

Stuart Relay

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Hi, I testified today in the Senate on SB116 and wanted to submit some testimony in support of the companion [HB 16](#) which you heard today in HSA.

I volunteered with Citizens Against Money in Politics (CAMP) and helped gather signatures for the initiative related to this bill and I'd like to see you pass this bill in its current form. It's a simple bill with a simple outcome, reinstating campaign contribution limits in Alaska.

Why not reinstate lower limits?

While I would personally like to see lower thresholds, it's important to the constitutionality of the bill that we use these amounts. In the 2006 supreme court case, **Randall v. Sorrell (2006)**, the concern was that too low a limit might magnify the "reputation-related or media-related advantages of incumbency" and insulate legislators from effective challenge.

Essentially, the limits need to be set high enough that an incumbent has an ability to communicate their message to constituents but not so high that one candidate can completely outpace the other with a single wealthy donor. The limits in our initiative and in this bill are a good balance.

Why the move to Campaign cycles instead of Years?

Alaska's use of annual limits favors incumbents because inexperienced challengers tend to register to run in election years.

One example that came up in the courts is the 2012 state senate race between incumbent Hollis French and challenger Bob Bell. French raised money in the off-year (228 contributions compared to Bell's 0 contributions). Then Bell entered the race the year of the general election. In the end, French raised about \$172,000, and Bell \$126,000. French won.

What can we do about Citizen's United?

We can't address Citizens's United in this bill but there are other things we can do in the future. I've heard concerns about independent expenditures from senators and representatives across the political spectrum and here are a few thoughts on how to approach that problem.

1. The court cases that bind us have much more to do with spending than disclosure. If Alaska were to tighten up disclosure rules, the people behind the big super pacs would be less likely to play here. Make more "true source" disclosure rules and when an organization or candidate is funded by majority outside dollars, slap a disclaimer on it - "This advertisement was funded by outside dollars, feel free to ignore it."

2. We make it clear to our congressional delegation and other states that Alaska wants a constitutional amendment put in place that frees us to regulate campaign finance. Charmin who testified today can provide more details about that effort and her involvement.

Thanks for your work on this,
Pat Race
Juneau