

Sponsor Statement SB 227

“An Act relating to municipal initiative and referendum elections.”

[SB 227](#) was introduced specifically to help local governments avoid costly special initiative elections and referendums brought forward by voters. In many cases, these measures are not so pressing in nature that they could not wait for the regular municipal election.

Special Elections are costly and generally result in a lower voter turnout than the regular election. Recently, the Fairbanks North Star Borough had over 46 petitions filed in a period of 4 months. Although these petitions resulted in only one special election (at a cost of \$35,000), there was a potential for many more special elections at great cost to the municipality.

This bill could result in cost savings to municipalities who could choose to wait until the next regular election, typically in October, to consider an issue. This legislation would give the municipal governing body the option of calling a special election if the Council or Assembly wished to have the initiative and referendum considered in a more timely manner.

This bill is supported by the Alaska Municipal League and the Kenai Peninsula Borough. I ask for your support of this important measure.