



Not giving up, in compliance to Alaska Legislative Rules, I approached the Rules Committees with a rule proposal. I suggested that the Rules compel on-going education about our political heritage by legislators—like nearly every other profession requires in our country. My legitimate, rule-based effort was ignored by both houses. However, Sen. Stevens (now sponsor of SCR1—then Rules Cmte Chairman) did have me in and heard me out. He showed comprehension of what I was getting at, but regrettably expressed his opinion that such an education focus was over the heads of most citizen legislators. The best we could hope for was chance driven forays by legislators into learning more about our political heritage. The reality of this shocked me with its hypocrisy—as these people were also the ones overseeing law and funding for public education. I then turned my efforts in the years since to encouraging civic participation by fellow citizens.

Now, what is the cure for this sort of human irrationality? It is the one executed by SCR1—organized, multifaction-balanced looking by a cooperative group of citizens. The SCR 1 task force should even encourage formation of satellite community task forces that are similarly composed. The specious nonsense that running such task forces is unaffordable should be answered by oath-keeping public officials putting their own money where their mouths are. I'm serious. Operating under principles from our political heritage, such task forces yield what are, literally and by dictionary definition, common sense results. Such principles include scientific discipline enforced on task force members to gather direct or verifiable observations and facts first before conclusions are attempted. This is what is called inductive reasoning—the hallmark of the scientific method.

I have spent over ten years encouraging civic participation by directly coaxing people to give their own ideas and advice to elected officials. My work enabled me to talk to literally several thousand people from Fairbanks through to Ketchikan, and from Kodiak through to Cordova. The SCR 1 Task Force needs to duplicate, almost at all costs, that depth of investigation. Their output then would become one of the most valuable works ever made available to the Alaska legislature—well beyond anything lobbyists could ever do.

Let me conclude with a very brief observation. You are the House Education Committee. Your legislative scope and function influences almost every thing the public and government does or could ever do. Therefore, let me leave this for you to think about for the rest of your legislative careers: The volume of true citizen participation in government of, for, and by the People is probably the most reliable test for the effectiveness of public education that could ever be.

Thank you for your attention. Good luck on your deliberations.

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