

Total Days in Special Session

Alaska Legislature
1959-2019

Special Sessions Called By:

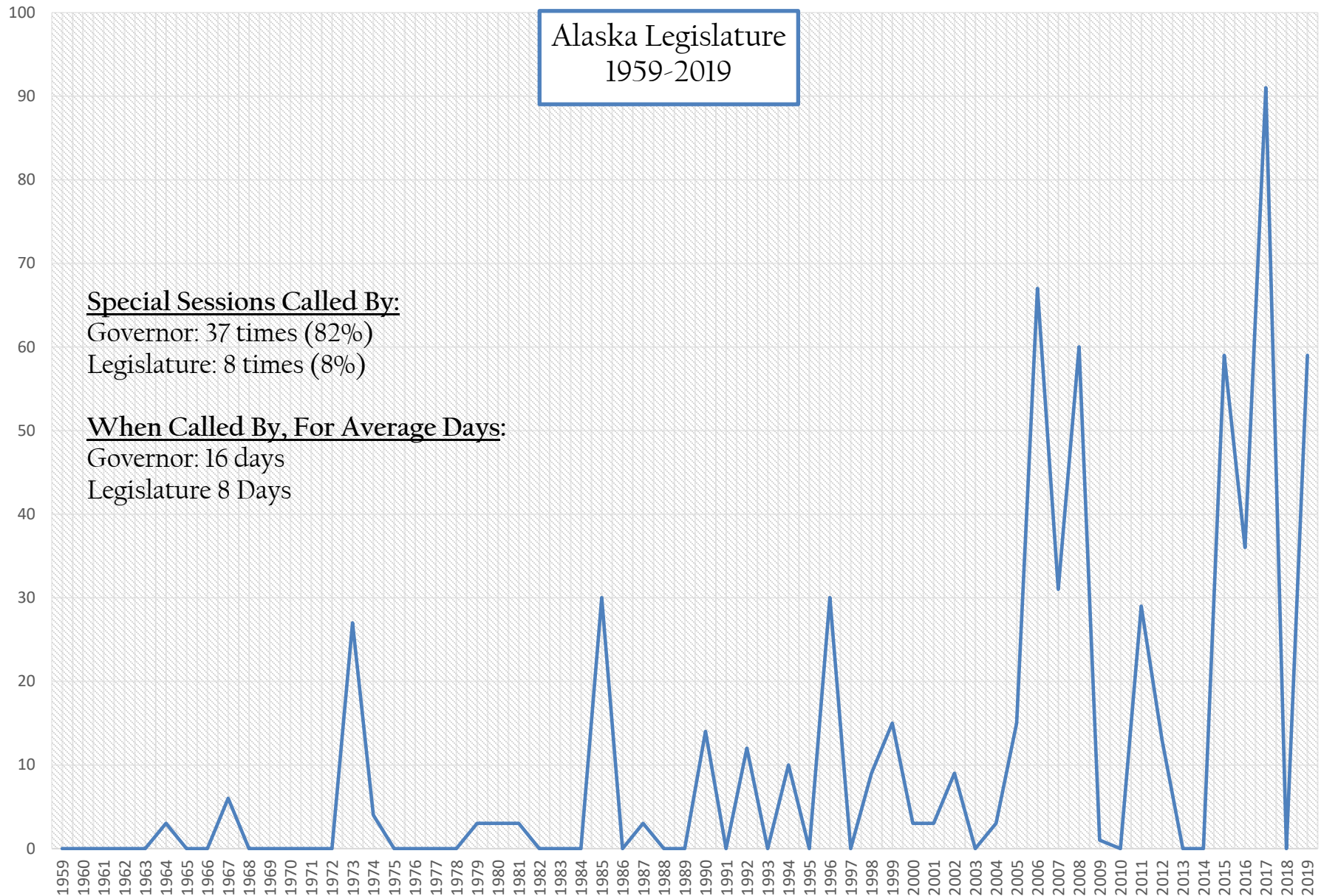
Governor: 37 times (82%)

Legislature: 8 times (8%)

When Called By, For Average Days:

Governor: 16 days

Legislature 8 Days



March 9, 2021

There are two main types of legislative sessions—regular and special (sometimes known as extraordinary). A regular session is the annual or biennial gathering of legislators, the starting date (and often, the length) of which is set by constitution or statute.

Unlike regular sessions, there is no specific timing for special (or extraordinary) sessions. They occur intermittently to deal with the specific issues or topics. Usually, the scope of a special session—that is, the topics that may be taken up—is limited to the issues specified in the notice calling for the special session.

There are no limits on the number of special session that may be called. Many factors can influence the number of special legislative sessions that occur in any year, including court decisions; federal government actions; length of or scope limits on regular legislative sessions; length or scope limits on special sessions; natural or other disasters; party control of the legislature and governor's office; political culture of the state; redistricting; or state economy.

In 14 states, only the governor may call a special session:

Alabama	Indiana	Mississippi	Texas
Arkansas	Kentucky	North Dakota	Vermont
California	Michigan	Rhode Island	
Idaho	Minnesota	South Carolina	

In 36 states, a special session may be called by either the governor or the legislature:

Alaska	Iowa	Nevada	Pennsylvania
Arizona	Kansas	New Hampshire	South Dakota
Colorado	Louisiana	New Jersey	Tennessee
Connecticut	Maine	New Mexico	Utah
Delaware	Maryland	New York	Virginia
Florida	Massachusetts	North Carolina	Washington
Georgia	Missouri	Ohio	West Virginia
Hawaii	Montana	Oklahoma	Wisconsin
Illinois	Nebraska	Oregon	Wyoming

How do legislatures call special sessions? Below is a summary of their processes.

STATE	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS
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Alaska	If two-thirds of the membership responds in the affirmative to a poll conducted by the presiding officer of each house.
Arizona	Upon presentation to the governor of a petition signed by not less than two-thirds of the members of each house.

Colorado	By written request of two-thirds of the members of each house to the presiding officer of each house.
Connecticut	1) Upon presentation to the secretary of state of a petition signed by two-thirds of the members of each house or 2) by joint call of the presiding officers of both houses.
Delaware	By mutual call of the presiding officers of both houses.
Florida	1) Upon the filing with the Department of State of a joint proclamation by the president of the Senate and speaker of the House or 2) if three-fifths of the members of both houses respond affirmatively to a poll by the Department of State—the poll being initiated by certificates from 20 percent of the members of the Legislature.
Georgia	Upon presentation to the governor of a petition signed by three-fifths of the members of each house, with a copy to the secretary of state.
Hawaii	By written request of two-thirds of the members of each house to the presiding officer of each house.
Illinois	Upon the filing with the secretary of state of a joint proclamation by the presiding officers of both houses.
Iowa	By written request of two-thirds of the members of each house to the presiding officer of each house.
Kansas	Upon presentation to the governor of a petition signed by at least two-thirds of the members elected to each house.
Louisiana	By written petition of a majority of the members elected to each house to the presiding officers of both houses
Maine	On the call of the president of the Senate and speaker of the House, with the consent of a majority of the members of the Legislature of each political party, all members having been first polled.
Maryland	Upon presentation to the governor of a petition signed by a majority of the members elected to the Senate and to the House of Delegates.
Massachusetts	Upon presentation to the clerk of the respective chamber of written statements of—and subsequent vote of—21 members of the Senate and 81 members of the House of Representatives
Missouri	By joint proclamation of the president pro tem of the Senate and the speaker of the House, upon filing with the secretary of state a petition signed by three-fourths of the members of the Senate and House.
Montana	At the written request of a majority of the members.
Nebraska	By proclamation of the governor, upon filing with the secretary of state a petition signed by 10 or more members of the Legislature and a subsequent poll by the secretary of state approved by two-thirds or more of the members.
Nevada	By petition signed by two-thirds of the members of both the Senate and Assembly.
New Hampshire	By a two-thirds vote (or petition) of the qualified members of each branch of the General Court.

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New Jersey	By proclamation of the governor, upon petition of a majority of the members of each house.
New Mexico	By proclamation of the governor, upon petition of three-fifths of the members elected to each house.
New York	By petition of two-thirds of the members of each house to the Senate president pro tem and the speaker of the House.
North Carolina	By joint proclamation of the president of the Senate and speaker of the House, upon written request by three-fifths of the members of each house.
Ohio	By joint proclamation of the presiding officers of the General Assembly.
Oklahoma	By joint order of the Senate president pro tem and the speaker of the House, upon written request of two-thirds of the members of each chamber.
Oregon	By the presiding officers of both houses, upon written request of a majority of the members of each chamber.
Pennsylvania	By the governor, upon petition of a majority of the members elected to each house.
South Dakota	By the presiding officers of both houses upon the written request of two-thirds of the members of each house. The petition of request shall state the purposes of the session, and only business encompassed by those purposes may be transacted.
Tennessee	By the presiding officers of both houses, upon written request of two-thirds of the members of each chamber.
Utah	By the presiding officers of both houses, upon poll of members, to which two-thirds of the members of each chamber are in favor because in their opinion a persistent fiscal crisis, war, natural disaster or emergency in the affairs of the state necessitate the convening.
Virginia	By the governor, upon the application of two-thirds of the members elected to each house.
Washington	By resolution of the Legislature, upon affirmative vote (or poll) of two-thirds of the members elected or appointed thereto.
West Virginia	By proclamation of the governor, upon the application of three-fifths of the members elected to each house.
Wisconsin	1) At the direction of a majority of the members of the committee on organization in each house; 2) by the adoption of and concurrence in a joint resolution on the approval by a majority of the members elected to each house; or 3) by the joint petition of a majority of the members elected to each house submitted to, and using a form approved by, the Senate chief clerk and the Assembly chief clerk.
Wyoming	1) Upon written request to the presiding officer of each house of the Legislature by a majority of the elected members of each house; or 2) the presiding officers of each house shall also jointly call a special session for the purpose of resolving a challenge or a dispute of any kind in the determination of the presidential electors.

Special Sessions of the Alaska Legislature: Dates, Duration, and Subjects

Legislature	Date Convened	Date Adjourned	Days	Subjects Under Consideration
3rd Legislature (1963-1964) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Egan	31-Aug-64	2-Sep-64	3	Disaster relief (1964 Good Friday Earthquake)
5th Legislature (1967-1968) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Hickel	29-Sep-67	4-Oct-67	6	Disaster relief (1967 Fairbanks-Nenana Flood) and establishment of a continuing disaster relief fund
8th Legislature (1973-1974) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Egan	17-Oct-73	12-Nov-73	27	Regulation and taxation of oil and gas exploration, production, and transportation
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Egan	17-Jun-74	20-Jun-74	4	Financial assistance to municipalities impacted by oil development, appropriations for election campaign reform; appropriation for reapportionment, royalties under state leases, authority of the Alaska Pipeline Commission, appropriations for Bristol Bay Regional Development Council & regional projects
11th Legislature (1979-1980) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Hammond	6-Aug-79	8-Aug-79	3	Supplemental appropriations for state employee negotiated contracts and salaries and amendments to public employees collective bargaining laws
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Hammond	22-Sep-80	24-Sep-80	3	Repeal of the state income tax and providing tax refunds for individuals
12th Legislature (1981-1982) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Hammond	13-Jul-81	15-Jul-81	3	Constitutional limit on appropriations
14th Legislature (1985-1986) 1st Special Session Called by the Legislature	15-Jul-85	13-Aug-85	30	Possible impeachment of Governor Sheffield

Special Sessions of the Alaska Legislature: Dates, Duration, and Subjects

Legislature	Date Convened	Date Adjourned	Days	Subjects Under Consideration
15th Legislature (1987-1988) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Cowper	1-Jul-87	3-Jul-87	3	Balancing the state budget and authority for adjustments to salaries of certain state employees not covered by collective bargaining
16th Legislature (1989-1990) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Cowper	25-Jun-90	8-Jul-90	14	Subsistence
17th Legislature (1991-1992) 1st Special Session Called by the Legislature	13-May-92	16-May-92	4	Supplemental and capital appropriations, reappropriations, housing, procedures for implementing the <i>Exxon Valdez</i> oil spill settlement, and state agency operations and fees
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Hickel	15-Jun-92	22-Jun-92	8	Subsistence
18th Legislature (1993-1994) 1st Special Session House Senate Called by Governor Hickel	12-May-94 10-May-94	16-May-94 16-May-94	5 7	Procedures related to the assessment for certain state taxes; appropriations for mental health land trust and associated litigation; appropriations to satisfy certain collective bargaining agreements; open meetings; and income withholding and other methods of enforcement for support and medical support orders
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Hickel	26-Sep-94	28-Sep-94	3	Mental health land trust litigation
19th Legislature (1995-1996) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Knowles	8-May-96	6-Jun-96	30	Appropriations for state employee collective bargaining agreements & adjustments to salary schedules for other employees; appropriations from the constitutional budget reserve fund; resolution of state and federal requirements for (a) the public school foundation program, school construction grants, and transportation of students, and (b) administration of the state drivers and commercial motor vehicle laws; appropriations for operating and capital expenses of the comprehensive, integrated mental health program; increasing the tax on tobacco products; cost saving for state (retirement incentives, cost-of-living differentials, geographic differentials, personal leave issues, and contributions and benefits in PERS for new employees; capital and operating appropriations (public safety; essential services for children, the elderly poor & individuals with disabilities; economic development & natural resource management; and intent for long-range fiscal planning); defining and designating program receipts

Special Sessions of the Alaska Legislature: Dates, Duration, and Subjects

Legislature	Date Convened	Date Adjourned	Days	Subjects Under Consideration
20th Legislature (1997- 1998) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Knowles	26-May-98	1-Jun-98	7	Subsistence
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Knowles	20-Jul-98	21-Jul-98	2	Subsistence--constitutional amendment with repeal upon a final order or judgment of a federal court holding the rural subsistence priority of ANILCA to be unconstitutional; authorization for the Legislative Council to sue on behalf of the state in <i>Legislative Council v. Babbitt</i>
21st Legislature (1999-2000) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Knowles	20-May-99	25-May-99	6	Budget bills; Constitutional Budget Reserve Fund; Long Range Fiscal Plan; Deposits to the Alaska Permanent Fund
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Knowles	22-Sep-99	30-Sep-99	9	Subsistence
3rd Special Session Called by Governor Knowles	4-May-00	6-May-00	3	State Employee Compensation
22nd Legislature (2001-2002) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Knowles	7-Jun-01	9-Jun-01	3	Discharge from Commercial Passenger Vessels
2nd Special Session Called by Legislature	17-May-02	21-May-02	5	Appropriations & Reappropriations; Constitutional Budget Reserve Fund; Housing & Services for Veterans; Municipal Bond Reimbursement; G.O. Bonds for Schools & Museum Facilities; Foundation Funding; Subsistence; Regulatory Commission of Alaska
3rd Special Session Called by Governor Knowles	24-Jun-02	27-Jun-02	4	Regulatory Commission of Alaska; Funding Veterans' Services

Special Sessions of the Alaska Legislature: Dates, Duration, and Subjects

Legislature	Date Convened	Date Adjourned	Days	Subjects Under Consideration
23rd Legislature (2003-2004) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Murkowski	22-Jun-04	24-Jun-04	3	Permanent Fund POMV & implementation; Advisory Vote on Source of Money Available for Appropriation; Spending Limit; Tobacco Tax; G.O. Bonds for Transportation & Education Capital Projects; Workers' Compensation; appropriations for listed subjects; and appropriation to DCCED to purchase fuel for rural communities
24th Legislature (2005-2006) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Murkowski	11-May-05	25-May-05	15	Capital Appropriations & Appropriations to capitalize funds; workers' compensation; teachers and public employee retirement systems; base student allocation in foundation formula; operating & capital appropriations for comprehensive integrated mental health program; appropriations for operating & loan programs; supplemental, capital, & other appropriations & reappropriations; university land grant; insurance regulation; state virology lab; elections, voters, political parties; state aid for retirement of school construction indebtedness
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Murkowski	10-May-06	8-Jun-06	30	Changes to the Stranded Gas Development Act (AS 43.82); judicial review of constitutionality or enforceability of a contract executed under AS 43.82; State interest in NS natural gas pipeline project, including indemnifications among project management & construction entities; establishing fiscal certainty for certain NS oil and gas leases; preliminary findings & determination of DNR commissioner made under AS 43.82.400(a)(1); provisions of proposed Alaska stranded gas fiscal contract; and production tax on oil and gas
3rd Special Session Called by Governor Murkowski	12-Jul-06	10-Aug-06	30	Repeal of the oil production tax and the gas production tax and passage of a production tax on oil and gas; statutory changes for the purpose of clarifying or providing additional authority for the development of contract terms under the Stranded Gas Development Act (AS 43.82); gang-related violence, contempt of court, and temporary detention and identification of persons; and an appropriation to study the feasibility of a spur line from the gas pipeline in the state
4th Special Session Called by Governor Murkowski House Senate	15-Nov-06 14-Nov-06	17-Nov-06 20-Nov-06	3 7	Employment-related benefits for same-sex domestic partners of state employees and retirees under the state's retirement systems

Special Sessions of the Alaska Legislature: Dates, Duration, and Subjects

Legislature	Date Convened	Date Adjourned	Days	Subjects Under Consideration
25th Legislature (2007-2008) 1st Special Session Called by Legislature	26-Jun-07	26-Jun-07	1	Senior Benefits Payment Program
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Palin	18-Oct-07	16-Nov-07	30	Making amendments related to oil and gas production taxes and conservation surcharges on oil; placing certain oil and gas tax and royalty auditors in the exempt service; authorizing public disclosure of certain taxpayer information on oil and gas production taxes; sharing certain oil and gas tax and royalty information among state agencies
3rd Special Session Called by Governor Palin	3-Jun-08	2-Jul-08	30	To consider any action taken by the commissioner of Natural Resources and the commissioner of Revenue under AS 43.90, the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act
4th Special Session Called by Governor Palin	9-Jul-08	7-Aug-08	30	To consider 1) approval of a license under AGIA to TransCanada Alaska Company, LLC and Foothills Pipe Lines Ltd., jointly as licensee; 2) statutory changes to establish the Alaska resource rebate program and to provide payments under the program to state residents; 3) statutory changes relating to power cost equalization under AS 42.45.100 - 42.45.190; 4) statutory changes to suspend temporarily the motor fuel tax; 5) statutory changes relating to a renewable and alternative energy grant fund and recommendation program, including statutory changes to authorize assistance for alternative energy purposes; and relating to the Alaska Renewable Energy Task Force; and 6) making appropriations relating to such subjects; also, [added Aug 7, 2008] statutory changes to the bulk fuel revolving loan fund and bulk fuel bridge loan fund and program; and making appropriations for those funds
26th Legislature (2009-2010) 1st Special Session Called by Legislature	10-Aug-09	10-Aug-09	1	To consider an override of Governor Palin's veto of federal energy stimulus finds and to consider confirmation of the lieutenant governor designee

Special Sessions of the Alaska Legislature: Dates, Duration, and Subjects

Legislature	Date Convened	Date Adjourned	Days	Subjects Under Consideration
27th Legislature (2011-2012) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Parnell	18-Apr-11	14-May-11	27	Operating Budget and Loan Program Expenses; Mental Health Appropriations; Capital Budget; Supplemental Appropriations; Alaska Performance Scholarship Fund; Power Projects; Extending the Alaska Coastal Management Program; Vocational Education and Basic Funding/Tax Credits; Extending the Regulatory Commission of Alaska; and Extending Boards and Commissions
2nd Special Session Called by Legislature	27-Jun-11	6/28/11 (H) 6/27/11 (S)	2 1	Alaska Coastal Management Program
3rd Special Session Called by Governor Parnell	18-Apr-12	4/30/12 (H) 4/26/12 (S)	13 9	Oil and gas production taxes; in-state gasoline development corporation (HB 9); and sex crimes and human trafficking (HB 359)
29th Legislature (2015-2016) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Walker	28-Apr-15	21-May-15	24	Sexual Abuse/Sexual Assault Prevention Programs (HB 44); Medicaid Expansion and Reform (HB 148); Operating Budget and appropriations under Art. IX, Section 17(c) of the Constitution from the Constitutional Budget Reserve sufficient to cover the remainder of FY 15 and to cover FY 16
2nd Special Session Called by Legislature	21-May-15	11-Jun-15	22	Operating Budget and Sexual Abuse/ Sexual Assault Prevention Program
3rd Special Session Called by Governor Walker	24-Oct-15	5-Nov-15	13	Acquire TransCanada's interest in the Alaska Liquefied Nature Gas Project.
4th Special Session Called by Governor Walker	23-May-16	19-Jun-16	28	Operating, capital, and mental health budgets; restructuring the Alaska Permanent Fund for a sustainable draw to fund government services; restructuring the oil and gas production tax, tax payments, and tax credits currently in place; instituting a personal income tax and increasing various taxes on consumption and natural resource extraction; addressing aspects of adoption, foster care, and reinsurance and innovation in the health care system; and providing medical insurance coverage for survivors of police officers and firefighters
5th Special Session Called by Governor Walker	11-Jul-16	18-Jul-16	8	Alaska Permanent Fund earnings reserve account, Permanent Fund Dividend, Personal Income Tax, Sales and Use Tax, Mining Tax, Fisheries Tax, Excise Tax, Oil & Gas Production Tax

Special Sessions of the Alaska Legislature: Dates, Duration, and Subjects

Legislature	Date Convened	Date Adjourned	Days	Subjects Under Consideration
30th Legislature (2017-2018) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Walker	18-May-17	16-Jun-17	30	Appropriations: operating budget, and loans, and funds; appropriations: mental health budget; motor fuel tax and transportation maintenance fund; credits against the oil and gas production tax; prescription of opioids, the controlled substance prescription database, and the Voluntary Nonopioid Directive Act; capital budget and supplemental appropriations; appropriation limit, the Alaska Permanent Fund, and the use of the earnings reserve account; an act or acts to increase an existing tax or to establish a new broad-based tax for the purpose of generating new revenues for the State
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Walker	16-Jun-17	15-Jul-17	30	Operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; repealing appropriations; making supplemental appropriations and reappropriations; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska, from the constitutional budget reserve fund. Prescription of opioids, the controlled substance prescription database, and the Voluntary Nonopioid Directive Act (added June 22, 2017); oil and gas subsidies (added June 23, 2017)
3rd Special Session Called by Legislature	27-Jul-17	27-Jul-17	1	Capital budget
4th Special Session Called by Governor Walker	23-Oct-17	21-Nov-17	30	SB 54 - crime and sentencing; and an act or acts enacting a tax on wages and net earnings from self-employment; and relating to the administration and enforcement of the wages and net earnings from self-employment tax
31st Legislature (2019-2020) 1st Special Session Called by Governor Dunleavy	16-May-19	13-Jun-19	29	An Act making appropriations for public education and transportation of students; HB 39 or similar bill making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; amending appropriations; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska, from the constitutional budget reserve fund; HB 40 or similar bill making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; SB 19 or similar bill making appropriations, including capital appropriations, supplemental appropriations, reappropriations, and other appropriations; amending appropriations; making appropriations to capitalize funds; and HB 49 relating to criminal law and procedure.
2nd Special Session Called by Governor Dunleavy	8-Jul-19	6-Aug-19	30	An appropriation bill that transfers the amount authorized under AS 37.13.145 (b) from the earning reserve account (AS 37.13.145) to the dividend fund (AS 43.23.045 (a)) for the payment of permanent fund dividends and for administrative and associated costs for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020.

Special Sessions of the Alaska Legislature: Dates, Duration, and Subjects

Legislature	Date Convened	Date Adjourned	Days	Subjects Under Consideration
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Notes:

- Since statehood, the legislature has been in special session a total of 465 days. Costs specific to special sessions have been tracked since 1997, and since that time, the legislature has convened in special session 24 times, for a total of 317 days.
- During special sessions called by the governor, consideration is limited to subjects the governor designates and to bills vetoed following adjournment of the last regular session. Under subjects considered, we do not include measures to suspend uniform rules or to override vetoes.
- Lawmakers extended the second regular session of the 22nd Legislature from May 14, 2002, through May 16, 2002, at which time members of both chambers voted to convene in special session on the following day, May 17, 2002. By so doing, the legislature was able to dictate the topics of consideration, rather than being limited to the governor's agenda (subsistence).
- The first special session of the 25th Legislature was held in Anchorage and marks the first time the full legislature has met outside of the Capital.
- The third special session of the 25th Legislature was held in Juneau. The House Special Subcommittee on AGIA met jointly with the Senate Special Committee on Energy met in locations outside Juneau.
- The first special session of the 26th Legislature is the second to have been held in Anchorage.
- The legislature at impasse, the first regular session of the 27th Legislature was adjourned by the governor, who then called a special session for the following day.
- In an unprecedented move, the governor on April 25, 2012, issued a supplemental proclamation withdrawing his oil tax bills (SB 3001 and HB 3001) from consideration by the third special session of the 27th Legislature. A Legal Services opinion deemed that action to be unauthorized, but the Senate concluded that without the governor's support of the bill, there was no realistic chance of meaningful policy discussion. The Senate adjourned, leaving the only bill in play, HB 9--the instate gasoline bill--unaddressed. After lengthy caucus considerations, the House also adjourned.
- 29th Legislature--Lawmakers went beyond the 90-day statutory limit for regular sessions, extending to the 98th day, relying on the constitutional limit of 121 days. The Legislature then adjourned and held technical session during budget standoff in the first special session. Despite the governor's call for the session to be held in Juneau, the special session was reconvened in Anchorage on 5/21/15, at which time both bodies adjourned the first special session sine die and immediately called themselves into the second special session, in Anchorage.

Sources: *Summary of Alaska Legislation* , (dates); Executive Proclamations (subjects); Legislative Affairs Agency (costs).