

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Bruce Botelho [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 10:53 AM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB 17 "An Act relating to political contributions and providing for an effective date"
Attachments: sm-2005.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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I submit the attached letter as my testimony on today's hearing on SB 17.

Bruce Botelho
[REDACTED]

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Mary Corcoran [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 12:01 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: PUBLIC TESTIMONY SB17A

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Dear Senators,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify about SB17. I strongly support limits to campaign contributions. This bill sets reasonable and affordable limits. It seems to address the court's objection to the previous amount and allows an equitable playing field for those who support candidates.

Please support this bill.
Thank you for your work.

Sincerely,
Mary Corcoran
[REDACTED]

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Jennine Williamson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 12:46 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Cc: Sen. Scott Kawasaki
Subject: Senate Bill 17

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I am a 45 year resident of this wonderful state and

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 17, limiting Campaign Contributions.

Thank you,

Jennine Williamson
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Maxine Franklin [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 2:16 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: Campaign Contributions

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If we are going to be a government of the people – actual people – rather than of virtual people – (corporations, religious groups, etc.), we need to make sure that we do everything to make that reality.

We hope that our elected representatives in government will listen to our needs for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, rather than large corporations' interests in fewer safety regulations and increased profits for shareholders. With the problems with Boeing for example, and its cozy relationship with government regulators, the FAA in particular, we can see that unless the average working person has a voice in affairs that mean life and death, we can be assured that from the corporate point of view, a couple crashes here and there with a few hundred dead are not going to be of real concern to the bottom line.

This of course is the most recent glaring example of the power large corporations have over mere lawmakers and the public at large. The best way to start solving this inequality is to not allow corporations to be considered actual people. We can't continue to have a government of the corporations, by the corporations, and for the corporations. We need to have actual people making decisions through you in our best interests of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Otherwise, our very lives are in danger.

Please reinstitute limits on campaign contributions to shift the balance of power back to ordinary citizens.

Thank you,

Maxine Franklin
[REDACTED]

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Janet Angel [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 2:17 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: Senate Bill 17

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I respectfully request that Senate Bill 17, regarding campaign contributions be passed. It's time to return to the days when people decided who's in office not corporations and lobbyists. As you can see, what we're doing now isn't working out.

Thank you for your time.

Janet Colon

Anchorage Alaska

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Larry Taylor, Jr. [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 3:16 PM
To: Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Senate Judiciary
Cc: Bruce Botelho; Bill Rotecki
Subject: Campaign Limits Reform Bill SB 17 testimony

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Senator Kawasaki,

I am sorry to miss testifying today. The hearing closed as I found out about it and called in.

Testifying for myself and my wife, I think SB 17 would help level the playing field and give us a voice in electing people we want to see in public office. Under the current lack of campaign donation limits, we do not have the leverage of the big corporations and rich donors, allowing those big corporations and wealthy individuals to control Alaska's wealth. This leaves the average citizen like us with less of a share in the government services we think necessary to support a vibrant economy, make it worth while for people to stay here, and to attract needed residents to the state.

Larry Taylor, Jr. & Gail Weston Taylor
[REDACTED]

From: Pat Race [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 4:07 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Cc: Sen. Scott Kawasaki; Joe Hayes; Rep. Calvin Schrage
Subject: SB 17

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Hello committee members, I'm writing in support of SB17. I've been assisting with [a volunteer effort to gather signatures](#) which started in early November. We're approaching the half-way point with plenty of time remaining but I'd really love to see the legislature take this task off the shoulders of our volunteers who are out there in the snow and wind.

1. **Alaskans want contribution limits.** In 2006, 73% of Alaskan voters supported the previous limits. This wasn't only driven by the VECO scandal, Pew Research shows the same [7-in-10 Americans approve of campaign contribution limits](#).
2. **Money wins elections.** There are [plenty of studies](#) that concede this point but you must all know it innately as politicians. Every donation your opponent receives is an additional headwind.
3. **This is an equity issue.** Campaign contributions aren't free speech, they're EXPENSIVE speech. Most Alaskans aren't going to be able to keep up with a campaign that can bring in a \$20k or \$500k check. When Alaskan's voices are drowned out by the megaphone of big money donors, their speech is silenced.
4. **This is an ownership issue.** We want policy makers who rely on donations from many Alaskans, not a single outside donor. campaign limits ensure that. No matter your voter registration or resources, there's always a bigger checkbook out there. We don't want Alaska's elections to be purchased by whatever billionaire decides they want to poke their nose in. Pick your bogeyman, they're out there.
5. **Thompson v. Hebdon invited appeal, it wasn't a slam dunk.** The federal district court for Alaska initially upheld the contribution limits. The three members of the circuit court only overturned those limits 2-1 with a strong dissent. They then invited appeal on August 20 by asking both sides to file briefs on whether the case should receive a hearing en banc. The case should have been appealed by the Governor who has an Alaska Statehood Defense fund sloshing around for just such purposes. But he is a personal beneficiary of no-limits campaigning and allowed it to stand.

Questions addressed today

1. **How does this relate to the VECO scandal?** The VECO scandal didn't happen overnight, it was the culmination of decades of corruption. In addition to the bribes and consulting fees and child sexual abuse Bill Allen perpetrated, he was caught using a scheme to funnel money to five political candidates. APOC found VECO had made contributions over the legal limit and fined the company \$72,000 but it was the price of doing business because Allen got rid of Governor Sheffield and several of his candidates won. After the election, the legislature passed no new oil industry taxes. Yay Oil.

2. **What's the status of the Ballot Initiative?** [In progress](#), but we'd love to not have to do this work! If you'd like to sign our petition or help to gather signatures, please reach out.
3. **What about Citizens United?** Yes, Citizens United created terrible problems with campaign financing. The best we can do at a state level is to require more disclosure and transparency. I'd encourage you to avoid lumping any of that into this simple bill. SB17 should remain streamlined for quick and easy passage rather than turning it into an elections omnibus. Campaign limits are critical to fair elections and I would like to see passage this session.

Thank you for your time,
Pat Race

Additional Reading:

One piece of the Thompson v. Hebdon decision I thought was interesting is this section suggesting that moving from annual limits to campaign cycles is appropriate. This is something we've addressed in our [initiative language](#) and something you're more than welcome to steal in moving this bill forward.

"Second, Alaska's use of annual limits favors incumbents. Alaska Stat. § 15.13.070(b)(1) (2018). General elections occur in even-numbered years. The odd-numbered years are known as "off-years." Challengers tend to register to run in election years. Their tendency not to enter political races earlier is not necessarily conscious or negligent. Often it is just that they are not recruited to run until the year of the general election. It follows that challengers are often not registered as candidates and therefore cannot raise money in the off-years. Meanwhile, most incumbents are registered as candidates and raise money year in and year out. Thus, challengers are short the contributions from those who contributed to them during the election year but would have also given during the off-year. For example, in the election cycles from 2002 to 2014, challengers overwhelmingly did not raise money in off-years, while incumbents overwhelmingly did."

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Martha Raynolds [REDACTED]
Sent: Saturday, January 20, 2024 11:49 AM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: Pro SB 17

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

Yes, we need campaign finance limits!! Please pass SB 17

No, we do not need a bill regarding purging our election rolls. The Division of Elections does a fine job of keeping up.

And, NO, we do not want the Legislature to repeal Ranked Choice Voting!!

A voter in Fairbanks,
-- Martha Raynolds

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Donna Goldsmith [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 21, 2024 3:54 PM
To: Sen. Matt Claman; Senate Judiciary
Cc: Donna Goldsmith
Subject: Testimony Senate Bill 17 Campaign Finance Reform

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Chairman Claman and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Please consider this email as my written testimony in support of Senate Bill 17.

For the following reasons, I wholeheartedly support Senate Bill 17, which would impose reasonable limitations on campaign contributions to individual candidates in Alaska. These limitations:

1. Eliminate the likelihood of a quid pro quo between candidates and wealthy donors. Without limits, there is a substantial risk that elected officials will feel more beholden to those who contribute the most amount of money to the candidate's campaign. Wealthy donors from anywhere in the country could easily dominate a candidate's attention - and drown out the voices of everyday Alaskans who are unable to meet the contributions of wealthy donors.
2. Promotes good government and protects democracy, as well as inhibiting corruption;
3. Ensures a more level playing field among candidates that will ensure that elected officials will listen to all of their constituents, not just the wealthy ones.
4. Are well within the average limits imposed by other states across the country. Alaskans previously voted overwhelmingly to support campaign finance limitations. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals struck down those limits, finding that they were so low that they restricted free speech and would become even lower as there was no inflation indexing. This new bill was drafted with the court's analysis in mind.

All Alaskans, regardless of their financial ability to donate to a candidate's campaign, have a right to be well-represented by their elected officials. Elected officials in this state should be elected by the people - not by a wealthy few. Wealth should not have an outsized influence on our elected officials.

I urge you to pass Senate Bill 17 out of committee.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Donna Goldsmith

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Donna Goldsmith.

Breanna Kakaruk

From: Pat Race [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 5:22 PM
To: Senate Judiciary
Subject: SB17

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Thank you for adopting the committee substitute for SB17. I appreciate the alignment with the signature gathering effort and hope it can be passed this session.

-Pat Race