

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 50
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES KUBINA, Grussendorf, M.W.Miller, R.Phillips, Moyer, Boyer, Gruenberg, Davidson, Donley, Mackie, Brown, Bruckman, Carney, B.Davis, C.Davis, Ellis, Finkelstein, Hudson, Koponen, Larson, MacLean, Navarre, Parnell, Sharp, Ulmer

Introduced: 2/10/92
Referred: State Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 Supporting open primary elections.

2 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

3 WHEREAS Alaskans have a proud tradition of freedom and independence and reflect that
4 tradition in the manner in which they exercise their franchise; and

5 WHEREAS in excess of 55 percent of all registered voters in Alaska have chosen not to affiliate
6 with an organized political party; and

7 WHEREAS this tradition is reflected in the open primary system that has been used since 1968
8 and is open to all voters, allowing maximum participation and freedom of choice in the electoral process;
9 and

10 WHEREAS there has been a national decline in voter registration and participation in the
11 electoral process, particularly among young people who are less likely to identify with political parties;
12 and

13 WHEREAS forcing voters to vote an exclusively partisan ballot that eliminates the current wide
14 range of choices may discourage them from voting; and

15 WHEREAS Alaska's primary elections already have significantly lower voter turnout than
16 general elections even under an open unrestricted system of voting and this level will likely be even

1 further reduced by a closed primary; and

2 **WHEREAS** the State of Alaska and its agencies have a consistent record of encouraging voter
3 registration and participation in elections; and

4 **WHEREAS** among the stated goals of closing primaries are strengthening parties and providing
5 greater party discipline, both of which run counter to Alaska voting traditions; and

6 **WHEREAS** in the current open election process Alaskans have the option of voting for the
7 person they prefer for each separate office, while a closed primary will limit voters' opportunity to vote
8 for the candidates of their choice; and

9 **WHEREAS** there will be a significant added cost to the state to print ballots for each separate
10 party primary;

11 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature opposes a change to Alaska's open primary
12 elections system and affirms support for maintaining our open primary; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the governing bodies of
14 the political parties to reconsider their decisions to hold separate closed primaries that force limitations
15 and restrictions on Alaska voters.

16 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Walter J. Hickel, Governor of Alaska;
17 the Honorable John B. Coghill, Lieutenant Governor of Alaska; Ms. Connie Zawacki, Chair, Republican
18 Party of Alaska; Ms. Rhonda Roberts, Chair, Alaska Democratic Party; Joe Vogler, Chair, Alaska
19 Independence Party; and to Ms. Joni Whitmore, Chair, Green Party of Alaska.