

# Improving Government/Reforming Elections

*Working to find ways to make government better serve the people, the Republican-led Majority passed several pieces of legislation designed to improve state laws regarding campaign contributions, voting rights and elections; to expand public involvement in transportation planning; to halt unwarranted government invasions of privacy; and to eliminate gender inequity in public employment.*

## **House Bill 13:** Service Areas: Voter Approval/Tax Zones

Sponsored by Rep. Con Bunde

House Bill 13 requires that any creation, modification or abolishment of a municipal service area could occur only with the approval of a majority of voters residing within that area.

## **House Bill 48:** No Social Security Number Required on Hunting/Fishing License

Sponsored by Rep. John Coghill

House Bill 48 frees hunting and fishing license applicants from the legal obligation to submit their Social Security numbers on such licenses.

## **House Bill 109:** Voting in Person by Absentee Ballot

Sponsored by Rep. John Coghill

House Bill 109 ensures that an absentee ballot cast in person is valid even if the absentee voting official or election supervisor accepting it fails to properly sign and date the accompanying voter certificate.

## **House Bill 110:** Social Security Number & Driver's Licenses

Sponsored by Rep. John Coghill

House Bill 110 ends the state's practice of requiring Social Security numbers on Alaska driver's and commercial driver's licenses and state-issued identification cards, though it lets the state retain the numbers in state drivers databases.

## **House Bill 137:** Records of Veterans

Sponsored by the House Military and Veterans Affairs Committee

House Bill 137 designates the state recorder's office as the preferred repository of Alaska veterans' discharge papers, and end the duplication of effort in which the state's Bureau of Vital Statistics also maintained copies of the same records.

## **House Bill 177:** Campaign Finance: Contribution/Disclosure/Groups

Sponsored by the House Rules Committee

House Bill 177 extends the state's political contribution limits and disclosure requirements to cover "non-group entities," and closes a loophole resulting from a 1999 Alaska Supreme Court ruling that had allowed groups without direct business interests or shareholders to contribute double the amount of money to political candidates that individuals could, without having to publicly disclose the contributions.

## **House Bill 189:** Repeal Term Limits/Term Limits Pledges

Sponsored by the House Judiciary Committee

House Bill 189 removes from Alaska state ballots language indicating whether or not the candidates shown would sign, or had honored previously signed, term limit pledges. The bill responds to a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that it is unconstitutional for federal election ballots to contain such language.

**House Bill 250:** Operating Budget Missions and Measures

Sponsored by the House Finance Committee

House Bill 250 defines the missions that the various divisions of state government are responsible for accomplishing for the 2002 fiscal year, and the methods of measuring their success or failure in accomplishing those missions.

**Senate Bill 65:** Pay Equity for State Employees

Sponsored by Sen. Dave Donley

Senate Bill 65 requires the Department of Labor to study state employee wages to determine if any gender-based pay inequities exist.

**Senate Bill 88:** Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Sponsored by Sen. Randy Phillips

Senate Bill 88 requires metropolitan planning organizations for communities with more than 200,000 residents to include one state Senator and one state Representative whose districts fall wholly or partially within the area. This bill requires the Anchorage Metropolitan Area Transport Study (AMATS) to add two local state legislators to their policy committee.

**Senate Bill 103:** Election Campaigns and Legislative Ethics

Sponsored by the Senate State Affairs Committee

Senate Bill 103 addresses conflicts and concerns with the campaign finance and legislative ethics statutes, putting into law administrative rulings by the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC) and the Legislative Ethics Committee.

**Senate Bill 152:** DOTPF Related Contract Claims

Sponsored by Sen. John Cowdery

Senate Bill 152 requires that when a contract settlement with the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities in dispute is finally settled in favor of the contractor, that interest must be paid to the contractor on the settlement amount for the time the contract was in dispute.

**Senate Bill 158:** Report: State Participate in Natural Gas Pipeline

Sponsored by the Senate Resources Committee

Senate Bill 158 requires the commissioner of the Department of Revenue to present a comprehensive report, with recommendations, addressing ownership and financing options for the proposed gas pipeline to the legislature and the governor no later than Jan. 31, 2002. The report must also include how participation in the gas pipeline might affect the state's cash flow, its credit worthiness, and its ability to continue to pay for essential public services. SB 158 moves to the Senate Finance Committee.

**Senate Bill 166:** Appointment of U.S. Senators

Sponsored by Sen. Dave Donley

Senate Bill 166 requires a five-day waiting period before the governor can fill a United States Senate seat vacancy.

**Senate Bill 172:** Court System Annual Report

Sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bill 172 requires the Alaska Court System to provide annual reports on its administration and activities to the Legislature and the people of Alaska. The court system has been filing the reports voluntarily since 1961, and placing this requirement in statute will guarantee that the reports will continue.

**Senate Bill 187: Absentee and Special Needs Voting**

Sponsored by Sen. Jerry Ward

Senate Bill 187 requires the director of elections to notify the voting public of all “absentee in person voting” locations at least 45 days prior to an election.

**Senate Bill 193: Study: Effects of Permanent Fund Dividend**

Sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee

Senate Bill 193 requires the Department of Community and Economic Development and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to jointly conduct a study of the economic and social effects of the permanent fund dividend on the state. A report explaining the scope of the study and conclusions reached would be submitted to the legislature no later than Jan. 15, 2003.

**Senate Concurrent Resolution 14: Joint Committee on Natural Gas Pipelines**

Sponsored by the Senate Rules Committee

Senate Concurrent Resolution 2 creates the Joint Committee on Natural Gas Pipelines. The committee, comprised of members of the House and Senate, will have the authority to act on behalf of the Legislature in protecting and advocating for Alaska's natural gas interests during the interim between the first and second session of the 22nd Alaska Legislature. The committee will be able to hold hearings and hire consultants as needed, and will propose any necessary legislation to be considered during the next session.

**Senate Joint Resolution 8: Voting Sites at Military Installations**

Sponsored by Sen. Loren Leman

Senate Joint Resolution 8 calls upon the President of the United States and Secretary of Defense to rescind a Department of Defense directive issued before the last general election advising installation commanders not to allow polling places at their facilities