

Proposed Amendment to SB 270
Addition of Definitions Section – AS 12.40.210

Purpose:

To clarify key statutory terms protecting the constitutional authority of grand juries and ensuring meaningful citizen access consistent with **Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the State of Alaska**.

Section __. AS 12.40 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 12.40.210. Definitions.

In AS 12.40.030 – 12.40.200, unless the context otherwise requires:

(1) **“Citizen”** means a resident of the State of Alaska who seeks to present information concerning matters affecting the **public welfare or safety** to a grand jury.

(2) **“Citizen Presentment”** means the act of a citizen presenting information, testimony, or evidence directly to a grand jury requesting investigation of a matter concerning the **public welfare or safety**.

(3) **“Presentment”** means a written accusation, report, or recommendation issued by a grand jury upon its own knowledge or upon information presented by a **citizen** or grand juror concerning criminal conduct or matters affecting the **public welfare or safety**.

(4) **“Public Welfare or Safety”** means any matter affecting the health, safety, property, constitutional rights, lawful governance, or public resources of the people of the state, including but not limited to:

- public corruption
- abuse of public office
- unlawful expenditure or misuse of public funds
- failure to perform duties required by law
- violations of constitutional rights.

The determination of whether a matter concerns the **public welfare or safety shall be made by the grand jury**.

(5) **“Public Official”** means an officer, employee, agent, contractor, or representative of the state or a political subdivision of the state, including members of the **judicial branch**, prosecutors, peace officers, and court personnel.

(6) **“Obstruct,” “Interfere,” or “Delay”** means any act that denies, delays, discourages, prevents, or materially impedes the ability of a **citizen** or grand juror to present information or pursue an investigation before a grand jury.

(7) **“Grand Jury Investigation”** means an inquiry initiated by a grand jury, proposed by a grand juror, or requested through a **citizen presentment** concerning criminal conduct or matters affecting the **public welfare or safety**.

Legislative Intent

The provisions of this section are intended to ensure that the constitutional authority of grand juries under **Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution of the State of Alaska** is fully protected and that citizens retain meaningful access to the grand jury as an independent institution of the people.

These definitions **shall be liberally construed in favor of protecting the constitutional authority of grand juries and the rights of citizens** to present matters affecting the public welfare or safety.