



# Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

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## *Renkes Urged to Approve Campaign Finance Initiative*

*Gara points out initiative is clearly constitutional, and time is of the essence*

ANCHORAGE – Representative Les Gara (D-Anchorage) today urged Attorney General Gregg Renkes to release from review the recently filed campaign finance reform initiative. The initiative reduces Alaska's campaign donation limits, which were increased by the Governor and Legislative majority this year. In a letter to Renkes, Gara points to a 1999 Alaska State Supreme Court review and a recent 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Federal Court of Appeals decision. The initiative re-instates Alaska's strict pre-2003 donation limits, which have been upheld by Alaska's State and Federal courts.

The letter asks Renkes to "immediately" approve the initiative and return it to the office of Lieutenant Governor Loren Leman so booklets can be printed and supporters of the initiative can obtain voter signatures.

"I am asking that you authorize your office to release the petition back to the Lt. Governor's Office immediately so that supporters of the initiative can begin to collect signatures at the State Fair to place the initiative on the November, 2004 ballot," Gara's letter states.

"Supporters of these initiatives cannot obtain signatures to place the initiative on the ballot until your legal review is completed, and the Division of Elections then prints the signature books. The latter task historically takes roughly a week or less (that was the case under the Knowles Administration)," Gara writes.

Representatives Crawford (D-Anchorage), Croft (D-Anchorage), and Guttenberg (D-Fairbanks), submitted the campaign finance initiative two weeks ago. Both houses of the Republican-controlled legislature this year loosened campaign limits over the opposition of all Democratic legislators, and Governor Frank Murkowski signed the newly relaxed laws.

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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