



Alaska State Legislature Representative Eric Croft

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Croft Introduces Open Meetings Constitutional Amendment

Openness in Government as the Rule of Law, Not the Exception

JUNEAU -- After a week filled with back-room politicking over the 2002 Operating Budget, Representative Eric Croft (D-Anchorage) introduced a resolution today that will guarantee that Alaskans can see and hear all the actions of their legislature. The amendment, once passed by the legislature, would be put to a vote of the people.

Croft, frustrated by the actions of the majority members on the House Finance Committee during debate on the operating budget, decided he could wait no longer to introduce the legislation he has been holding since the beginning of session.

"It is the right of every member of a democracy to view the actions of their government," Croft said. "Recently, members of the legislature have said publicly that they believe Alaskans don't care if they have access to the workings of their government. I disagree, and I believe the people of Alaska disagree too."

This amendment to the constitution prohibits a quorum of members from the House, Senate or any legislative committee to discuss legislation substantively behind closed doors. The language specifies that no legislation will be invalidated because of a violation of the amendment, but that members in violation of the amendment could be fined.

"This legislation will not keep legislators from attending the same church, eating in the same restaurant, or having conversations in the wash room, it will only prevent them from doing the people's business there," Croft said. "Let the sun shine in."

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