

# NEWS FROM HUGHES

INTERIM UPDATE

AUGUST 2023



Alaska Food Strategy Task Force, Chair  
 Legislative Food & Farm Caucus, Co-Chair  
 Senate Minority, Ranking Member  
 Senate Special Committee on World Trade, Member  
 Senate Finance Law Subcommittee, Member  
 Victims' Advocate Selection Committee, Member  
 Article V Phoenix Correspondence Commission,  
 National Commissioner  
 State Agricultural and Rural Leaders, National Board Member  
 NCSL Cybersecurity Task, Member  
 CSG West Canada Relations, Member  
 CSG Interbranch Committee, Member

## HOPE FOR OUR NATION

# WHAT IS AN ARTICLE V CONVENTION?

When we see the dysfunction and discord in DC, we often worry whether our nation will survive or whether it is on a declining trajectory. We doubt DC will fix itself. We wonder what will get our nation back

on track. I believe the remedy that ails our country may lie within our states.

As the delegate for Alaska, I recently participated in an Article V Convention simulation. As a check on the federal government, the framers included a provision in the US Constitution that state legislatures could call for a convention of the states to propose amendments if two-thirds of the states agreed to do so. Our founders not only understood the importance of the check and balance between the three branches of government (legislative, executive, and judiciary), but they also recognized the necessity of the same between the states and the federal government.

The founders knew an Article V convention would allow the states to rein in an overreaching, misdirected federal government to realign it in proper balance with the states.

The mock convention provided the opportunity to work through the processes and iron out wrinkles in the event the 34-state (two-thirds) threshold is met. This year, 49 states participated (all but Rhode Island) and adopted six proposed amendments. Had the convention been an official one, those amendments would go back to the 50 states for ratification.

I am proud to say that the countermand amendment that I proposed passed unanimously at the convention (the Alaska Legislature, too, had previously passed my amendment). Countermand means to veto, repeal, abrogate, or nullify. This amendment, if added to our US Constitution, would allow state legislatures, if a majority agreed, to countermand federal laws, regulations, or executive orders. In addition, five more amendments were passed on the following topics: 1) a balanced federal budget requirement; 2) congressional term limits; 3) 9-judge limit for US Supreme Court; 4) commerce; and 5) release of certain federal lands to states.

On July 26<sup>th</sup> the State Board of Education and Early Development (DEED) heard testimony on Title IX to protect girls' sports. The proposed regulation would ban biological males from participating in girls' sports while creating a third co-ed category to allow all students—all athletes—the opportunity to be on a competitive team. This is not "transphobic" as the opposition continues to argue. Rather, it evens out the playing field while helping our girls feel safe in their own spaces. It's important to note that this policy would have impact when teens travel and share lodging/showers/bathrooms.



The board postponed action on the proposed regulation changes to allow more time to read through public testimony and make a more informed decision at a later meeting - which is prudent and commendable - because two new members have come on board. DEED is conferring with legal counsel during this postponement to ensure that any decision is sound with current laws and statutes. I believe that is likely, whether the protections are passed or not, that there will be one or more lawsuits. It is wise for DEED and the state school board to be prepared.

Some interesting facts to note as we wait for the final decision from DEED are as follows:

- A recent Gallup poll shows that nearly 70% of Americans want to protect female sports, while only 26% polled think that individuals claiming trans-woman status being allowed to compete against biological women is

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▶ From pg. 1... a good idea.

- Slightly more than half of the write-ins submitted to DEED were in support of protecting girls' sports. Over 2,000 signatures were also submitted in support.
- Many people from all backgrounds, persuasions, faiths, and political leanings have confided in me that they are in favor of protecting girls' sports from biological males competing. Those with liberal persuasions in particular have not openly voiced their view for of fear of potential and severe retaliation by the opposition and extreme activists.
- If approved, the proposed regulations protecting girls' sports in our schools will not go into effect until the 2024-25 academic year.



# ALASKA FOOD STRATEGY TASK FORCE

I was appointed as the Chair of the 36-member Alaska Food Strategy Task Force (AFSTF) created by HB 298, signed into legislation in 2022. This task force picked up where the Governor's 2022 Alaska Food Security and Independence Task Force left off when it expired.

AFSTF has established several goals to achieve, including the following:

1. Develop a comprehensive statewide food strategy
2. Strengthen the state's diverse food system
3. Improve food security for all residents of the state
4. Grow local food economies of the state.

We are currently vulnerable, and it is time we begin to implement tangible solutions. Our overdependence on the lower 48 puts us at one crisis away from a food shortage. An earthquake, a labor strike at a major port, a pandemic – and we would see our store shelves empty out in short order. Rather than an academic discussion about interesting ideas, the report includes specific, workable strategies that list responsible entities, any required statutory or regulatory changes, proposed timelines and action steps, and metrics to be used to measure progress and success. We are not promoting boondoggles. We are focused on actually increasing food production and access to locally grown foods over the coming years.

AFSTF released its first report, as per statute, on August 1, 2023. The report can be found on the Alaska Legislative website ([www.akleg.gov](http://www.akleg.gov)) under the *Joint Committees* section with the July 19<sup>th</sup> meeting documents. The second report will be due August 1, 2024.



## COMING UP...

# COFFEE CHAT

WITH SENATOR *Shelley Hughes*

**Saturday, September 9**  
**10:00 to 11:30am**



Sen. Shelley Hughes  
DISTRICT M  
Greater Palmer & Knik-Fairview

## SOPHIA'S CAFÉ

9191 E Frontage Rd, Palmer

**COME AND JOIN ME FOR COFFEE AND CONVERSATION!**

*This is your time to share input and concerns about issues important to you.*

Questions? Call (907)376-3725



For additional information, contact my staff:

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