

Alaska State Legislature

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Senate Judiciary Committee

Sponsor Statement: Senate Bill 284 Campaign Expenditures

In the wake of the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling, *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*, the Senate Judiciary Committee has worked to determine the changes to Alaska's elections laws that will be needed. Corporations and labor unions have been banned from participating in Alaska's elections prior to this ruling. This means many of Alaska's laws regarding disclosure and disclaimers simply do not apply to corporations and labor unions making independent expenditures to support or oppose specific candidates in elections.

Testimony from Legislative Legal Services attorneys and from the Alaska Department of Law indicated that changes would be needed to Alaska's campaign laws, and this bill was subsequently drafted to address the concerns raised by the attorneys and by committee members.

Senate Bill 284 amends state election laws to clarify that corporations and labor unions are covered by all applicable reporting requirements. It expands communication identification requirements to ensure accurate reporting of top contributors, to require the approval of the content by the principal officer of the corporation or union, and to require statements in each communication that its content has not been authorized or approved by the candidate. It also speeds reporting requirements for communications expenditures in the last nine days of the election so that expenditures over \$250 must be reported within 24 hours.

Recent opinion surveys show broad disapproval by Americans across party lines for the decision reached by the U.S. Supreme Court. In order to retain Alaskans' trust in our system it is vital that legislation be passed this year to ensure that corporations and labor unions spending money to influence elections are at least required to disclose it in a timely fashion. I urge you to support Senate Bill 284.