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DEPARTMENT OF LAW

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

POUCH K - STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
PHONE: (907) 463-2500

July 8, 1982

The Honorable Terry Martin
3960 Reka Drive-B6
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

Re: Marilyn Carpenter's candidacy
Our file 366-029-83

Dear Representative Martin:

In a letter dated June 24, 1982 (received in this office on June 28, 1982), you requested that we review certain aspects of Ms. Marilyn Carpenter's candidacy for the office of Representative from Election District 13, Seat B. Although you pose a number of specific questions, you appear to have two primary concerns: (1) was Ms. Carpenter a resident of Election District 13 for one year, as required by Article II, Section 2 of the Alaska Constitution, at the time she refiled her declaration of candidacy on June 1, 1982; and (2) because she was not properly a candidate before June 1, 1982, having not been a resident for a full year in Election District 13, must her campaign committee (or, in the alternative, contributors to that committee) repay to the state any campaign contribution refunds under AS 43.20.013(a)?

In brief, the Attorney General's office cannot make the residency determination you desire. We are the attorney for the Division of Elections, and as such have no greater powers than the division possesses to make such inquiries. As you note in your letter, the division cannot go beyond the statements in the declaration of candidacy. If you have a disagreement with the statements in that declaration of candidacy, one remedy which you may pursue is to file a lawsuit in the Superior Court. The answer to your question regarding repayment to the state for refunds given to campaign contributors is not as clear. However, on the basis of our research and consideration of the facts presented, we believe it is extremely unlikely that a court would require contributors to repay the refunds, and even more unlikely that the court would require the campaign committee to do so. A more detailed analysis of these issues follows.

I. FACTUAL BACKGROUND

On December 1, 1981, Ms. Carpenter filed her declaration of candidacy under AS 15.25.030. In the declaration, she stated that she had been a resident of Election District 13 since June, 1981.

Article II, Section 2 of the Alaska Constitution provides in pertinent part: "A member of the legislature shall be a qualified voter who has been a resident of Alaska for at least three years and of the district from which elected for at least one year, immediately preceding his filing for office." (Emphasis added.) Since Ms. Carpenter stated on her December 1, 1981 declaration that she had been a resident of Election District 13 only since June, 1981, it appeared from the face of her declaration that she did not meet the constitutional eligibility requirement for the office of having been a resident of the district for one year "immediately preceding [her] filing for office."

However, that fact was not noticed by Division of Elections officials at that time, and they accepted her declaration. Ms. Carpenter solicited campaign contributions and made expenditures for campaign purposes.

In April, 1982, you contacted officials in the Division of Elections and pointed out the problem with Ms. Carpenter's December 1, 1981 declaration of candidacy. On May 5, 1982, Patty Ann Polley, Director of the Division of Elections, spoke with Ms. Carpenter about the residency question, following up the conversation with a May 6, 1982 letter to Ms. Carpenter.

Ms. Carpenter responded that she became a resident of Election District 13 on May 28, 1981. On May 27, 1982, Ms. Polley sent Ms. Carpenter a letter informing her that her declaration of candidacy was being rejected because she did not meet the one-year residency requirement prior to filing. The letter noted that Ms. Carpenter had indicated an intention to refile on or after May 28, 1982.

On June 1, 1982, Ms. Carpenter refiled for the office of Representative from Election District 13, Seat B, stating that she had been a resident of Election District 13 since June 1, 1981.

Your June 24, 1982 inquiry to this office followed.

II. MS. CARPENTER'S RESIDENCE SINCE JUNE 1, 1981.

In your letter, you relate a number of items which lead you to question Ms. Carpenter's residence in Election District 13 as of June 1, 1981. However, as you also note in your letter, there is nothing the Division of Elections "could do but accept as the truth any information a candidate submits on the application." That is what we advised the Lieutenant Governor in a memorandum on January 22, 1980 (Department of Law file J66-412-80). In that memorandum, we stated: "As a general rule, you should accept filings which are valid on their face, and it is neither your duty nor your function to question their validity." We also stated:

For the most part, the Aleka Election Code, like many others, depends upon the adversarial nature of the election process for enforcement. The law reasonably assumes that a candidate's opponents will be the first to raise complaints against any false or fraudulent filing. Residence (domicile) is an elusive legal concept. Proof of residence consists of both objective facts and subjective feelings. A determination requires a full blown hearing and an independent, nonpartisan decisionmaker. The Election Code quite wisely does not provide for the election officials to make such determinations.

The court in Bell v. Foster, 200 A.2d 354 (N.J. Super. App. Div. 1964), reached the same conclusion. In that case, the court found that the clerk's duty in reviewing a nominating petition (similar to a declaration of candidacy) was merely ministerial, and that the clerk could not rule on the question of residency. The court stated: "To the extent that the residence requirement embraces the concept of domicile, its determination calls for judicial intervention." The court noted the significant possibility of abuse if such determinations were made by individuals appointed by elected officials. Garcia v. Carpenter, 525 S.W.2d 160 (Tex. 1975). A similar result was reached in (In our telephone conversation yesterday, you acknowledged the problems which might result from the Lieutenant Governor, as supervisor of elections, ruling on the qualifications of a candidate for Lieu-

tenant Governor or the Attorney General, as an appointee of the Governor, ruling on the qualifications of a candidate for Governor.)

While you recognize that Division of Elections officials cannot question Ms. Carpenter's residence in Election District 13 as of June 1, 1981, you wondered whether the Attorney General might make a ruling on this question. Under AS 44.23.020, the Attorney General is the legal advisor to the Governor and other state officers. In other words, he is charged with assisting them in carrying out their duties. It was in this capacity that we gave advice to the Lieutenant Governor regarding elections officials making residency determinations. The Attorney General does not have independent authority to make such determinations; rather, it is his duty to advise other state officials and, if necessary, defend their decisions (for example, a decision by elections officials not to make a residency determination) in the event of litigation.

As we indicated in our advice to the Lieutenant Governor, "the Alaska Election Code, like many others, depends upon the adversarial nature of the election process for enforcements." If you still believe that Ms. Carpenter is not qualified to run as a candidate for the office of Representative from Election District 13, there are two remedies available to you. The first is to file a lawsuit in Superior Court seeking a judicial determination that Ms. Carpenter is not qualified to run. The second is to take your case directly to the most powerful judges of all, the voters, in Election District 13.

III. REPAYMENT OF STATE REFUNDS TO CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTORS.

AS 43.20.013(a) authorizes refunds by the state of up to \$100 per individual for political contributions. You are interested in knowing whether the state could require repayment to the state of those refunds made for campaign contributions to Ms. Carpenter's campaign prior to the refiling of her declaration of candidacy on June 1, 1982.

Initially, it must be noted that any repayment to the state would have to be made by the individual contributors to Ms. Carpenter's campaign, not her campaign committee. The campaign committee did not claim any refunds from the state; only the individual contributors did. Accordingly, if

those refunds were improperly claimed, it was the contributors who improperly claimed them. The campaign committee could not be required to repay the state for refunds given to individual contributors.

More importantly, however, we believe it is extremely unlikely that a court would require the repayment of those refunds under the facts of this case. Ms. Carpenter initially filed on December 1, 1981. On December 8, 1981, she was informed by Division of Elections officials that her filing was in order and that her name would appear on the primary election ballot. It was not until May 27, 1982, that the division rejected her declaration of candidacy.

Under these facts, the contributors to Ms. Carpenter's campaign would have a very strong argument that their contributions to her campaign were made in reliance on the representation by the division that Ms. Carpenter's filing was in order and that she would be listed on the ballot as a candidate. There is an appearance of unfairness in the state certifying Ms. Carpenter's candidacy, allowing contributions to be solicited on behalf of her campaign, allowing those contributions to be spent for campaign purposes, refunding those contributions, and only then seeking repayment of those refunds upon discovering that her initial filing was not proper.

There are a number of cases which hold that the absence of fraud or willful misconduct excuses a failure to comply with the letter of the law. See, e.g., Anderson v. Davis, 419 A.2d 806 (Pa. 1980); People ex rel. Ball v. Powell, 221 N.E.2d 292 (Ill. 1966). While we have discovered no cases precisely on point, in Owens v. Sharpton, 381 N.E.2d 160 (N.Y. 1978), the court addressed the question whether petitions designating a candidate in a party primary election and a committee to fill vacancies were completely invalidated because the candidate did not meet residency requirements. If the petitions were completely invalidated, the committee to fill vacancies would not be permitted to make an appropriate substitution. The court held that the petitions were valid as far as the committee was concerned and that the committee should be permitted to make an appropriate substitution, notwithstanding the disqualification of the candidate, as long as there was no finding that either the petition or the petition gathering process was tainted by fraud. Compare Fotopoulos v. Bd. of Elections, 381 N.E.2d 337 (N.Y. 1978)

(where designating petition invalid, committee invalid as well).

Under the facts presented here, where the Division of Elections recognized Ms. Carpenter's candidacy until May 27, 1982, we believe the court would find that her campaign contributions committee expenditures were sufficiently valid -- or at least appeared sufficiently valid to good faith contributors -- that contributors to the campaign were entitled to refunds under AS 43.20.013(a).

IV. OTHER MATTERS.

You also raise a number of other questions:

1. Should Ms. Carpenter have listed the name of the person or persons renting her condominium from June 1981 until its sale in November, 1981? AS 39.50.030(b)(1) requires a conflict of interest statement to include "(1) the source of all income over \$100 . . . received by him . . . during the preceding calendar year." Because Ms. Carpenter's conflict of interest statement was filed in December 1981, it was not necessary for it to include any sources of income during that same calendar year, only the preceding calendar year.

2. Should the individual who loaned Ms. Carpenter the down payment for her new home be listed on the conflict of interest form? We have no knowledge that Ms. Carpenter received a loan to make the down payment on her new home. However, if she received such a loan, it is reportable on the conflict of interest form under AS 39.50.030(b)(6).

3. Should the person leasing or renting Ms. Carpenter's part ownership in a condominium in Girdwood be listed on the conflict of interest statement? If she received income from the rental of a condominium in calendar year 1980, the source of that income should be listed on the form under AS 39.50.030(b)(1).

4. Would Ms. Carpenter's campaign committee have to return monies given in federal tax credits to contributors in 1981? While that is a question of federal law, not state law, we believe the federal courts would apply an analysis similar to that contained in Part III of this letter.

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5. Can a person list their campaign telephone number as a work number on the declaration of candidacy form? We are unaware of any provision of law which prohibits this practice.

6. If Ms. Carpenter won the primary election and then was found not to be qualified, would her primary opponent be entered on the ballot for the general election? AS 15.25.110 provides that a vacancy on the general election ballot resulting from a candidate's disqualification may be filled by party petition. See AS 15.25.120 -- 15.25.130 for petition procedures.

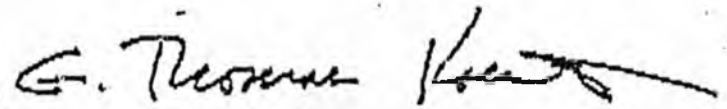
V. CONCLUSION.

We hope we have answered your questions. If we can be of further assistance, please contact us at your convenience.

Sincerely,

WILSON L. CONDON
ATTORNEY GENERAL

By:



G. Thomas Koester
Assistant Attorney General

GTK:dln

cc: Ms. Marilyn Carpenter
Lieutenant Governor Terry Miller
Joseph K. Donohue
Patty Ann Polley

INTERIM OFFICE:
1024 WEST SIXTH AVENUE
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501
(907) 274-2843

IN SESSION:
POUCH V
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
(907) 485-4963

Alaska State Legislature



Representative Mitch Abood
CHAIRMAN

House Committee on State Affairs

AGENDA

DATE: 3/14

TIME: 1:00 P.M., ROOM 102

I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

A. NOTE THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT AND WELCOME THOSE OBSERVING THE MEETING.

B. REMIND THOSE WHO HAVE NOT SIGNED-IN TO DO WHO WISH TO TESTIFY. AND REMIND THOSE GIVING TESTIMONY TO SPEAK UP AND STATE THEIR NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER BEFORE TALKING.

II. ANNOUNCE LEGISLATION UNDER CONSIDERATION:

3 HCR 10 - access to whittier *MAYOR Cecil Ziegler of Whittier.*

HB 29 - verification of residency for candidates running for certain public offices.

HB 123 - A special appropriation to the Office of the Gov..

OTHER NOTES OR REMINDERS:

FISCAL NOTE

I. REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No. House Bill No. 29
 Title "An Act relating to the verification of residency of candidates
 Requested by House State Affairs Date 1/20/83 for
 certain public offices

II. FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected Office of the Governor
 Program Category Affected Division of Elections
 BRU, Program, Or Subprogram(s) Affected Division of Elections
 (Note: If more than one budget component is affected, separate line-item
 amounts and funding for each component in the analysis section.)

EXPENDITURES (Thousands of Dollars)

	FY 83	FY 84	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88
100 PERSONAL SERVICES						
200 TRAVEL						
300 CONTRACTUAL						
400 COMMODITIES						
500 EQUIPMENT						
600 LAND & STRUCTURES						
700 GRANTS, CLAIMS, ETC.						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

FUNDING (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER (Specify Source)						

POSITIONS

NONE

FULL TIME						
PART TIME						
TEMPORARY						

III. ANALYSIS (See Fiscal Note Preparation Instruction, Section III)

No additional fiscal impact is anticipated with House Bill No. 29.

IV. DATE 1/20/83 PREPARED BY Danith D. Arnoldt, Deputy Director
 AGENCY Office of the Governor, Division of
 Original: Legislative Finance PHONE 556-6181 Elections
 cc: Budget and Management
 Prime Sponsor (First Legislator Named)
 33-001 (Rev. 12/82)

HB 26 (cont'd)

Fund, providing loans for expansion of business in communities having a population under 10,000 have priority over all other qualifying business loans, and loans that use at least 25 percent of the loan proceeds for expansion of a business have priority over loans that use less than 25 percent of the loan proceeds for business expansion.

Loans may not exceed \$2,000,000 or 75% of the net market value of the borrower's business, whichever is less; may not bear interest in excess of 10.9 percent or one percent above the prime lending rate, whichever is less; shall have a fixed interest rate and fixed monthly payments; and shall have a term of 15 years but may not impose a penalty for acceleration of payments. Eligibility for loans is based on residency, providing the borrower must do business in the state for one year before applying for the loan, and must be a state resident. A business may receive only one loan under the program. Provides Act takes effect July 1, 1983.

Introduced January 17 and referred to Labor & Commerce, then to Finance.

Certificate of Need Prog. (repealing)

HOUSE BILL NO. 27, by Lindauer.

Would repeal the Certificate of Need Program (see HB 19, page 32, identical). Does not provide for an effective date.

Introduced January 17 and referred to Health, Education & Social Services. ~~WITHDRAWN~~ January 17 by sponsor in favor of HB 19.

U of A Trust Lands (transfer of ownership)

HOUSE BILL NO. 28, by Martin and Lindauer.

Would transfer the ownership and management of University of Alaska trust land from the Department of Natural Resources to the Board of Regents of the U of A. Directs the Commissioner of Natural Resources to convey to the Board of Regents the right, title, and interest of the state in the land granted to the state by the United States for the support of the U of A that is identified in Appendices E and N in a document entitled "Settlement Agreement between the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Revenue, and the Department of Administration and the University of Alaska and the Board of Regents as Trustees for the University of Alaska." Provides Act takes effect immediately.

Introduced January 17 and referred to Resources, Judiciary, then to Finance.

Candidates for Public Office (residency requirements)

HOUSE BILL NO. 29, by Martin, Flood and Lindauer.

Amends section of the Election Code relating to the nomination of candidates (AS 15.25) by adding new sections requiring the verification of residency of candidates. Candidates must meet specific requirements (to be adopted as regulations by the Director of Elections). Requirements apply to candidates for state executive and national legislative offices (AS 15.25.030), and also for candidates who do not represent a political party (AS 15.25.180). Does not provide for an effective date.

Introduced January 17 and referred to State Affairs, Judiciary, then to Finance.