

Sponsor Statement

SB 89

“Proposing revisions to Alaska’s Regulation of Lobbying Act relating to regulations enacted by the Alaska Public Offices Commission defining who must register as a lobbyist.”

[Regulations](#) enacted by [APOC](#) defining a “lobbyist” unconstitutionally restrict business people from any meaningful contact with legislators or the administration. Currently, a person must register as a lobbyist if he or she spends in excess of four hours within a 30-day period in direct communication with a public official or legislative employee in activities directed toward influencing legislative or administrative action.

The revision provides a more reasonable level of access for Alaska businessmen and women to their elected representatives, their staffers, and state agency personnel. Traveling to Juneau, for most everyone in the state, is a significant event, both in cost and in time away from business. This revision would give business men and women the right to meet with legislators or the administration for a reasonable amount of time to discuss proposed legislation, regulations or permit applications that would directly affect business and not be required to become a registered lobbyist. Public employees are exempt from the statute and are therefore not held to the same restriction of their constitutional rights.

Registered lobbyists can only make personal contributions to political campaigns and are limited solely to contributions to candidates for the Legislature in a district in which the individual is eligible to vote. This revision gives businessmen and women access to state government without hampering their right of free association regarding political campaigns.

Currently social gatherings are included within the four-hour limitation, even where there is no discussion or attempt to influence legislation. For example, when APOC read in a newspaper that a prominent businessman was attending a golf tournament with legislators and legislative staffers, it contacted his company to verify that he was registered as a lobbyist. This revision would allow anyone to participate in social events with legislators or administrative staff.

The rules would remain the same as they are now for professional lobbyists.

[This revision](#) offers a simple fix to the current problem, which is consistent with the intent of the original lobbying legislation. It is supported by the over 700 members of the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce. The sponsors strongly urge you to support this revision.