



Senator Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

Senate District P

Senate Bill 17 Sponsor Statement

“An Act relating to political contributions and providing for an effective date.”

Alaska has long regulated campaign contributions and limited the amount that can be donated to political campaigns. Following the VECO scandal in 2006, the people of Alaska approved a ballot initiative that established strict contribution limits. Part of the argument behind that initiative was that limiting the amount of money candidates can raise would curb the type of corruption seen during VECO.

In 2019 the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned some of Alaska’s political contribution limits in the case *Thompson v. Hebdon*. The *Thompson* decision struck down the limits, including the limits on contributions from individuals, nongroup entities, nonpolitical party entities, and joint campaigns for Governor and Lieutenant Governor.

This bill establishes new campaign contribution limits compliant with the *Thompson* decision. It increases these limits such that they are nearly indexed for the rate of inflation between 2006 and 2023. The limits are rounded to the nearest hundred. Here are the new limits:

- Individual contribution limits from \$500 to \$700
- Nonpolitical party group limits from \$1,000 to \$1,400
- Nongroup entity limits from \$1,000 to \$1,400
- Individual limits to a joint candidacy for Governor and Lieutenant Gov. from \$1,000 to \$1,400
- Group limits to a joint candidacy for Governor and Lieutenant Gov. from \$2,000 to \$2,800

The *Thompson* decision also stipulated that contribution limits must be indexed for inflation. SB 17 requires APOC to index contribution limits for inflation by regulation starting in 2024 and after subsequent terms of four years.

I respectfully urge your support for SB17 to help limit corruption by establishing new campaign contribution limits. Please reach out to my office with any questions or concerns.

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