

Alaska State Legislature

Session:
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
Phone: (907) 465-3709
Fax: (907) 465-4714



Interim:
1851 Fox Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone: (907) 451-5501
Fax: (907) 451-4714

Senator Gary Wilken District O

For Immediate Release: April 11, 2001
Contact: Senator Gary Wilken, (907) 451-5501

Senate Brings Equity to Education Funding

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska Senate passed legislation under reconsideration today allowing residents in unorganized Alaska to contribute toward their students’ public education.

“Senate Bill 48 simply asks the question, ‘Can you help?’” said Sen. Gary Wilken (R-Fairbanks), sponsor of the legislation. “Is there a way for residents living in unorganized Alaska to help contribute to their local school system.

Residents in organized Alaska are required by state law to contribute a four-mill equivalent of all taxable property within the school district to their local school system, a total of \$159 million next year. At the same time, citizens residing in the unorganized borough are not required to help financially as they live within a community that does not have the authority to levy or collect taxes.

REAA school districts are not required to match funds because residents of these districts live in communities or areas of the state that do not have the authority to levy or collect taxes. They can not be mandated by the State to contribute funds toward local education if they can’t legally collect them.

SB 48 allows an arm’s length, methodical, and professional analysis of the readiness of certain areas of the state to either incorporate as a borough or be annexed to an existing borough. Under the bill, the Department of Community and Economic Development will annually review areas in the unorganized borough and develop a list of those that may warrant annexation or incorporation. The Local Boundary Commission will select places from the list, analyze the nominations, and after local input and discussion, draft the appropriate petitions. Following a public review process, the petitions would go to the Legislature for consideration.

“It is important to note that this bill merely creates a new way for borough incorporation or annexation,” said Wilken. “SB 48 is a rational evolution of local government. The legislation was proposed and supported by the Local Boundary Commission, and they universally passed it on Oct. 31, 2000.”

SB 48 moves to the House for consideration.

#