ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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As outlined in AS 24.20, the Legislative Council has the essential role of conducting internal business for the Alaska Legislature, while the Legislative Budget and Audit (LB&A) Committee plays a pivotal role in managing state finances and expenditures. Both committees are established in statute with authority to conduct business anytime throughout the year so that internal legislative business may be conducted in a timely manner.

Alaska State Statute establishes membership on Legislative Council and the LB&A Committee to include "at least one member from each of the two major political parties of each house." However, the Alaska Legislature has a long history of coalition caucuses and unaffiliated legislators. In addition, following passage of voter initiative Ballot Measure 2 in 2020, candidates are not required to name a political party affiliation, and therefore may be elected to office without one. Senate Bill 160 seeks to update the membership statutes for both Legislative Council and the LB&A Committee to reflect these changes in law and practice to ensure fair caucus representation on these committees.

Every committee established in the Alaska Legislature Uniform Rules ensures representation of organized minority caucuses. Under current law, there is no guarantee that these two joint interim committees will include representation of all organized caucuses. SB 160 also reflects the Uniform Rules definition of "minority" as constituting at least 25 percent of a chamber's membership.

As all Alaskans have a right to vote for their legislators, who in turn have a right to form caucuses if they choose, those organized caucuses have a right to have their voices and visions represented on all committees. Senate Bill 160 seeks to ensure this fair representation is established in law.

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