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SB 39 -Sponsor Statement “Election Integrity”

“An Act relating to elections and voter registration; designating as a class C felony the intentional opening or tampering with certain election materials; and providing for an effective date.”

Election integrity matters. Every vote counts. Election integrity is a concern for many that has influenced Alaskan elections for too long. Chain of Custody is the foundation of ballot integrity. SB39 was written to allow a comprehensive look at every chain of custody issue in Alaska.

“The focus of the bill, which I first filed in 2019, is to insure ballot chain of custody and election integrity. Once you lose chain of custody, you lose ballot integrity. I support mail-in voting and utilized it throughout my 24-year military career.

Elections should not be called into question because of ambiguous election protocol policy. SB 39 codifies strict chain of custody protocols into the handling of ballots and election reports. It mandates that all ballots be in a strict chain of custody all the way back to a central location where they can be destroyed after all ballots have been accounted for by the Elections Board. Current practice allows ballots to be destroyed in precinct without central accounting.

SB 39 requires the director to establish in regulation, best practices for chain of custody protocols, and provides affected parties reasonable notice for ballot handling observation opportunities. It establishes an election offence hotline number that is conspicuously posted at polling areas and on the election privacy envelopes. Every voter becomes empowered, if they see something, they can now effectively report irregularities or concerns. It requires election workers to immediately notify the Director of any irregularities, then allows for an audit of ballots in precinct, immediately after the election;

There are no better checks and balances than empowering voters themselves at the most local level possible to become informal election observers.

“My intent is – through rigorous debate and the committee process – to listen to all sides and make voting, including mail in voting, more secure, so Alaskans can be confident in their election system.”