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Lawmaker introduces bill to close dark money loophole

'Alaskans have a right to know who is behind any effort to try to impact our state's political and economic future'

JUNEAU – Alaskans should always have the right to know the source of campaign money and how much is being spent by individuals and organizations attempting to influence the outcome of referendums and recall elections.

Unfortunately, a loophole allows groups to create and launch campaigns aimed at changing major policies impacting our state's future, or efforts to remove elected officials from office, without releasing financial information until very late in the process. A recent article by the Alaska Landmine highlighted a current recall campaign that has gone on over a year and a half, and collected a total of 105,482 signatures, without reporting any donations per current statute.

Rep. Sara Rasmussen (R-Anchorage) today released House Bill 157, legislation that would guarantee a higher level of transparency every time the interests of Alaskans are on the ballot.

The proposal would require disclosure of contributions and expenditures made to influence a referendum or recall election to an earlier point in the statutory process, as well as the reporting of certain campaign finance activity prior to the collection of signatures. This the bill aligns recall and referendum reporting requirements with reporting requirements for ballot initiatives.

“Alaskans deserve an honest, transparent process and have a right to know who is behind any effort to try to impact our state's political and economic future,” ***Representative Rasmussen*** said. “This proposal closes a loophole that could easily be exploited by dark money special interests.”

HB 157 was referred to the State Affairs and Judiciary committees for consideration.

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CONTACT

Crystal Koeneman

Office of Representative Sara Rasmussen

(907) 465-3892

Crystal.Koeneman@akleg.gov