

# The Bush Caucus



## THE BUSH CAUCUS

The Bush Caucus is a group of legislators working together on issues of mutual benefit. We are called the Bush Caucus because all of the members either live in rural Alaska or a portion of the area they represent is rural. The Caucus focuses on issues or budget items that impact rural Alaska. The Bush Caucus members are Rep. Reggie Joule (House Chairman), Rep. Alan Austerman, Rep. Bryce Edgmon, Rep. Neal Foster, Rep. John Harris, Rep. Bob Herron, Rep. Kyle Johansen, Rep. Beth Kerttula, Rep. Cathy Munoz, Rep. Woodie Salmon, Rep. Bill Thomas, Rep. Peggy Wilson, Rep. Paul Seaton, Sen. Albert Kookesh (Senate Chair), Sen. Lyman Hoffman, and Sen. Donny Olson.

## REDISTRICTING

The United States constitution requires that the population be counted every 10 years and a census, which you may have participated in, was just completed this summer. The census information is used for a variety of things including redistricting. Redistricting is a process used by states to balance out the legislative representation of the population. As the population distribution changes over time, district lines must be redrawn to reflect those changes and preserve the "**one person, one vote**" concept.

The Alaska State Constitution says that a five-member independent Redistricting Board must draw the new district lines. All board members must be residents of the state for at least one year, and none may be public employees or officials at the time of or during their appointment.

The members of the Board are appointed by several different people and in the following order:

- Two members appointed by the Governor,
- One member appointed by the President of the Senate,
- One member appointed by the Speaker of the House, and

- One member appointed by the Alaska Supreme Court Chief Justice.

Governor Parnell appointed Albert Clough of Juneau (1st District) and John Torgerson of Soldotna (3<sup>rd</sup> District); Senate President Gary Stevens appointed Robert Brodie of Kodiak (3<sup>rd</sup> District); Speaker of the House Mike Chenault appointed Jim Holm of Fairbanks (4<sup>th</sup> District); and Chief Justice Walter L. Carpeneti appointed Marie Kasannaaluk Greene (2<sup>nd</sup> District) to the redistricting board. With the appointments completed the redistricting board will begin their work. The Board only has **90 days** from the official reporting of the census to complete its task so the Board must work quickly.

## BALLOT MEASURE 1

### A Constitutional Amendment to Add Four Reps. and Two Senators

Currently, the Alaska Constitution sets the number of state election districts at 40 House Districts and 20 Senate Districts. Due to population shifts, it is anticipated that in the next redistricting process, some areas will lose representation. If this happens, some districts will become so large and diverse it will be impossible for one Senator and one Representative to adequately represent that area. In response to this situation, the legislature passed SJR 21 which places a constitutional amendment before voters in the November 2010 election. This will appear on your election ballot as Ballot Measure 1. Ballot Measure 1 amends the constitution adding four House and two Senate districts, expanding the legislature from 60 to 66 members. This change better reflects the constitutional intent to provide citizens with the most accessible and responsive representation possible. Ballot Measure 1 allows the redistricting board to add representation to the districts with the most population growth without creating even larger rural districts.

When Alaska's constitution was drafted its authors required each election district to be composed of a compact and integrated socioeconomic unit. Though the state's population and demographics have changed dramatically since statehood the number of election districts has remained the same. In 50 years of statehood, Alaska has not changed the makeup of its legislature. During that same period, the population has more than tripled. Currently, Alaska has the smallest legislature in the nation, yet we are not the smallest state. States with similar populations to Alaska have an average legislature that is more than double what we have in Alaska. This is an essential issue for all of Alaska and we urge you to take some time and become familiar with the issue. Without the passage of Ballot Measure 1 rural Alaska will lose representation so we encourage you to vote **"yes"** on this issue. Most importantly, we encourage you to get out and **vote** on **November 2nd.**

**For more information please contact any of our offices at any time.**

• Representative Reggie Joule, Chair • Senator Albert Kookesh, Chair • Rep. Alan Austerman • Rep. Bryce Edgmon • Rep. Neal Foster • Rep. John Harris • Rep. Bob Herron • Sen. Lyman Hoffman • Rep. Kyle Johansen • Rep. Beth Kerttula • Rep. Cathy Muñoz • Sen. Donny Olson • Rep. Woodie Salmon • Rep. Paul Seaton • Rep. Bill Thomas • Rep. Peggy Wilson •

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