



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

News from the House Majority

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House Passes Legislation Calling for Advisory Vote on Same-Sex Benefits

(JUNEAU) – The House of Representatives has passed CSHB 4002, sponsored by House Rules Chairman Representative Norman Rokeberg (R-Anchorage) by a vote of 24-6. The legislation calls for an advisory vote of the people on the issue of benefits for same-sex partners of public employees or public employee retirees.

Passage of CSHB 4002 would put the following question before voters on April 3, 2007:

Shall the legislature adopt a proposed amendment to the state constitution to be considered by the voters at the 2008 general election that would prohibit the state, or a municipality or other subdivision of the state, from providing employment benefits to same-sex partners of public employees and to same-sex partners of public employee retirees?

“We trust the people and they need to be able to vote on a constitutional amendment on this subject,” said Representative Rokeberg. “By authorizing an advisory vote of the people, we will put substantial political pressure on members to enact a constitutional amendment which may only appear on the general election ballot in 2008, giving the people the final say.”

The House also passed HB 4001, by a vote of 22-8 legislation forbidding the Commissioner of Administration from moving forward on the issue of same-sex benefits without statutory authority.

“I simply do not believe it is appropriate for the Judicial Branch to side-step the Legislature’s constitutional right to find a remedy to the court’s decision on this issue by ordering the executive branch to put a new employment benefits program in place,” said House Majority Leader John Coghill. “The courts have overruled the people of Alaska, the state legislature, and the next generation by making same sex partners equal to married people with regard to the benefits of marriage.”

The House has adjourned Sine Die.

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