

# Alaska State Legislature

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## Senator Bettye Davis

**SCR 2, 27-LS0031 - "Proposing amendments to the Uniform Rules of the Alaska State Legislature relating to the presiding officer pro tempore."**

### SPONSOR STATEMENT

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SCR 2 amends Uniform Rules 1 and 4 to increase the roles and responsibilities of Presiding Officers Pro Tempore. The term "pro tempore" is derived from the Latin phrase "for a time." To make the titles more consistent throughout the Rules and to recognize increased status and duties of Presiding Officers Pro Tempore in the leadership of both houses, Sections 1 and 2 of Uniform Rule 1 change the titles of *Temporary Presiding Officers* to *Presiding Officers Pro Tempore* and *Permanent Presiding Officers* to *Regular Presiding Officers*.

Section 4, Rule 4, Uniform Rules is amended and establishes that in the absence of both the Regular Presiding Officer (Senate President/Speaker of the House) and in the absence of the Majority Leader, the Presiding Officer Pro Tempore previously elected in Uniform Rule 1(b) serves as the Presiding Officer Pro Tempore.

The result of the language amending section 4 of SCR 2 in the original bill is that the Presiding Officer Pro Tempore elected at the start of the first session of a Legislature, in addition to the Presiding Officer Pro Tempore's duties set out in Uniform Rule 1(b), will continue for both sessions to serve as a "backup" in the absence of the regular presiding officer (President of the Senate/Speaker of the House) and Majority Leader. These changes effectively create a third permanent position in the leadership without changing the present leadership structure. The Regular Presiding Officer, the Majority Leader and the Presiding Officer Pro Tempore may temporarily relinquish the chair to any member.

These changes in the Uniform Rules mean that in addition to the few minutes of prominent duties, honor, and high visibility assigned to the Presiding Officer Pro Tempore to help organize the houses at the beginning of every two year session, the Presiding Officer Pro Tempore may function in capacities delegated in the absence of the Regular Presiding Officer and Majority Leader.