

SB

241

STEVE COWPER  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JUNEAU

April 7, 1987

The Honorable Jan Faiks  
President of the Senate  
Alaska State Legislature  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator Faiks:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill amending Alaska's campaign disclosure statutes in AS 15.13. This bill makes two changes to present law.

First, this bill prohibits groups, including corporations, unions, and political action committees, and "persons" other than individuals, from contributing to candidates for public office. Individuals will continue to be able to contribute up to \$1,000, and political parties will continue to be able to make unlimited contributions. These amendments are aimed at reducing the overall cost of campaigns, without weakening the party system in Alaska.

Second, this bill prohibits registered lobbyists from acting as campaign treasurers or deputy campaign treasurers for candidates for governor, lieutenant governor, or the legislature. It also prohibits them from soliciting, receiving, collecting, handling, disbursing, or accounting for contributions for candidates for those offices. This latter prohibition tracks language in the federal regulations (see 5 C.F.R. 733.121(b)(3)) adopted under a provision in the Hatch Act, 5 U.S.C. 7324, which was upheld by the United States Supreme Court in United States Civil Service Commission v. National Association of Letter Carriers, AFL-CIO, 413 U.S. 548, 93 S. Ct. 2880 (1973).

The tremendous increase in the cost of campaigns in Alaska has proportionately increased the influence of those individuals who are able to raise large amounts of money. In many cases, those who raise money and those who lobby elected officials are one and the same. It has been said in other states that the influence of lobbyists is so great that they constitute a "third house" of the legislature. Fritz v. Gorton, 517 P.2d 911 (Wash. 1974) (en banc). This must not happen in Alaska. The lure of lobbyist money is too much for some elected officials to resist, and the

24241

resulting opportunities for corruption of the political process are too great to be ignored. If "money is the mother's milk of politics," the people of Alaska will not tolerate lobbyists owning the dairy. The State of Alaska must be governed by the people through their elected representatives, not by a shadow government of well-heeled lobbyists and the special interests that generally employ them.

Moreover, when lobbyists raise or handle large campaign contributions to those officials whom they will likely lobby after the election, there exists at least the appearance of corruption -- the appearance of buying influence and selling votes. This undermines public confidence in the political process, and breeds cynicism and apathy among the voters. The confidence of the people in the integrity of our government must be maintained.

I fully realize that lobbyists have First Amendment rights under the federal constitution as well as rights under the corresponding language of our state constitution. These rights may be infringed only upon a showing of a compelling public interest, and only by legislation narrowly drawn to accomplish that public interest. State, APOC v. Marshall, 633 P. 2d 227 (Alaska 1981). It is my view that the compelling public interest in preventing actual and apparent corruption demands that lobbyists be prevented from raising or handling campaign contributions to candidates for elected state office. This bill restricts lobbyists' activities only to the extent reasonably necessary. Lobbyists' right to express their personal political views and to make personal campaign contributions to candidates will not be infringed.

The bill also deletes language from AS 15.13.070(a) (amended in other respects in sec. 2 of this bill) that unconstitutionally restricts campaign expenditures, as distinct from campaign contributions. Restrictions on campaign expenditures contained in federal legislation have been struck down by the Supreme Court of the United States. Buckley v. Vallo, 424 U.S. 1 (1976). Alaska's similar restrictions have therefore not been enforced for many years, and sec. 45, ch. 85, SLA 1986 repealed a related unconstitutional provision.

This bill is a great step toward a clean, open government free from improper influences, and worthy of the people's respect. I urge your prompt and favorable action on this measure.

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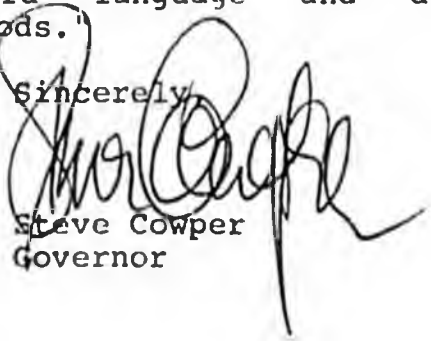
A section-by-section description of the bill follows:

Section 1: AS 15.13.050 is amended to reflect sec. 2's change that the only "groups" that may contribute to candidates are political parties. Such contributions by other kinds of groups would be prohibited by sec. 2 of the bill. This does not affect expenditures by groups. Section 1 also includes amendments simply to make the statute easier to read.

Section 2: AS 15.13.070(a) is amended to prohibit persons other than individuals, and groups other than political parties, from contributing to candidates. The existing \$1,000 limitation on contributions by individuals, and the existing provision permitting political parties to make unlimited contributions to candidates, are retained.

Section 3: Proposed AS 15.13.075 would prohibit registered lobbyists from handling campaign contributions for candidates for governor, lieutenant governor, or the legislature. The proposed new section also prohibits them from serving as a campaign treasurer or deputy campaign treasurer for such candidates.

Section 4: AS 15.13.080 is amended to be consistent with the amendment of AS 15.13.070(a) (in sec. 2 of the bill), by deleting language suggesting that groups other than political parties may contribute to candidates. Other amendments rephrase awkward language and delete an unnecessary reference to "goods."

Sincerely,  
  
Steve Cowper  
Governor

**STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
FISCAL NOTE**

Law Log #773-87-0051  
Bill Version: SB241  
Publish Date: 4-8-87

REQUEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Revision Date: 5/24/87  
Title: An act relating to election  
campaign financing...  
Sponsor: Governor  
Requestor: \_\_\_\_\_

Agency Affected: Administration  
BRU: Alaska Public Offices  
Commission  
Components: \_\_\_\_\_

**EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)**

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL	-0-	25.0	25.0	25.0	-0-	-0-
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>

CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
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**FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)**

GENERAL FUND	-0-	25.0	25.0	25.0	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>25.0</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>

**POSITIONS:**

FULL-TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

**ANALYSIS :**

73000, Contractual Services: Information preparation and dissemination on new contribution limits and new rules on allowable contributors.

Prepared by: Theda Pittman  
Division: Alaska Public Offices Commission

Phone: 276-4176  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by Commissioner: Jed Roper  
Agency: Alaska Public Offices Commission

Date: 3/5/87

**Distribution (by preparer):**

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)
- Senate Secretary

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: 12/11/87  
Title: An Act Relating to Election Campaign Financing  
Sponsor: Rules Committee  
Requestor: Governor

Agency Affected: Alaska Public Offices Commission  
BRU: \_\_\_\_\_  
Components: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Please see attached.

Prepared by: Karla L. Forsythe  
Division: Executive Director, ARDC

Phone: 276-4176  
Date: 2/11/87

Approved by Commissioner: Daniel Patrick O'Tierney  
Agency: Chairman, Alaska Public Offices Commission

Date: 12/11/87

Distribution (by preparer):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF LAW

OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX K—STATE CAPITOL  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811  
PHONE: (907) 465-3600

April 22, 1987

Honorable Mitchell Abood  
Alaska State Senate  
Room 423, Capitol Building  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

RE: SB 241 -- election campaign  
financing

Dear Senator Abood:

Senate Bill 241, relating to election campaign financing, currently resides in your committee. AS 15.13.080 is amended by sec. 4 of the bill; an additional amendment should be made in the first sentence of that statute to make it accurate.

The first two words of that sentence, "A person," should be replaced with "An individual," to reflect the amendments made to AS 15.13.070(a) by sec. 2 of the bill. And it would probably be clearer if "each" were substituted for "an" or "a."

With this amendment, the first sentence of AS 15.13.080, as amended by sec. 4 of the bill, should appear in the bill as follows:

Each individual or political party [A PERSON OR GROUP contributing [TO A CANDIDATE] over \$250 in money, [OR CONTRIBUTING] goods, or services to a candidate [WITH A VALUE OF MORE THAN \$250 TO INFLUENCE THE ELECTION OF A CANDIDATE] shall furnish the commission a signed statement, on a form made available by the commission.

If your committee prepares a committee substitute for SB 241, please incorporate this additional amendment in it. If SB 241 passes out of your committee unchanged, please forward this letter with the bill to the next committee of referral.

Very truly yours,

GRACE BERG SCHAIBLE  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

By:   
Arthur H. Peterson  
Assistant Attorney General

RECEIVED

APR 22 1987

GBS:AHP:md

Hon. Mitchell Abood  
Re: SB 241

April 22, 1987  
Page 2

cc: Hon. Garrey Peska, Commissioner  
Dept. of Administration

Theda Pittman, Executive Director  
Alaska Public Offices Commission

Kay Gouwens  
Assistant Attorney General  
Anchorage

Richard Monkman  
Assistant Attorney General  
Juneau

A M E N D M E N T

Offered in the SENATE

By Josephson

TO: SB 241

Page 1, lines 20 through page 2, line 9:

Delete all material.

Insert a new bill section to read:

"\* Sec. 2. AS 15.13 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 15.13.065. LIMITATIONS ON ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS. (a) A candidate may accept a contribution only during an election campaign.

(b) During the election campaign, a candidate for the office of governor or lieutenant governor may not accept

(1) more than \$1,250 in contributions from a person, a corporation, a labor union, or a group other than a political party and its subdivisions;

(2) a cumulative total of more than \$50,000 in contributions from corporations, labor unions, and groups other than political parties and their subdivisions;

(3) a cumulative total of more than \$50,000 in contributions from political parties and their subdivisions.

(c) During the election campaign, a candidate for the state senate may not accept

(1) more than \$1,000 in contributions from a person, a corporation, a labor union, or a group other than a political party and its subdivisions;

(2) a cumulative total of more than \$25,000 in contributions from corporations, labor unions, and groups other than political parties and their subdivisions;

(3) a cumulative total of more than \$25,000 in contributions from political parties and their subdivisions.

(d) During the election campaign, a candidate for the state house of representatives may not accept

(1) more than \$1,000 in contributions from a person, a corporation, a labor union, or a group other than a political party and its subdivisions;

(2) a cumulative total of more than \$12,500 in contributions from corporations, labor unions, and groups other than political parties and their subdivisions;

(3) a cumulative total of more than \$12,500 in contributions from political parties and their subdivisions.

(e) Except for a candidate for mayor, during an election campaign a candidate for municipal office and a candidate for office not described in (b) - (d) of this section may not accept

(1) more than \$1,000 in contributions from a person, a corporation, a labor union, or a group other than a political party and its subdivisions;

(2) a cumulative total of more than \$10,000 in contributions from corporations, labor unions, and groups other than political parties and their subdivisions;

(3) a cumulative total of more than \$10,000 in contributions from political parties and their subdivisions.

(f) Except as provided under (g) of this section, during an election campaign a candidate for mayor may not accept

(1) more than \$1,000 in contributions from a person, a corporation, a labor union, or a group other than a political party and its subdivisions;

(2) a cumulative total of more than \$12,500 in contributions from corporations, labor unions, and groups other than political parties and their subdivisions;

(3) a cumulative total of more than \$12,500 in contributions from political parties and their subdivisions.

(g) Notwithstanding (f) of this section, a candidate for mayor in a municipality that contains more than one house election district within its boundaries may accept contributions during an election campaign with a cumulative total under (f)(2) and (3) of this section multiplied by the number of house election districts that are located within the municipality except that a candidate for mayor may not in any case accept

(1) a cumulative total of more than \$40,000 in contributions from corporations, labor unions, and groups other than political parties, and their subdivisions;

(2) a cumulative total of more than \$40,000 in contributions from political parties and their subdivisions.

(h) A candidate is subject to the limitations established in this section only for the office for which the candidate most recently filed a declaration of candidacy or nominating petition. A candidate who withdraws as a candidate for an office and refiles for an office

with a lower limitation on the acceptance of campaign contributions shall return the amount of each contribution that exceeds the limitations established for the current candidacy.

(i) In this section, "election campaign" means

(1) for a candidate for a nonstatewide state office, the period between September 1 of the year before the year in which the election will be held through January 15 or the first day of the regular legislative session, whichever comes first, of the year after the election;

(2) for a candidate for a statewide office, the period between September 1 of the year that is two years before the year in which the election will be held through January 15 or the first day of the regular legislative session, whichever comes first, of the year after the election;

(3) for a candidate for municipal office, the period 90 days before the date of the municipal election through a date 60 days after the date of the municipal election;

(4) for a candidate for municipal office at a run-off election, the period from the day after the date of the municipal election through a date that is 60 days after the date of the run-off election."

Page 3, after line 7:

Insert the following new bill sections to read:

"\* Sec. 5. AS 15.25.040 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(e) A statewide candidate may not file a declaration before

September 1 of the year that is two years before the year in which the election will be held. Except for a statewide candidate, a declaration may not be filed before September 1 of the year before the year in which the election will be held.

\* Sec. 6. AS 15.25.150 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(b) A statewide candidate may not file a petition before September 1 of the year that is two years before the year in which the election will be held. Except for a statewide candidate, a petition may not be filed before September 1 of the year before the year in which the election will be held.

\* Sec. 7. AS 29.26.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

(c) A nominating petition or declaration of candidacy may not be filed more than 90 days before the date of the election.

\* Sec. 8. AS 15.13.070(a) is repealed.

\* Sec. 9. The prohibition in AS 15.13.065, as added in sec. 2 of this Act, against the acceptance of campaign contributions by a candidate for elective office outside of an election campaign does not apply to the acceptance by a candidate for

(1) state elective office of campaign contributions to retire debt in existence on November 8, 1988, and the candidate may accept campaign contributions at any time to retire that debt;

(2) municipal office of campaign contributions to retire debt in existence on the day after the first municipal election occurring after July 1, 1988, and the candidate may accept campaign contributions at any time to retire that debt.

\* Sec. 10. APPLICABILITY. The provisions of secs. 2 and 6 - 8 of this

Act are applicable to election campaigns started after November 8, 1988."

# STATE OF ALASKA

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

## ALASKA PUBLIC OFFICES COMMISSION

REPLY TO:

- 2221 E. Northern Lights, Room 128  
Anchorage, AK 99508  
(907) 276-4176
- Juneau Branch Office  
Box CO  
Juneau, AK 99811-0222  
(907) 465-4864

March 7, 1988

Sen. Mitchell Abood  
Chairman, Senate State Affairs Committee  
PO Box V  
Juneau, AK

Dear Sen. Abood:

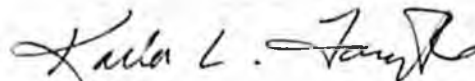
Carol Horos requested that I ask the Department of Law to prepare any suggested wording changes to SS SB 241. Because of time constraints, I have not had an opportunity to ask Mr. Monkman to undertake the necessary drafting. However, Mr. Monkman and I discussed drafting changes several weeks ago, and these proposed changes subsequently were approved by the commission at a regular meeting held January 28, 1988.

A copy of the proposed changes are attached.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these changes.

Sincerely,

ALASKA PUBLIC OFFICES COMMISSION



Karla L. Forsythe  
Executive Director

cc: APOC Members  
Dick Monkman, Department of Law

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO SS SB 241

1. Change section 3 to read:

Sec. 15.13.041. USE OF CONTRIBUTIONS. An individual who accepts campaign contributions as a candidate for public office may not use, take, or spend campaign funds as personal income at any time.

2. Change section 4 to read:

Sec. 15.13.045 (e). An investigation by the commission is confidential. A complaint filed with the commission is a public record. A written response to a complaint is available for public inspection if authorized by the respondent. All other documentary material, written or verbal information, and testimony of witnesses which is produced, obtained, recorded or compiled during an investigation by the commission may not be disclosed to anyone other than a commission member, an employee of the commission for use in the investigation, the attorney general, or the person or group who produced the material or gave the testimony until such times as

(1) an accusation is filed under AS 44.62;

(2) the commission, by majority vote, closes an investigation without filing an accusation under AS 44.62; or

(3) the superior court, for good cause shown, orders the information disclosed.

Violation of this section constitutes an abuse of public office under AS 11.56.

3. Change section 5 to include the first sentence only. Title the second and third sentences "section 6", and renumber the remainder of the sections accordingly.

4. Change existing section 8 by replacing the word "person" with the word "individual" in line 24, page 3 and line 1, page 4.

5. Amend existing section 12 to provide for an effective date of January 1, 1990 for sections 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12, and an immediate effective date for sections 1,2, and 4.



G. Eve Reckley, Legislative Liaison  
789-9392  
P. O. Box 210242  
Auke Bay, AK 99821

## 1988 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### OPEN MEETINGS:

The League supports enactment of a constitutional amendment to mandate Legislative compliance with the Open Meetings Act and to give the courts authority to enforce it.

Resolutions proposing this amendment are: HJR 44 by Rep. Kay Brown in the House, and SJR 50 by Senator Arliss Sturgulewski in the Senate. Enactment of this legislation this session will place the issue on the ballot for voters to decide in November.

### CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM:

The League is concerned about the escalating cost of political campaigns. While the high cost of running for office may discourage political competition, it allows well-heeled special interest groups to exercise undue influence.

Therefore, the League supports legislation to limit the length of campaigns; establish the day before the election as the cut-off date for candidates to recoup expenses of that campaign; and maintain existing contribution limits. The League opposes any effort to raise the existing limit of \$100 for public disclosure of campaign contributions.

Bills introduced -- CS SS HB 137 by Rep. Kay Brown in the House and SS SB 241 in the Senate by request of the Governor-- address the campaign finance issue.

The League believes elections should be decided on the candidates' qualifications and stands on the issues, not on the size of their purse or the depth of their warchests.

### BALLOT READABILITY:

The League supports legislation to ensure that ballot propositions and election pamphlet information is written in clear, concise and easily readable language. CS HB 247 by Reps. Davis, Koponen and Boucher establishes this as policy within the election law.

The bill also requires a "yes" vote for approval of a proposed law. Early enactment of the bill with an immediate effective date will put it into effect for this November's election.

**EDUCATION:**

The League supports a formula for school funding that is equitable and not subject to manipulation.

**DAY CARE:**

The League supports funding at adequate levels for day care programs.

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:**

The League supports adequate funding levels for programs dealing with domestic violence.

**NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION:**

The League opposes efforts to lower air and water quality standards. The League supports adequate funding levels for the Department of Environmental Conservation to fulfill its mandate to protect Alaska's natural resources.

**NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION:**

The League supports efforts to make the Arctic and Sub-Arctic nuclear-free zones.

to a candidate with a value of more than \$250 to influence the election of a candidate shall furnish the commission a signed statement, on a form made available by the commission. The statement shall itemize the contributions and goods and state that the contributor is not a person or group prohibited by law from contributing and that the contribution consists of funds or property belonging to the contributor and has not been given or furnished by another person or group. The contributor's statement shall be filed with the commission by the contributor no later than 10 days after the contribution is made. A copy of the statement shall be furnished the candidate, campaign treasurer, or deputy campaign treasurer at the time the contribution is made. (§ 1 ch 76 SLA 1974; am § 29 ch 189 SLA 1975)

**Sec. 15.13.090. Identification of communication.** All advertisements, billboards, handbills, paid-for television and radio announcements and other communications intended to influence the election of a candidate or outcome of a ballot proposition or question shall be clearly identified by the words "paid for by" followed by the name and address of the candidate, group or individual paying for the advertising. In addition, candidates and groups must identify the name of their campaign chairman. (§ 1 ch 76 SLA 1974; am § 22 ch 189 SLA 1975; am § 36 ch 100 SLA 1980)

**Effect of amendments.** — The 1980 amendment substituted "chairman" for "treasurer" at the end of the section.

construction of state statute prohibiting anonymous political advertising. 4 ALR4th 741.

**Collateral references.** — Validity and

**Sec. 15.13.100. Expenditures before filing.** No political campaign expenditure may be made or incurred by a person in an election or by a person or group with his knowledge and on his behalf before the date upon which he or she files for nomination for the office which the person seeks, except for personal travel expenses or for opinion surveys or polls. These expenditures shall be charged against the spending limitation that applies to the office for which he subsequently files, and shall be included in the first report required under this chapter after filing for office. (§ 1 ch 76 SLA 1974; am § 23 ch 189 SLA 1975)

**Editor's notes.** — For discussion relating to the enforcement of the expenditure limits of this chapter, see the editor's

notes and notes from the opinion of the attorney general dated May 13, 1976 following AS 15.13.070.

**Sec. 15.13.110. Filing of reports.** (a) Each candidate and group shall make a full report in accordance with AS 15.13.040 during the period ending three days before the due date of the report and beginning on the last day covered by the most recent previous report, or, if a first report, all contributions received and expenditures made before three days before the due date of the report. The report shall be filed at the following times:

STEVE COWPER  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JUNEAU

January 14, 1988

The Honorable Jan Faiks  
President of the Senate  
Alaska State Legislature  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator Faiks:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am submitting a sponsor substitute for SB 241, relating to election campaign financing and the Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC).

As you know, last session I introduced SB 241. Please see my April 7, 1987 transmittal letter at 1987 Senate Journal, pages 865 -- 867. This bill includes everything in SB 241, and adds several provisions strongly supported by the bipartisan Alaska Public Offices Commission. Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 12 are new.

The new provisions include a confidentiality section (sec. 4), which would keep APOC investigations confidential until the commission decides either to file formal charges or to close a complaint file. The commission believes that this provision would strengthen its ability to fairly investigate complaints. This provision would also protect the privacy interests of those individuals who are being investigated. At the point that the commission believes that formal charges are justified (or not justified), the entire investigative file would be available for public review. In my judgment, and in the unanimous opinion of the commission, this provision strikes a fair balance between the needs of the commission to conduct its investigations and the public's right to know.

The bill also includes a provision to prevent candidates from using surplus campaign contributions as personal income (sec. 3), and provisions remedying possible constitutional defects in the APOC appointment procedures (secs. 1 and 2).

Lastly, the bill now includes a provision (sec. 9) that requires candidates to close their campaigns, and file a final report with the APOC, by July 1 of the year following

the election. The present situation, which allows candidates to keep their campaigns alive for years after the election, has led to serious administrative problems. Public confidence in the campaign laws is undermined when an individual can receive maximum contributions for several campaigns from a single source, thus making a mockery of the contribution limitations. (The new secs. 10 and 11 conform other statutes to the new one in sec. 9.)

Last year, I made campaign finance reform a top priority. As I mentioned above, this bill has the strong support of the bipartisan Alaska Public Offices Commission. I am convinced that this bill, if enacted into law, would be a major improvement in the present situation, both for the public and for candidates. I urge that this bill be passed without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Cowper", written over the typed name and title.

Steve Cowper  
Governor



March 7, 1988  
Senate State Affairs Committee  
The Alaska Legislature  
Testimony on: SS SB 241 relating to  
election campaign financing.

Mister Chairman, Members of the Committee:

My name is Eve Reckley. I represent the League of Women Voters of Alaska. The League is concerned about the escalating cost of political campaigns in Alaska. The high cost of running for office might well shut out potential contenders while allowing well-heeled special interest groups to gain undue influence through campaign contributions. We feel the time is ripe for campaign finance reform.

The League supports legislation that would:

- \*Limit the length of campaigns;
- \*Establish an early cut-off date for recouping campaign costs;
- \*Maintain existing limits of \$1,000 for individual contributions and continued public disclosure of campaign contributions of \$100 or more.

The League supports efforts to restrict filing for office to the calendar year in which an election is held and to end post-election fundraising. We believe that shortening the duration of campaigns to the election year, and establishing the day before the election as the cut-off date to recoup campaign expenses would bring down the costs of campaigns. This cut-off date for recouping campaign expenses would prevent special interests from making contributions to obvious winners in an attempt to buy influence. It also should help to limit the accumulation of personal debt by candidates. Preventing early filing will keep candidates from circumventing the cut-off date for recouping campaign expenses by opening a new campaign.

The League believes that actual reform of the way in which campaigns are financed and conducted is vital to ensure the public's trust in the electoral process. We feel it is important that elections be decided on the basis of the candidates' qualifications and stands on the issues, not on the size of their purse or campaign warchests.

Page 2 Testimony on campaign finance legislation SSSB 241/ Senate State Affairs

Reform of campaign financing is a high priority on the League's agenda for this session of the Legislature. The bill before you, the Sponsor Substitute for Senate Bill 241 introduced by request of the governor, provides a vehicle for fair and imaginative action. Together with the Committee Substitute for House Bill 137 making its way through House committees, the bills address ways in which campaign finance reform can be accomplished. We realize it is not an easy task to address the problems that candidates might encounter in widely disparate election districts. But then, that is the challenge that often faces Alaskans in trying to find an equitable way of legislating in the broad public interest.

The League's position on campaign finance reflects our continuing concern for open and honest elections and for maximum citizen participation in the political process. We believe the goals of a campaign finance system should be to ensure the public's right to know; to combat corruption and undue influence and to enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office.

We endorse legislation to provide for appointment of all five members of the Alaska Public Offices Commission with confirmation by the Legislature. We support legislation to prohibit use of contributions as personal income and impose civil penalties for accepting illegal campaign contributions. And we support adequate funding for the Alaska Public Offices Commission to oversee and enforce provisions of the elections law.

The League of Women Voters of Alaska urges your careful consideration and action on this legislation. We know reform of campaign financing will require careful balancing, judicious handling and a real commitment to meaningful reform. We believe you are equal to the task. The stakes are high--building the public's confidence in the political process.

Thank you for this opportunity to express our views.