



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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Democrats Ask Republicans to Limit Lobbyist Influence, Not Expand It

Senate bill would exempt most lobbyists from current fundraising and donation limits

JUNEAU – House Democrats today called on their Republican counterparts to oppose a bill that expands the ability of lobbyists to donate money and fundraise for candidates. The bill, Senate Bill 89, reverses the ban on lobbyist donations from a 1996 voter initiative. The bill has already passed the Senate and is scheduled for a vote on the House Floor today.

House Democratic Leader Ethan Berkowitz (D-Anchorage) said, “The nation is moving towards limiting the influence of money, and this bill does the opposite. The bill opens the door to corrupting the political process.”

Representative Les Gara (D-Anchorage) worked on the 1996 initiative as a citizen and says those who support the bill are out of touch with the voters. “The voters want us to place limits on the influence lobbyists can wield. Anyone who thinks Alaskans want lobbyists to donate more money didn’t read the 1996 voter initiative, and definitely didn’t run the idea by their voters when going door-to-door.”

The bill opens the door to lobbyist donations in two ways. First, it allows corporate CEO’s, executives, and business managers 40 hours of direct communications with legislators per month before they must register as lobbyists. And second, it exempts those lobbyists from the ban on lobbyist contributions to candidates outside their own districts.

Democratic legislators urged their colleagues in the House of Representatives to vote “no” on the bill.

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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