



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Education Committee
Committee name

Committee on SCR-1, dated First Hearing Feb 26 2015
Sen Dunkavay Bill/Subject

Accompanying this are two MatSu area
OPEds that are wholly relevant to
the matter addressed in SCR-1.
I would appreciate these OPEds
being provided committee members

Signed:

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What's driving poor primary election attendance?

The Frontiersman has called for public input on dealing with poor primary election attendance. Poor voter turnout is not an actual problem. It is really a combined symptom of three problems. Not many citizens and absolutely no government officials want to face all three. It's much easier to sanctimoniously blame one's favorite political whipping boy. Naturally, nothing happens.

Problem No. 1 — The political problem that a clear majority of Alaskans know about and are fighting is the entrenched corruption of the two-party system (Democrat vs. Republican). This revolt is ethically founded on one of the foundations for conducting organized liberty: freedom from involuntary association. It is a fact that registered Non-Partisan/Undeclared/Independent Alaskans severely outnumber the registered Alaskan Democrats and Republicans combined. Yet despite the majority political will so expressed, primary elections are mainly held for the benefit of just these two political minorities.

Worse, more than 10

THINK ABOUT IT

By Stuart Thompson

years ago, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Alaska Republican party is a private political club. This allowed them to force the state to segregate primary election ballots to let only Republicans and "unaffiliated" voters vote for their candidates at every government level. In other words, a clear majority of Alaskans are forced — forced — to tolerate use of public resources for private-club elections that clearly benefit only political minorities. This is unless they succumb to the enslavement of involuntary association.

Problem No. 2 — A key problem that's suppressing civic participation like voting is the irresponsible and selfish character of too many people. These folks now get politically active only when their prejudices and self-centered appetites for politicians "bringing home the bacon" aren't being served. It is this

alone that is rushing our form of government into history's garbage can.

Benjamin Franklin — in his last speech to the U.S. Constitutional Convention — explained it best:

"Sir, I agree to this constitution, with all its faults, if they are such; because I think a general government necessary for us, and there is no form of government but what may be a blessing to the people if well administered; and I believe farther that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years, and can only end in despotism as other forms have done before it when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other."

So how can I accuse those who scoff at or neglect civic participation as being corrupt — in a far worse manner than any of Alaska Legislature's infamous Corrupt Bastard's Club? Or how can those who chant "throw the bums out of government" while failing to perform their own citizenship duties be called corrupt hypocrites?

The Alaska Constitution

explains it best:

"Article I, Inherent Rights — this constitution is dedicated to the principle that all persons have a natural right to life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the enjoyment of the rewards of their own industry; that all persons are equal and entitled to equal rights, opportunities, and protection under the law; and that all persons have corresponding obligations to the people and to the State. [Note that the last clause is a supreme law mandate for unarguable civic responsibility corresponding to citizen rights and privileges.]

"Article I, Source of Government — All political power is inherent in the people. All government originates with the people, is founded upon their will only, and is instituted solely for the good of the people as a whole."

It doesn't say that government originates from, and is founded on the will of, "elected officials," politicians, lobbyists, and bureaucrats — does it?

Problem No. 3 — ignorance is the most power

See ELECTION, Page 7

Letters to the editor

see page 2

Debt of gratitude to the Guardsmen

To the editor:

Alaska owes a debt of gratitude to the guardsmen who risked their careers and faced retribution to confront the abuse of power, violence against women, and intimidation within the Guard. Without

POLICY ON SUBMISSIONS

We welcome Letters to the Editor. Letters will be edited for length, clarity, good taste and libel. Factual accuracy and a civil tone are expected.

Letters should not exceed 400 words. All letters, including e-mail, must have a name and include a daytime phone number for verification. Letters will generally be printed in the order in which they are received — however, until they have been verified, they are not considered received. Longer Spectrum pieces are 600-800 words. We do not normally run letters sent to multiple publications.

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Opinions expressed in letters to the editor and in guest columns.

nomination for the U.S. Senate. I'm humbled by your vote and confidence in me. Despite my withdrawal from the race, I'm still active in helping elect a new senator with conservative values and one who will go to Washington, D.C., and fire the liberal, partisan obstructionist Harry Reid, Barack Obama's point man in the Senate, so we can finally

Solutions to election attendance

My last column, published Sept. 9, dealt with the real problems that drive poor primary election attendance, and indeed mediocre civic participation. It will take some guts on the part of citizens and their elected and appointed government officials, but here are stand-alone ideas of what we can do.

A) Help increase voter participation in primary elections by legally requiring a "None of the Above" choice in every ballot section. Party big-shots & big money might whine and snivel that they can no longer force "electable" candidates down people's throats. So what. Let's empower voters to force political parties to field people-driven candidate choices.

B) Our state's registration of political affiliation unarguably shows that the majority of Alaska's population is not being served by state funding of primary elections — grossly contrary to the Alaska constitution. Therefore, let's lawfully get rid of primary elections.

Fill the void with law that allows organized political parties to rent Alaska's election voting system. This enables them to honestly

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pay for their private-club elections of their candidates for forthcoming true elections — that remain publicly funded. Apportionment of rental costs would be in simple proportion to individual party membership. Party candidate elections would naturally become cheaper and more open to candidate choices, instead of being controlled by an elite deciding who is "electable".

C) Change primary election design and tabulation to the "Instant Run-off" voting construction. This is where a voter selects two or more candidates in the order of preference (first choice, then second choice, then third choice, etc.). Then if the aggregate first choices don't show a clear winner, it goes to the second choices, and so on. This would generate more interest in voting on one of the current segregated ballot choices (Republican or Democrat & others), and more interest in joining a mainline party by the unaffiliated.

D) Under the author-

ity of Alaska Constitution Article I, require applicants for the PFD to attest (under penalty of perjury) to voting — absentee or otherwise — in the prior year's public-office elections. Provide a selection of pre-authorized, seriously legitimate reasons (no "my car broke down" or "I forgot" nonsense) for not being able to so attest, which is similarly sworn to. Similar attestations are already enforced concerning residency. Note: selective enforcement of our constitutions to justify corruption exposes enemies of our form of government. A live example is enforcing citizen privileges without equally enforcing citizen responsibilities.

E) Mandate by law that every elected or appointed government official must undergo segments of continuing education about government—including what leadership means in a constitutional republic. Preposterously, most all government officials now show they think leadership means "making the hard decisions for everyone—as advised by knowledgeable experts, lobbyists, and public polling gurus". Such continuing education would embrace the education of our founding fathers. Our founders

learned the difference between an enlightened aristocracy (who do all the thinking and ruling for the benefit of everyone) and government by representatives (who organize their constituents to harvest the fruits of their minds for representation and action).

Real leadership is always the cure for the selfishness and irresponsibility of humans being led towards commonly desired goals. Thinly disguised dictatorship enforced by economic blackmail, egotistical law enforcement, and feel-good propaganda is not.

F) Mandate by law real and practical public education in government. Current Alaska schooling methods — "elements" of government embedded in a couple semesters of social studies — are making citizens who don't know how to conduct our form of constitutional republic. Consider, as an incremental example, Representative Wes Keller's idea of mandating the teaching of "constitutionalism". This would encourage the teaching of the sometimes-contradictory beginnings of our political heritage — rather than the feel-good, pro-

See SOLUTIONS, Page A7

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SOLUTIONS

Continued from Page A6

cessed rah-rah fed our youth in current civics texts. Civic leaders should also lead (I said lead, not force!) adult Alaskans at studying the same expanded material. Why? It's to make people power — the real thing — triumphant!

Civics education success also requires state certification of civics teachers by testing an educator's conceptual understanding of why the US founders (and faithful statesmen that followed) wrote and acted as they did. Disguising social engineering as civics education to pacify youth into being "civilized" and obedient to authority figures is a failed policy. It is visibly sending our country into oblivion. This makes cost no object — no object I say! — in enabling average citizens to save our state and nation.

Does our state and nation need saving? The job security blackmail of citizens that is increasingly exerted by corporations and the federal government (through government spending) is making virtual slaves of us all. Fellow citizens, there is no greater enemy to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness than the political cowardice we are now wallowing in. We must find courage to better educate ourselves on the tools each of us must use to make freedom truly mean something.

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