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Sponsor Statement

HB 21

House Bill 21 may very be the first step to more positive political campaigns. Presently, a candidate running for office, or a group proposing an initiative can be the subject of negative advertising and sometime even lies. HB 21 will establish an administrative process to counteract false attacks in a timely manner.

Under existing law, a false damaging statement in a political advertisement can only be countered with a response, often times along the same lines. Legally the only recourse is to file a civil suit. Because of the backlog in the courts it may be months after the election before the complaint is even heard.

With the passage of HB 21, a candidate or group victimized by false advertising will be able file a complaint with the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC). By filling out a form, and providing proof that the statement is false APOC must respond in an expedited manner. The panel will be able to hold hearings and may fine the offending campaign or individual.

HB 21 will cause a candidate or group to consider more closely what they say in their advertising campaigns. Alaskans want the truth about the candidates and issues before they go to the polls just like they do when they purchase a commercial product or service. HB 21 will show our constituents that we, as elected officials, agree.