



Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. For the record, my name is Kati Capozzi, and I serve as the President and CEO of the Alaska Chamber.

The Alaska Chamber was founded in 1953, and our mission is to promote a healthy business environment in Alaska. The Chamber has more than 700 members and represents businesses of all sizes and sectors from across the state.

The Chamber supports passage of Senate Bill 23. Each year, our membership weighs in and votes on our advocacy agenda for the upcoming year. Support for ballot measure reform was recently added as an issue of statewide importance to the business community. Our position of support for ballot measure reform states, in part, that “changes in the initiative process should produce more transparency and better public policy in a comprehensive and balanced manner equally benefiting both voters and the legislative process.”

To that end, the Chamber would like to focus our comments today on two points: First, transparency that will benefit Alaskans as well as ballot measure proponents, and second, upholding the constitutional rights and duty of the Legislature.

Once an Alaskan signs their name to specific ballot measure language, their support should be applied only to the exact language to which they lent their name. If any court or courts decides to alter or remove language from the initiative, it cannot and should not be assumed that support remains for the revised language. Likewise, should a court or courts sever language from a proposed ballot measure, it cannot and should not be assumed that the ballot measure proponents themselves will support the new language. Our current system threatens all ballot measure proponents, regardless of cause or political affiliation, as it restricts groups from being given the chance to go back to the drawing board if a court or court alters the language of the measure they originally submitted.

The second point is ensuring the constitutional obligations of the legislature are upheld. By allowing courts to sever language of a proposed law and placing that proposed law on the ballot, it is granting the judicial branch the power to write law, which is expressly limited to the legislative branch or to the people by way of the ballot measure process. This strips the legislature of its constitutional obligation to review initiatives and, should they choose, to enact a law that is considered substantially similar.

In closing, the Chamber membership expresses our support for passage of SB23, as it would benefit the people of Alaska and ballot measure proponents by increasing transparency and providing for a clear set of rules as well as keep the express limitation of law-writing to the Legislature and to the people.



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