

SB

227



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February 10, 2004

Senator Gary Stevens
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Support for SB 227

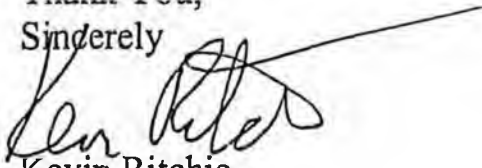
Dear Senator Stevens,

Thank you for introducing SB 227. This bill primarily removes the unfunded state mandate that municipalities hold special elections, and allows municipalities, with citizen input, to make their own decision regarding the scheduling of an election.

In times of great fiscal stress, allowing communities and citizens to save money by making local decisions on local issues is much appreciated.

The concept of the bill is strongly supported in the 2004 AML Policy Statement. The bill was also discussed again fully and endorsed by the AML Local Government Legislative Subcommittee on February 9, 2004.

Thank You,
Sincerely



Kevin Ritchie
Executive Director

By:	FNSB Assembly
Introduced:	02/12/04
Adopted:	02/12/04

FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

RESOLUTION NO. 2004-15

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING HB 322, "AN ACT REQUIRING A MUNICIPAL INITIATIVE OR MUNICIPAL REFERENDUM TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS AT THE NEXT REGULAR ELECTION OCCURRING NOT SOONER THAN 60 DAYS AFTER CERTIFICATION OF THE INITIATIVE OR REFERENDUM PETITION" AND SB 227, "AN ACT RELATING TO MUNICIPAL INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM ELECTIONS".

WHEREAS, AS 29.26.270 and 29.26.280 mandate that a municipality conduct a special election on initiative and referendum questions respectively when no regular election occurs within 75 days after certification of a sufficient initiative or referendum petition; and

WHEREAS, special elections are costly, consume staff time for extended periods, and result in a much lower turnout than the municipality's regular election; and

WHEREAS, it is difficult to obtain election officials and polling locations for special elections; and

WHEREAS, many municipality's are struggling to provide basic services to its citizens and cannot easily afford the cost of an unbudgeted special election; and

WHEREAS, HB 322 and SB 227 do not effect the right of the local governing body to call a special election if necessary.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Assembly of the Fairbanks North Star Borough supports the passage of HB 322 and SB 227 and urges the State Legislature to expeditiously move these bills through their respective bodies.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Governor Murkowski and the Alaska State Legislature.

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ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS

RESOLUTION NO. 2004-01

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS
SUPPORTING SB 227 AND HB 322 RELATING TO MUNICIPAL INITIATIVE
AND REFERENDUM ELECTIONS**

WHEREAS, municipal clerks in the State of Alaska strongly support the right of its citizens to petition the government through the initiative and referendum process; and

WHEREAS, AS 29.26.270 and 29.26.280 mandate that a municipality to conduct a special election on initiative and referendum questions respectively when no regular election occurs within 75 days after certification of a sufficient initiative or referendum petition; and

WHEREAS, there is no such requirement that mandates a special election for initiative and referendum questions submitted to the state for state elections; and

WHEREAS, special elections are costly, consume staff time for extended periods, and often result in a much lower turnout than the municipality's regular election; and

WHEREAS, it is often difficult to obtain election officials for multiple elections; and

WHEREAS, many municipalities are struggling to provide basic services to its citizens and cannot easily afford the cost of an unbudgeted special election; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of these factors, Senator Gary Stevens and Representative Paul Seaton have sponsored SB 227 and HB 322 respectively to eliminate the mandate that a municipality call a special election after certification of an initiative or a referendum petition; and

WHEREAS, nothing in these bills eliminates the local government option to call a special election if one is deemed necessary or advisable by the governing body;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL CLERKS (AAMC):

SECTION 1. That AAMC supports the passage of SB 227 and HB 322 and urges the State Legislature to expeditiously move these bills through their respective houses.

SECTION 2. That a copy of this resolution shall be mailed to each member of the Alaska Senate and the Alaska House of Representatives.



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

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LINDA MURPHY, MMC
BOROUGH CLERK

April 29, 2003

The Honorable Paul Seaton
Alaska State House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 428
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: Requested Changes to Title 29 (Municipal Initiative and Referendum Elections)

Dear Representative Seaton:

It was a pleasure to meet with you in Juneau last week. As I discussed with you at that time, I am hopeful that you will sponsor legislation for the 2004 session that will eliminate the requirement that municipalities call a special election to consider an initiative or referendum brought forward by the voters. As you know, special elections are costly and generally result in a lower voter turnout than the regular election. In addition, most measures brought forward using the initiative or referendum process are not so pressing in nature that they could not wait for the regular municipal election. Of course, nothing in the change I am suggesting would prohibit the governing body from calling a special election if the Council or Assembly wished to have the matter considered in a more timely manner.

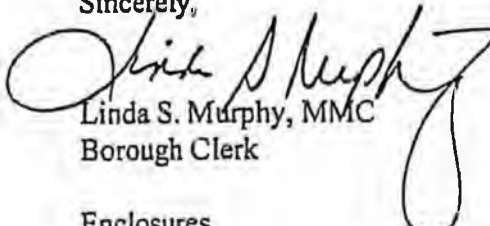
This amendment is supported by the Alaska Municipal League and is included in its 2003 policy statement. I have enclosed that portion of the policy statement for your information. I have also enclosed some language I drafted to make the requisite changes to AS 29.26.170 and AS 29.26.180.

You can expect support for this legislation from members of the Fairbanks North Star Borough delegation. Last year, the FNSB had a total of 46 petitions filed over a period of 4 months. Although these petitions resulted in only one special election (at a cost of \$35,000), there was the potential for many more at great cost to the municipality.

I will be asking Senator Gary Stevens to sponsor a companion bill in the Senate. It is my hope that this bill can be prefiled in both houses this winter and move expeditiously through the legislature.

Thank you once again for your assistance.

Sincerely,


Linda S. Murphy, MMC
Borough Clerk

Enclosures

AMENDMENT

OFFERED IN THE HOUSE BY REPRESENTATIVE CISSNA
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
TO: CSSB 227 (STA)

- 1 Page 1, Line 12-Page 2, Line 6; delete all material
- 2
- 3 Renumber sections accordingly

*was objects
failed 2-4*

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Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Legislature

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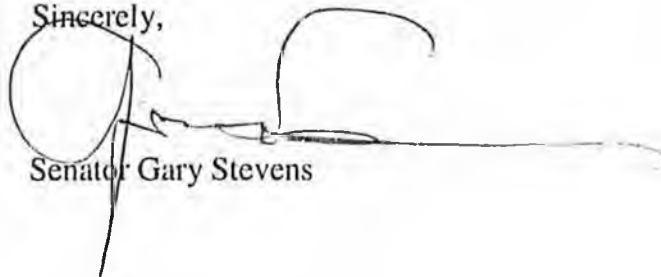
Memorandum

DT: April 7, 2004
TO: Representative Carl Morgan, Chair
House Community and Regional Affairs Committee
FR: Senator Gary Stevens
RE: SB 227

I would like to request a committee hearing at your earliest convenience on Senate Bill 227, "An Act relating to municipal runoff elections and to municipal initiative and referendum elections."

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Senator Gary Stevens

