Courts on Friday Afternoons	\$3,098.0 UGF	The legislature denied the Court System's request for funding to re-open the courts on Friday afternoons. This funding level would have returned employees to a full 37.5 hour workweek.

**Legislative Additions**

Item #	Approp/Allocation	Description	Amount/Fund Source	Comment
3	Various/ Various	3% COLA Increases to Align the Judiciary's Employees Salaries with the GGU Salary Increases in FY20	\$1,709.7 UGF	Members of the General Government Union (GGU) received a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) in the FY20 budget. Judicial Branch employees are not members of a union. When Executive Branch employees' salaries increase, if the Judicial Branch employees' salaries do not increase at an equal rate, it makes it difficult for the Judicial Branch to retain its employees.  As has been the practice in the past, the legislature approved COLA increases for Judicial Branch employees equal to the GGU increases.

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**Governor's Vetoes**

<b>Item #</b>	<b>Approp/Allocation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount/Fund Source</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>4</b>	Alaska Court System/ Appellate Courts	Elimination of Funding Equal to FY18 State Funded Abortions	(\$334.7) UGF	<p>Despite the legislature restoring the Governor's HB 38 veto in HB 2001, the Governor vetoed \$334.7 from HB 2001. The Governor's explanation for vetoing the funding is as follows:</p> <p>"The Legislative and Executive Branch are opposed to State funded elective abortions; the only branch of government that insists on State funded elective abortions is the Supreme Court. The annual cost of elective abortions is reflected by this reduction.</p> <p>The Federal Government also prohibits any federal funds paying for elective abortions."</p>
<b>5</b>	Therapeutic Courts	Add Deputy Therapeutic Courts Coordinator, Contractual Funding for Two Probation Officers in DHSS	(\$124.0) UGF  <b>(1) PFT Position</b>	<p>The legislature added a PFT position with funding. Under the general direction of the Therapeutic Court Coordinator, a new Deputy State-wide Therapeutic Courts Coordinator position would have assisted in the planning, implementation, coordination, and oversight of therapeutic courts throughout the State. Responsibilities were to include monitoring and evaluating the quality of programs and services, provision of technical assistance, and coordination with other agencies and community groups.</p> <p>The Governor vetoed the funding because the position was not requested by the Court System and the "State's fiscal reality dictates a reduction in expenditures across all agencies."</p>

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**Fiscal Notes**

Item #	Bill #	Title	Amount/Fund Source	Comment
<b>Legislative Fiscal Analyst Comment:</b> The PCE Endowment fund has limited purposes designated by statute. Appropriations from the PCE Endowment to fund fiscal notes for HB 49 and SB 41 (the fiscal notes below) are flagged as non-designated uses of the PCE Endowment fund.				
6	HB 49 (Chapter 4, FSSLA 2019)	Crimes; Sentencing; Drugs; Theft; Reports	\$1,136.5 PCE Endow (DGF)  <b>9 PFT Positions</b>	<u>Alaska Court System/Trial Courts</u> The passage of this legislation resulted in numerous changes to the State's criminal code, including pretrial, probation, and parole. The Alaska Court System has requested a total of 9 new positions (2 FT pro tem judges, 5 clerical positions and 2 positions to expand videoconferencing) in order to handle the increased caseload. The legislature funded this fiscal note with PCE Endowment funds (DGF).
7	SB 41 (Chapter 2, SLA 2019)	Number of Superior Court Judges	\$62.0 PCE Endow (DGF)	<u>Alaska Court System/Trial Courts</u> SB 41 increases the total number of superior court judges that are authorized in the state by two, from a total of 43 to 45. It specifies that the additional judges will serve in the Third Judicial District; specifically, one of the added superior court judges will be assigned to Homer, and one will be assigned to Valdez.  The Court System will reclassify 2 district court judge seats to instead be superior court judge seats. This fiscal note accounts for the net cost of upgrading the positions (\$71 thousand) and savings from reduced travel (-\$9 thousand).