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A Communication From
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Sponsor Statement for HB 348 (Version R) **"An Act relating to membership of the state personnel board."**

By Representative Bob Lynn

HB 348 brings a broader representation to the Personnel Board so it can operate, or at least appear to operate, with greater independence when addressing complaints, and carrying out its other powers and duties under AS 39.52 Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act.

The bill increases board membership from three to five members, allowing the governor to make an appointment from a list of at least three nominees selected by the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, subject to the right of the governor to request additional nominations. It also ensures that the board has at least one member of the two parties that received the most votes in a recent election.

The Personnel Board, as currently constructed, lends itself to criticism that it's a creature of the governor rather than an independent body when it comes to investigating Executive Branch ethics complaints. As we know, perception can be the same as reality in the public eye.

HB 348 also prohibits certain conduct by board members and board employees and contractors that can lead to conflicts of interest or at least an appearance of conflict, such as campaigning for elective office; being an officer of a political party, political committee, or group; or lobbying, employing, or assisting a lobbyist.

Like other ethics-related measures, the purpose of this bill is to build a better foundation of trust between the people of Alaska and those they elect to public office.