

**HB**

**112**

# Alaska State Legislature

## House of Representatives

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Official Business

State Capitol  
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Representative Al Vezey

### HB 112 SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 112 would expand the definition of a political party. It would allow a political party to choose its method of qualification: (1) receive three percent of the vote in the preceding gubernatorial election; or (2) have at least 10,000 eligible voters in the state registered to their party. A political party with 10,000 registered voters would not have to run a candidate for governor every four years to retain status as a political party.

To be recognized as a political party under current Alaskan law, a political party must nominate a candidate for governor every four years. The candidate must receive at least three percent of the total votes cast for governor in the general election. Political parties should not have to enter Alaska's gubernatorial race just to qualify as a political party.

In the 1990 gubernatorial election, the governor was elected by 38.8% percent of the voters. In the 1994 gubernatorial election, the governor was elected by 41.1% percent of the voters. HB 112 would result in a Alaska's governors being elected by a larger plurality and hopefully a majority of Alaskan voters.

# LEGAL SERVICES

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130 Seward Street, Suite 409  
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## MEMORANDUM

January 29, 1997

**SUBJECT:** Amending the definition of "political party" (Work Order No. 20-LS0455\A)

**TO:** Representative Al Vezey  
ATTN: Rynniva Moss

**FROM:** Jack Chenoweth  
Legislative Counsel 

Bill section 2 amends the definition of "political party," AS 15.60.010(2), as it is used in the state Election Code in line with your suggested wording.

Because the definition of "political organization" in AS 05.15, covering regulation of gaming, cross-references the definition of "political party" in AS 15.60.010, I had to make a decision as to whether the substantive change made in bill section 2 should affect the definition of political party under gaming regulation. I opted not to have the change affect the gaming regulation provision. Bill section 1, then, simply "unties" the definition of "political party" from its cross-reference to AS 15.60.010 and substitutes the text of the current definition of "political party." In other words, though a change is made to AS 05.15.690, it is not intended to have substantive effect. If I did not do this and simply omitted the change being made by bill section 1, redefining "political party" in AS 15.60.010 would necessarily carry over into the gaming regulation provision, and I would have to note the effect of the change in the bill title.

The bill title provided notes an exception. For purposes of campaign financing regulation under AS 15.13 (AS 15.13 is part of the Alaska Election Code), there is a separate definition of "political party" intended to apply only for purposes of treatment of parties under the contribution and expenditure regulation provisions of AS 15.13. The change in definition made in bill section 1 does not affect that definition.

If this bill becomes law, there will be three definitions of "political party" operating in the Alaska Statutes:

-- AS 15.13.400(10)(A) will apply to regulation of campaign financing;

Representative Al V...  
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-- AS 15.60.010(20) as amended by bill section 2 of this measure will apply to provisions of the Alaska Election Code apart from election campaign financing; and

-- AS 05.15.690(34) as amended by bill section 1 of this measure will continue in place the current definition of "political party" as applicable to gaming regulation.

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If any of this prompts questions, or if you want this redrafted to eliminate the inconsistent definitions, please contact me.

JBC:glc  
97-024.glc

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## News From The House Majority

web site: <http://www.akrepublicans.org>

State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Actuality line: 1-800-478-6540

Ken Freeman  
*Press Secretary*  
(907) 465-3804

For Immediate Release: March 11, 1997

Contact: Rep. Al Vezey (907) 465-3719

### HB 112 TO GO TO HOUSE VOTE

**JUNEAU** - Monday the House Finance Committee passed out of committee HB 112, a bill introduced by Rep. Al Vezey (R-North Pole) which would expand the definition of a political party.

The legislation makes it easier for a political party to qualify as a political party under Alaska Statutes.

Currently, in order to qualify as a political party, a party must run a candidate in the gubernatorial election and that candidate must receive 3 percent of the total votes cast for governor. If a party does not run a candidate for governor, it loses its legal status as a party.

HB 112 would add an additional means of qualifying as a political party. If a party has voters registered as members of their party equal to 3 percent of the votes cast for governor in the last election, they will be recognized as a political party. This would allow a party to maintain its party status without having to run a candidate for governor. Currently this amounts to approximately 6500 registered voters.

Rep. Vezey told the committee that the issue is not ballot access. Recognized parties would be able to elect whether or not to run a candidate for governor and anyone who could collect approximately 2200 signatures on a petition, could get their name placed on the ballot for governor.

"Alaska has not elected a governor by a majority since 1970. By allowing another means for parties to maintain their status as a party, we might be able to encourage candidates who are not serious about winning from actually running for office," said Vezey.

## 1970 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidates	Party	Total Votes	% of Vote
Anderson/Merill	(AIP)	1,206	1.5%
Egan/Boucher	(D)	42,309	52.4%
Sheffield/McAlpine	(R)	37,264	46.1%
Write-ins		**	
	Totals	80,779	100.0%

\*\* Write-in information was not kept in '70 or '74.

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## 1974 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidates	Party	Total Votes	% of Vote
Egan/Boucher	(D)	45,381	47.4%
Hammond/Thomas	(R)	45,602	47.6%
Vogler/Peppler	(AIP)	4,740	5.0%
Write-ins		**	
	Totals	95,723	100.0%

\*\* Write-in information was not kept in '70 or '74.

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## 1978 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidates	Party	Total Votes	% of Vote
Croft/Hurley	(D)	25,656	20.2%
Hammond/Miller	(R)	49,580	39.1%
Kelly/Poland	(A)	15,656	12.3%
Wright/Vogler	(I)	2,463	1.9%
Write-in Hickel*		33,555	26.4%
	Totals	126,910	100.0%

\* Primary race close - Hickel had a ballot sticker for his write-in campaign.

## 1982 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidates	Party	Total Votes	% of Vote
Fink/Colleta	(R)	72,291	37.1%
Randolph/Thompson	(L)	29,067	14.9%
Sheffield/McAlpine	(D)	89,918	46.1%
Vogler/Roberts	(AI)	3,235	1.7%
Write-ins		374	0.2%
	Totals	194,885	100.0%

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## 1986 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidates	Party	Total Votes	% of Vote
Cowper/McAlpine	(D)	89,943	48.7%
O'Brannon/Barnes	(L)	1,050	0.6%
Sturgulewski/Miller	(R)	76,515	41.5%
Vogler/Rowe	(AI)	10,013	5.4%
Write-in Hickel		4,958	2.7%
Write-in Hoch		107	0.1%
Write-in Misc.		1,969	1.1%
	Totals	184,555	100.0%

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## 1990 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidates	Party	Total Votes	% of Vote
Hickel/Coghill	(AI)	75,721	38.9%
Knowles/Hensley	(D)	60,201	30.9%
O'Callaghan/Darby	(TPP)	942	0.5%
Sturgulewski/Campbell	(R)	50,991	26.2%
Sykes/Crumb	(GPA)	6,563	3.4%
Write-ins		332	0.2%
	Totals	194,750	100.0%

## 1994 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Candidates	Party	Total Votes	% of Vote
Knowles/Ulmer	(D)	87,701	41.1%
Campbell/Miller	(R)	87,118	40.8%
Coghill/Ward	(AIP)	27,838	13.0%
Sykes/Lewis	G	8,727	4.1%
Winterround/Nolan	(P**)	1,743	0.8%
Write-ins		277	0.1%
	Totals	213,404	100.0%

\*\* Patriot Party \*

Author: dcruz@Alaska.NET ("Damon H. Cruz") at CC2MHS1

Date: 3/25/97 7:47 PM

Priority: Normal

TO: Representative Al Vezev at LAA\_TRANS

Subject: Party status

As a former Elections chair of the Alaska Libertarian Party, I applaud your proposal to ease and simplify the restrictive requirements for small political party standing. Regardless of any interpretations of this action as partisan or designed for short-term effect it will make it easier to offer the people of Alaska alternative candidates and ideas in the future.

I would also appreciate your support for any other measures designed to simplify or reform campaign funding, elections and political accessibility. The recent campaign spending reforms made progress in some areas, but other features lent themselves to furthering a two-tier system that discriminates against smaller political parties, grass-roots groups and initiative campaigns.

# Bill changes rules for minority parties

3/25/97

■ *Democrats call Vezey's legislation pure politics*

By JEANINE POHL SMITH  
THE JUNEAU EMPIRE

Alaskans haven't elected a governor by a majority vote since 1970, and a bill passed by the House today could remedy that, according to sponsor Rep. Al Vezey.

Democrats are calling the North Pole Republican's bill pure politics that could hurt Gov. Tony Knowles' chances of re-election.

House Bill 112 changes the definition of political parties in state law so small parties could maintain their status in the 1998 gubernatorial election without a candidate for governor.

Vezey said today he merely wanted to give parties more flexibility, allowing them to stay current without having to go through the extra effort of running a gubernatorial candidate.

## Limits . . .

Continued from Page 1  
the state Division of Elections, 213,404 votes were cast in the 1994 general election, with 3 percent equaling 6,402 votes.

Rep. Eric Croft said the measure, if passed, could help a Republican candidate for governor in the next race. That's because an AIP candidate wouldn't be there to split the conservative vote with a Republican, but a Green candidate running against Knowles could divide the liberal vote.

with Juneau Democratic Rep. Kim Elton voting against it. Juneau Republican Rep. Bill Hudson was absent during the vote.

If passed, a political party would qualify as such if it nominated a candidate for governor who received at least 3 percent of the votes cast for governor in the preceding election. It would also qualify if the party has registered voters in the state equal to at least 3 percent of the votes cast for governor in the preceding election.

Under current law, the only way a political group qualifies as a party is if it nominated a candidate for governor who received at least 3 percent of the votes cast for governor in the previous election.

Democrats argue the change could let the Alaskan Independence Party skip the 1998 gubernatorial election, but force the Green Party of Alaska to run a candidate to keep its party status.

That's because the Green Party's 3,000 registered voters are below the 3 percent requirement, while the Alaskan Independence Party's about 16,000 registered voters are more than the requirement. According to

Please see Limits, Page 8

"It's playing politics with our election laws," said Croft, an Anchorage Democrat. "I get the sense that anything that has the potential to hurt Tony Knowles is a priority in this Legislature."

While Knowles, who won the 1994 election by a tiny margin, hasn't declared his intentions, many in the Capitol expect him to run for a second term.

"Rep. Vezey's legislation is pure politics, plain and simple, aimed at influencing the next election," said Bob King, the governor's spokesman, in de-

claring the governor's opposition to the measure.

The AIP supports Vezey's bill, and former Lt. Gov. Jack Coghill, the party's chairman, told the House Finance Committee earlier this month that the group probably wouldn't run a candidate in the 1998 election.

Vezey said he was aware his proposal would be controversial, but his main goal was to give parties an alternative to running a candidate for governor.

"I think it's very reasonable," he said.