

# “Because They Can”

By: Rep. Vic Kohring  
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Our national leaders have recommended that we get back to living normal lives so that the major Evil which arose September 11th in New York City would not get the best of us. I agree with this recommendation. Part of my living normally is to point out where local mischief lies and figure out how to excise it.

As I write this on March 4th, the Courts are considering a re-write of certain districts in the Eagle River and Mat-Su area following the politically motivated work of the Tony Knowles' dominated Reapportionment Board. This board gave us one of the most pathetic, politically driven, misuse of taxpayer's funds in a long time.

I will admit to a small responsibility to this debacle. The Legislature created the means by which the Governor could dominate who was to be on the Reapportionment Board. Legislation allowed Knowles two selections, the Legislature two and the Supreme Court one. We should have known in advance that the Chief Justice, appointed by Knowles, would appoint a person, Vicki Otte, favorable to the governor's interests. Why? Vicki Otte (who's also Chair of the Board) is married to Ron Otte, former Commissioner of Public Safety, also appointed by Knowles. Too many naively assumed the Chief Justice would be fair and apolitical. We should have known better. This string of bias ultimately meant that Knowles' people would be in charge of the Board by three to two, and be in a position to re-draw district boundaries that would be politically advantageous to them.

That being the case, the Reapportionment Board gerrymandered boundaries to create more than three score cases where well-known Republicans have been forced to run against each other. The theory is that the conservative ranks will be greatly thinned, thereby opening the door for the Democrats to seize control of the Legislature.

In my case, what the Board did was so transparent, so obvious, that you have to ask, “Did the Board really think we were that ignorant?” Here's what they did.

I own a home that I've been remodeling a little more than a mile south of Knik-Goose Bay Road near Wasilla. It is within my present legislative district (26). Along comes Tony's Gang where they drew a line, a new boundary, conveniently down Knik Road, but bypassing Fairview Loop Road, including my neighborhood. For no reason other than political (that is to force me to run against my friend Beverly Masek), they shoved me into Beverly's district to the west. There is no known logical reason for this action. There is not even an excuse for it.

Why did the Board commit this obvious, self-serving act? According to one wise pundit...”Because they can!” Let's hope the court action will show the people of Alaska that Tony Knowles' Reapportionment Board is found guilty of political arrogance. Also let us hope that an unbiased, rational, redistricting map can be drawn solely on the geography of all the people in Alaska as it's supposed to be.

In the meantime, I moved my official residence back into my current district, strictly out of self-defense. This means that Beverly and I will not have to fight it out to the Democrat's amusement. It means that the actual home I was working on for my new family will now have to be sold or rented. I was able to outmaneuver Tony's efforts politically but he was successful in creating a hardship for me and my family on a very personal level.

If I were the attorney involved in this redistricting case, I would subpoena the Governor's majority on the Board and put them on the stand with the question, "How do you justify the obvious gerrymandering?" It would be laughable to hear them explain.

If the Governor and his left-wing hacks are able to get away with such obvious, irresponsible behavior on a simple matter of redistricting, with a feeble excuse... "well, the Republicans did it to us 10 years ago...", then what will they do to us in other matters like taxation, spending and regulation if they had control of the Legislature? How can we trust them to look after our best interests? This is just one more example of a long list of why the answer is... we can't!

It is also a massive waste of tax dollars and the court's time when it has to take on the "Tony Legacy..The Boundaries That Could Not Be Explained Away!"

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