



# REPRESENTATIVE ALYSE GALVIN

Serving Alaska House District 14  
Anchorage: Roger's Park, Midtown, Tudor, and Spenard

## **Sponsor Statement: HB 298 – Ethics Act Legislation**

The purpose of HB 298 is to update and clarify language within the Legislative Ethics Act to bring consistency in terminology and organization, and to codify the current practice of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics. The bill adds clarifying language across multiple sections, with particular focus on confidentiality provisions related to ethics complaints along with clear timeframes.

The Ethics Act is unusual because it is without a department that enacts regulations and so consistency reduces the risk of misinterpretation and provides clearer guidance to the Ethics Committee as well to legislators and staff.

The first nine sections of the bill include new language covering the Ethics Committee subpoena powers, the use of a legislator's title, the requirement to provide sufficient documentation of a gift of travel for a legislative purpose, per diem and reimbursement of travel expenses for public members of the Ethics Committee, public members of the Ethics Committee and staff will no longer be under the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman's office to be consistent with legislators who are members of the committee, and the time frame for the Ethics Committee to respond to a request for an advisory opinion.

The bill also addresses ethics complaints involving legislators and staff beginning in section ten through the end of the bill. These sections cover the most substantial portions of the bill and include the most clarifying language and new language. Confidentiality requirements are clearly defined during the entire complaint process as well as the consequences for violating the confidentiality requirements. The impact of a waiver of confidentiality is also clearly established. Clear timeframes for all components of the complaint process have been added to avoid ambiguity. The campaign sections related to complaints have been condensed into a single section rather than spread throughout the entire complaint section to improve clarity and consistency. The statute now reaffirms that all complaint deliberations and votes by the Ethics Committee are confidential and that decisions will include a statement stating by a majority vote of the committee and list the names of members participating in the decision. Overall, the complaint sections of the Legislative Ethic Act will be easier to follow, understand, and administer.