



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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HB459: Touch Screen Voting Must be Limited

Sen. Ellis seeks assurances from Lt. Gov. Leman

ANCHORAGE – Senate Democratic Leader Johnny Ellis (D-Anchorage) today urged Lieutenant Governor Loren Leman to carefully and deliberately carry out the intent of House Bill 459, which narrows the use of paperless voting machines in Alaska. Leman serves as head of the Division of Elections and is required to implement the law.

The voter confidence bill restricts the use of unreliable touch screen machines to those who specifically ask to use them. It passed unanimously in both the Senate and House of Representatives this spring and had over 20 Legislators listed as co-sponsors. It was signed into law July 3.

“The unreliability of touch screen voting machines and the lack of a dependable method to verify the will of those casting ballots has profoundly troubled citizens in communities throughout the nation,” Ellis wrote in a letter to Leman. “In no case should a voter not declaring a preference be directed to a touch screen machine.”

“I would like your assurance that in implementing the law, you will require the Division of Elections to limit the use of touch screen technology to those who specifically ask to use the machines.”

Ellis noted that supporters of House Bill 459 anticipate that blind and handicapped voters – citizens that this technology was intended to benefit – will be the most interested. Voters who do not express an unprompted preference, however, should be handed the standard, optically scannable paper ballot we have used successfully for years and is now the legal standard.

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