

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE

March 11, 2024

1:31 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Matt Claman, Chair
Senator Jesse Kiehl, Vice Chair
Senator James Kaufman
Senator Löki Tobin

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Cathy Giessel

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 17

"An Act relating to political contributions; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 17

SHORT TITLE: CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) KAWASAKI

01/18/23	(S)	PREFILE RELEASED 1/9/23
01/18/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/18/23	(S)	STA, JUD
04/27/23	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
04/27/23	(S)	Heard & Held
04/27/23	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
05/06/23	(S)	STA AT 9:00 AM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/06/23	(S)	Moved SB 17 Out of Committee
05/06/23	(S)	MINUTE(STA)
05/08/23	(S)	STA RPT 2DP 1NR
05/08/23	(S)	DP: KAWASAKI, WIELECHOWSKI
05/08/23	(S)	NR: BJORKMAN
01/19/24	(S)	JUD AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
01/19/24	(S)	Heard & Held
01/19/24	(S)	MINUTE(JUD)
03/11/24	(S)	JUD AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

BREANNA KAKARUK, Staff
Senator Matt Claman
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented the explanation of changes for SB 17 from version A to version B.

HEATHER HEBDON, Executive Director
Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during the discussion of SB 17.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:31:01 PM](#)

CHAIR MATT CLAMAN called the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:31 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kiehl, Tobin, and Chair Claman. Senator Kaufman arrived immediately thereafter.

SB 17-CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

[1:31:28 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 17 "An Act relating to political contributions; and providing for an effective date."

CHAIR CLAMAN said this is the second hearing of SB 17 in the Senate Judiciary Committee. There is a proposed committee substitute (CS). He invited Ms. Kakaruk to put herself on the record to present the explanation of changes for the committee substitute.

[1:31:55 PM](#)

SENATOR KAUFMAN joined the meeting.

[1:32:08 PM](#)

BREANNA KAKARUK, Staff, Senator Matt Claman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, presented the explanation of changes for SB 17 from version A to version B:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Senate Bill 17 version B rewrites the language in version A. The language from version B that replaces the language from version A is based on a current ballot initiative, 23RCF2, which is currently in the signature gathering phase.

The initiative: "An Act restoring campaign contribution limits for campaigns for state and local offices; and restoring limits on out-of-state contributions to candidates for state and local offices" was introduced to reinstate fair, reasonable, and constitutional campaign contribution limits. These limits are adjusted based on Alaska's consumer price index rates every ten years to ensure limits remain constitutional moving forward. The initiative was introduced following the 2021 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision to strike down Alaska's statutory campaign contribution limits.

Version B moves from a "per-year" limit to a "per-campaign" contribution limit and raises the campaign contribution limits from version A to account for a two-year fundraising period and to better adjust for inflation.

[1:33:22 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN announced that Ms. Heather Hebdon, Executive Director, Alaska Public Offices Commission, was available to answer questions on SB 17.

[1:33:34 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL noted that the explanation of changes references a two-year cycle. He sought verification that the CS does not alter the 18-month limitation on fundraising. For instance, a House member could not raise money throughout their entire term.

[1:33:56 PM](#)

MS. KAKARUK replied that she will follow up with an answer.

[1:34:15 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN directed the question to Ms. Hebdon.

[1:34:19 PM](#)

HEATHER HEBDON, Executive Director, Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC), Anchorage, Alaska, responded that she does not have a copy of the CS. She expressed her belief that neither

the current initiative nor the CS extends the 18-month fundraising period.

[1:34:44 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN agreed, expressing his understanding that the CS does not change the 18-month timeframe.

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CHAIR CLAMAN found no further questions.

[1:35:01 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN solicited a motion to adopt the CS as the working document.

[1:35:06 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL moved to adopt the committee substitute (CS) for SB 17, work order 33-LS0183\B, as the working document.

[1:35:19 PM](#)

CHAIR CLAMAN found no objection and CSSB 17 was adopted as the working document. He noted that the questions under discussion in the Senate Judiciary Committee align with terms raised by the ballot initiative. He expressed his belief that the initiative would not appear on the ballot this year.

[SB 17 was held in committee.]

[1:35:57 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Claman adjourned the Senate Judiciary Standing Committee meeting at 1:35 p.m.