



AMERICANS
for TAX REFORM

Honorable Gabrielle LeDoux
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

March 23, 2015

Dear Representative LeDoux,

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform and taxpayers everywhere, I am writing to you to express my strong support of House Bill 317. This bill would reform Alaska's civil asset forfeiture laws to add additional protections for law-abiding citizens.

Currently, the police can take an Alaskan's cash, car, or firearm based solely on a suspicion of a crime. In some cases, the agency performing the forfeiture can keep 100 percent of the proceeds. In America, the Fourth and Fifth Amendments are supposed to protect our due process and property rights, this status quo is unacceptable.

HB 317 would provide crucial constitutional protections by requiring that a defendant be convicted of the underlying crime before cash or property can be permanently seized. This provides the necessary due process to ensure fairness while maintaining asset forfeiture as a tool for law enforcement. Standards of proof would also be raised to reflect the criminal nature of forfeitures.

Transparency requirements would also be bolstered in addition to removals of profit incentives to ensure legislative oversight over the state's police budgets. Police departments should not self-fund outside of the legislature: its common sense.

Across the United States, asset forfeitures have ballooned year after year. In 2014 alone, \$5 billion were seized by law enforcement, and because of the nature of asset forfeiture much of that came as a result of seizures without convictions. Voters and legislators across the states have come to realize the problem and are taking steps towards reform.

Wyoming, Michigan, Maryland, New Mexico, and Florida are just some of the many states that have taken asset forfeiture seriously. Alaska should join the growing club of states that put their citizens' rights first.

I implore your colleagues to extend their personal support for this important legislation. For more information, please contact Jorge Marin in my office at jmarin@atr.org.

Regards,

Grover G. Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform

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