



City of Galena
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February 17, 2015

Senator Cathy Giessel
State Capitol Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: SENATE BILL 4

Dear Senator Giessel:

I write on behalf of the City of Galena to express support for Senate Bill 4, which moves the deadline for certain financial disclosures to May 15, after the April 15 deadline for filing personal federal income tax returns.

In 1984, Galena voters chose to exempt municipal officials from financial disclosures otherwise required by Alaska Statute 39.50. Chapter 39.50 recognizes that financial disclosures are important for transparent democracy. The Chapter's opt-out provision balances transparency with an understanding that onerous requirements secondary to official duties may dissuade broad engagement in public service, limiting the number of persons would seek office.

I am honored to serve as the mayor of Galena. At the same time, elected office in Galena is not a full-time job. The demands of unpaid public office, while ultimately satisfying, can be taxing. I encourage Galena residents toward greater civic participation and believe this is the purpose of the opt-out provision of Chapter 39.50, and is also the purpose of SB 4.

The disclosures mandated by AS 24.60.200 promote transparency in state government. The amendment posed by SB 4 lessens the burden on public servants while preserving policy objectives: By moving the deadline from March to May, federal tax information already prepared by the official can be provided to APOC. Public officials are freed to dedicate more of their time to governing and less to duplicative personal record keeping.

Alaska has a rich history of civic participation and continues to include persons of diverse experience, drawing on those without a background in government; Alaska is stronger for it. A relatively simple amendment encourages this tradition by making public service easier while maintaining transparency and integrity

Sincerely,

Jon Korta
Mayor

cc: City Council