



Alaska State Legislature

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SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 53

Conflict of Interest and State Boards, Commissions & Authorities

It is currently legal for individuals serving without pay on state boards, commissions, and authorities to raise money for state or federal elective office. House Bill 53 would require they resign their position before they declare their candidacy and begin raising money.

Ethics laws serve many purposes. Among these is the elimination of conflicts of interest, both real and perceived. Allowing members of boards, commissions, and authorities to run for political office and raise money from the very people who have a stake in matters before these bodies leaves open a window of opportunity for abuse – a window that should be permanently closed.

Current law only requires members of state boards, commissions, and authorities who receive salaries to resign their post prior to declaring candidacy for state or federal office. That only covers 22 of the 120 boards, commissions, and authorities in the state, however. HB 53 would expand the law to cover all 120 state boards, commissions and authorities, requiring both paid and unpaid members to resign their position before declaring candidacy. The bill does provide an exception for people appointed to state boards, commissions, or authorities due to their elective office.

HB 53 also stipulates that people who ran for elective office would not be eligible for appointment to a state board, commission, or authority for one calendar year following a bid for elective office. This creates a “cooling off” period after a person’s bid for office, removing them from the immediate influence – real or perceived – of contributors who may have business before their board, commission or authority in the future.