



City of Homer

City Manager

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March 30, 2012

Chair Gatto
House Judiciary Committee
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: HB 347 “An Act prohibiting the use of municipal funds to support or oppose an initiative proposal to circulate a petition for a ballot initiative, or to influence the outcome of an election concerning a ballot initiative, without approval by municipal voters at an election.”

Dear Chair Gatto,

The City of Homer appreciates the opportunity to comment on HB 347 which is currently before your committee and scheduled to be heard on Monday.

A municipality has the duty to educate and inform constituents about ballot initiatives so the people can make an educated choice when voting on an initiative. I am concerned that HB 347 would restrict a municipality's ability to provide factual information to the voting public. AS.15.13.145(b) already requires that if a municipality is going to take a position or advocate for an initiative they must appropriate any funds spent on such advocacy through an ordinance. This provides for an accountable public process regarding the advocacy action. Requiring a special election before spending any funds on advocacy activity would be expensive and not allow enough time for the meaningful distribution of information.

HB 347 would have a negative impact on informed public discourse and I urge you not to support this legislation in its current form.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Walt Wrede
City Manager, City of Homer

Cc:

Representative Thompson

Representative Keller

Representative Lynn

Representative Pruitt

Representative Gruenberg

Representative Holmes

Representative Hawker

Representative Seaton

Senator Stevens