

SPEECH

File

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F: 1) SPEECH
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MR. PRESIDENT, I WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK THIS MORNING CONCERNING THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA. THERE...SERIOUS BUDGETARY AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS HAVE RESULTED IN THE UNIVERSITY'S BOARD OF REGENTS DISMISSING A NUMBER OF SCHOOL OFFICIALS.

NO ONE IN ALASKA...MUCH LESS MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATORS...CAN VIEW THE UNIVERSITY'S DEEPLY DISTURBED SITUATION WITHOUT GREAT CONCERN. OBVIOUSLY SERIOUS MISTAKES HAVE BEEN MADE. THE UNIVERSITY'S REPUTATION HAS BEEN IMPAIRED. ITS FINANCIAL STANDING HAS BEEN PUT INTO QUESTION, AND THE CAREERS OF MANY OF ITS ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL DAMAGED.

INSTITUTIONS ARE BASICALLY FRAGILE CREATIONS THAT REQUIRE TIME AND PATIENT WORK TO GROW INTO VIGOROUS AND SELF-SUSTAINING BODIES. IN TIMES OF STRESS AND CRISIS, THEY CAN EASILY BE SHATTERED BY WELL-MEANING...IF INAPPROPRIATE...EFFORTS BY OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS TO SET THINGS STRAIGHT.

IN THIS CASE I AM REFERRING TO THE RECOMMENDATION MADE BY A MEMBER OF THIS BODY THAT THE LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE STAFF BE INSTRUCTED TO INVESTIGATE THE CONDITIONS SURROUNDING THE DISMISSAL OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY'S JUNEAU CAMPUS BY THE BOARD OF REGENTS.

I UNDERSTAND AND SYMPATHIZE WITH THE CONCERN WHICH HAS MOTIVATED THIS RECOMMENDATION. RECENT EVENTS AT THE ANCHORAGE AND FAIRBANKS CAMPUSES.. AS WELL AS AT JUNEAU...HAVE BEEN PAINFUL TO ALL OF US.

HOWEVER...THE BOARD OF REGENTS IS ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF ALASKA... AND FULLY EMPOWERED BY STATE STATUTE...TO EXERCISE THE POWER TO DISMISS UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS.

THIS AUTHORITY IS SPECIFICALLY GRANTED IN ALASKA STATUTE SECTION 14.40.230 WHICH STATES: "THE BOARD OF REGENTS MAY REMOVE FROM OFFICE ANY OFFICER OF THE INSTITUTION BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE WHOLE BOARD WHEN IN ITS JUDGEMENT THE GOOD OF THE UNIVERSITY REQUIRES IT."

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA IS CLEARLY UNDERGOING THE MOST SERIOUS CRISIS IN ITS HISTORY AND IS BEING SHAKEN TO ITS ROOTS. BUT WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT IF THESE ROOTS ARE RIPPED OUT...THE INSTITUTION WILL DIE.

THE LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE HAS WORKED DILIGENTLY IN REVIEWING AND AUDITING THE UNIVERSITY'S FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL STRUCTURE. IT IS NOT...HOWEVER...THE APPROPRIATE AGENCY TO UNDERTAKE AN INVESTIGATION OF THE DISMISSAL OF ONE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S CHANCELLORS.

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NOR...FOR THAT MATTER...IS THE LEGISLATURE ITSELF THE APPROPRIATE BODY TO ADMINISTER AND MANAGE THE UNIVERSITY. WE ARE A POLICY-MAKING AND BUDGET-SETTING GROUP. WE CANNOT ATTEMPT TO APPOINT OR FIRE THE UNIVERSITY'S OFFICERS... OR RUN ITS ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS.

I FEAR THAT IF WE IN THE LEGISLATURE INTERVENE... OR CALL ON NON-UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATIONS TO INTERVENE IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY... WE RUN THE RISK OF CRIPPLING AN ALREADY BELEAGUERED INSTITUTION.

THE BOARD OF REGENTS IS ACTING VIGOROUSLY TO CORRECT THE PROBLEMS AT THE UNIVERSITY...AS IN LAW THE BOARD IS REQUIRED TO DO. AS BAD AS THE SITUATION MAY BE, I BELIEVE WE CAN ONLY MAKE IT WORSE IF WE ATTEMPT TO CIRCUMVENT THE BODIES WHICH ARE LEGALLY DESIGNATED TO CARRY OUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY.

ACCORDINGLY, I AM FORMALLY AND OFFICIALLY REQUESTING THAT THE LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE NOT INVESTIGATE THE DISMISSAL OF THE CHANCELLOR OF THE JUNEAU CAMPUS AS REQUESTED EARLIER BY A MEMBER OF THIS BODY.

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