

# Alaska State Legislature

## Select Committee on Legislative Ethics

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P. O. Box 101468  
Anchorage, AK  
99510 – 1468

February 4, 2013

Representative Mike Hawker  
Chair, Legislative Council  
State Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative Hawker:

Re: Access to Facebook

The Ethics Committee requests permission to access Facebook. Over the years, the committee has taken on the role of being more pro-active than reactive in helping legislators and legislative employees work through the myriad of the do's and don'ts of ethics. We anticipate questions in the future by those governed by the Ethics Act about Facebook postings; particularly since it is challenging to maintain clear lines between the professional and personal aspects of social media.

By accessing Facebook, especially during this time of tremendous growth in the use of Facebook by legislators and legislative employees, our goal is to continue to move forward in a pro-active manner and provide helpful ethics advice in the area of social media sites.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "H. Conner Thomas" with a small "(Jma)" written below it.

H. Conner Thomas  
Chair, Legislative Ethics Committee

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE



### Division of Legislative Audit

P.O. Box 113300  
Juneau, AK 99811-3300  
(907) 465-3830  
FAX (907) 465-2347  
[legaudit@akleg.gov](mailto:legaudit@akleg.gov)

March 14, 2013

Representative Mike Hawker, Chair  
Legislative Council  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Hawker:

RE: Facebook Page for the Division of Legislative Audit

The purpose of this letter is to request approval to publish a Facebook page for the Division of Legislative Audit. We anticipate using Facebook for the following.

- **Recruiting:** Graduates increasingly use social networking sites to seek out potential career and job opportunities. Recruiting new graduates has been challenging for our division. We believe Facebook will help us connect with the new generation of accountants and auditors.
- **Communicating:** As our society's modes of communication change, we must re-examine how best to communicate our audit results to the public. Facebook is a widely used platform for communication that may help facilitate the exchange of information between our division and other organizations and individuals.
- **Auditing:** State agencies increasingly use social networking sites such as Facebook. An audit we issued in 2011 concluded that 86 percent of state departments were using or exploring the use of social networking sites (Department of Administration, Enterprise Technology Services Division, Telecommunication Procurement and Pursuit of New Technologies, Audit Control Number 02-30058-11). Our division will need access to social networking tools in order to complete audit procedures.

Thank you for the opportunity to make this request. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please feel free to contact me at (907) 465-3830.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kris Curtis", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kris Curtis, CPA, CISA  
Legislative Auditor



## Memorandum

**Date:** March 17, 2013

**To:** The Honorable Rep. Mike Hawker, Chair  
Alaska Legislative Council  
State Capitol, Room 502  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

**Via email:** Juli.Lucky@akleg.gov

**From:** Linda Lord-Jenkins  
Alaska Ombudsman

**Regarding:** Legislative Council Policy on Access to Social Networks

Dear Representative Hawker:

I am writing to ask that the Alaska Legislative Council authorize the Office of the Alaska Ombudsman to access Facebook and social media sites in ombudsman investigations, in reference checks for job applicants, and for ombudsman outreach to the Alaska community.

I am aware that Legislative Council has granted limited Social Network access authorization to Alaska Legislators. I also am aware of Legislative Council's concerns that any Facebook/social media access be used solely for official SOA work-related purposes.

### Investigations

The Office of the Ombudsman requests Facebook/social media access in order to conduct our investigative functions. In the past two years the ombudsman has accessed Facebook on personal computers for the following purposes:

- My staff or I accessed Facebook via personal accounts to locate witnesses in investigations.

Reply to:

- ☒ P.O. Box 101140  
Anchorage, AK 99510-1140  
(907) 269-5290  
(800) 478-2624  
(FAX) 269-5291
- ☐ P.O. Box 113000  
Juneau, AK 99811-3000  
(907) 465-4970  
(800) 478-4970  
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- The ombudsman reviewed a complaint against the Office of Children's Services which pivoted on the issue of information posted on Facebook by relatives of a child in OCS custody
- The ombudsman received a complaint from a person who alleged that two other inmates had sexually assaulted the complainant. We researched the complainant's criminal history in CourtView and found that the complainant had two separate charges of false report of a crime. We used a personal account to check the complainant's Facebook account to determine if there was pertinent information on the alleged assault.
- My office on occasion must review Facebook pages created and maintained by other State of Alaska agencies to determine what information is being disseminated to the public. At present we cannot do this on state-owned equipment.

## **Reference Reviews**

Like many other employers, my office has reviewed Facebook accounts as part of reference checks for job applicants. The ombudsman office and staff must be politically neutral and must be viewed as non-political. Facebook posts could contain information that would have bearing on that political neutrality.

## **Outreach**

Finally, the ombudsman would like the option of creating a Facebook page for outreach and educational purposes. While we have no immediate plans to do so because of staffing issues, we believe that such a page could be a useful tool to disseminate information on investigations, educational materials on dealing with state agencies, special announcements, or common referral information. An example of how ombudsman offices can use Facebook page to reach out to the public can be found on the Dayton, Ohio Ombudsman's page at [www.facebook.com/dayton.ombudsman?ref=ts&fref=ts](http://www.facebook.com/dayton.ombudsman?ref=ts&fref=ts)

A review of the Dayton Facebook page shows that it provides information about complaints that might be of interest to a great number of citizens. The Dayton Ombudsman often posts summaries of ombudsman complaint resolutions that would be of interest to the community. The Dayton page also provides information to citizens about City government and services and occasionally provides information about other assistance services such as the presence of the IRS ombudsman in Ohio. The Dayton Facebook page does not post comments from citizen users or "friends".

For these reasons I respectfully request that the Legislative Council authorize the ombudsman to use social media to carry out our duties. The ombudsman is prepared to draft internal policies to address proper use of any social media access and track such access internally. Any use of social media access in investigations would be kept confidential per AS 24.55.160.

Thank you for your consideration.