



# Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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## *Democrats Call for Open Meetings Guidelines*

### *Berkowitz, Ellis urge Republican leaders to adopt Ethics Guidelines*

JUNEAU – On behalf of their respective caucuses, House and Senate Democratic Leaders Ethan Berkowitz (D-Anchorage) and Johnny Ellis (D-Anchorage) today called on Legislative Majority leaders to adopt open meetings guidelines proposed by the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics.

In twin letters to Senate President Gene Therriault (R-North Pole) and Speaker of the House Pete Kott (R-Eagle River) the lawmakers urged prompt and definitive action be taken to adopt recommendations from the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics.

“The unanimous assertion of jurisdiction by the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics has again highlighted the question of how Alaska’s open meetings law applies to the Legislature. To facilitate both the public’s understanding of the law and the committee’s deliberations—as well as to meet the law’s requirement—the Legislature should adopt open meetings guidelines. As called for by Alaska Statute 24.60.037, the Ethics Committee has developed such guidelines and submitted them to the Legislature on more than one occasion, most recently last August. For reasons that are not apparent, the process of adopting the guidelines has fallen into limbo, with the result that legislators, the press and the public are confused and frustrated by the lack of clear rules regarding open meetings.

“Fortunately, we have an opportunity to correct the situation. The Senate [and House] Democratic caucus[es] urgently request the Majority to introduce and bring to the floor a concurrent resolution adopting the Ethics Committee’s open meetings guidelines as soon as possible.

“We look forward to working constructively with you on this issue.”

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Sen. Bettye Davis, Sen. Johnny Ellis, Sen. Kim Elton, Sen. Lyman Hoffman, Sen. Hollis French, Sen. Gretchen Guess, Sen. Georgianna Lincoln, Sen. Donny Olson, Rep. Ethan Berkowitz, Rep. Sharon Cissna, Rep. Harry Crawford, Rep. Eric Croft, Rep. Les Gara, Rep. Max Gruenberg, Rep. David Guttenberg, Rep. Reggie Joule, Rep. Mary Kapsner, Rep. Beth Kerttula, Rep. Albert Kookesh, Rep. Carl Moses