

# ALASKA STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**REPRESENTATIVE JOHN COGHILL**

## Sponsor Statement HB 237

### Filling a Vacancy in the Office of United States Senator

The United States Constitution gives exclusive authority to state legislatures to set the terms of temporary appointments to fill vacancies in the U.S. Senate. If the vacated U.S. Senate term is longer than 30 months, the appointment of a U.S. Senator is temporary until a special election can be held.

If the vacated term is less than 30 months, however, the appointee serves out the term. Under current state law, if a United States Senate seat for Alaska becomes vacant, the governor must fill that position with an individual within thirty days. The only requirement of the governor is that he must select someone who has been registered as a qualified voter from the political party of the individual vacating the seat for six months.

HB 237 takes this right to association by a political party one step further. This legislation provides that if a political party nominated the predecessor to the Senate seat, that political party will have fifteen days after the vacancy to submit the names of three party nominees to succeed to the vacant seat. The governor will be required to select his appointment from the three names submitted by the party.