



Alaska State Legislature  
Representative Les Gara  
Representative Harry Crawford

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## ***NEW REPORT: LEGISLATORS CAN PROMISE VOTES FOR CAMPAIGN DONATIONS UNDER STATE CRIMINAL LAW LOOPHOLE***

**Democratic Legislators Requested Report, Call For Legislation Warning Legislators, Donors that Trading Votes for Donations Will Be A Felony**

ANCHORAGE -- A new memo from Legislative Legal Services warns it is currently not a crime under Alaska law for legislators to accept campaign contributions in exchange for votes. The report was requested by Representatives Harry Crawford (D-Anchorage) and Les Gara (D-Anchorage), who've been working to strengthen the laws governing donor influence on legislators since the FBI-vote buying investigations started this fall.

The report, released last week, reads, " There is nothing in current criminal law that prohibits a legislator from changing a vote in exchange for a campaign contribution." ([See this report](#)).

Crawford and Gara, along with other Democrats including Rep. Berta Gardner and Sen. Hollis French, have pushed ethics reform proposals that have been blocked by the Republican-led Legislature the past 2 years. They say the time is long overdue for the Legislature to put its house in order. "The public shouldn't stand for the kind of conduct that's led to the recent FBI investigations. This is a loophole we need to close," stated Rep. Harry Crawford.




Bribery involving campaign donations is a federal crime, which the FBI can prosecute in Alaska. However, Rep. Gara said Alaska should not rely on the feds. "We are charged with protecting Alaskans. We need our own state law so we can enforce campaign bribery at the state level," he said.

The need for Ethics reform in Alaska isn't sudden, and Democrats have pushed for ethics reform legislation given the lucrative consulting contracts held by legislators such as Sen. Ben Stevens (R-Anchorage), the overabundance of closed legislative meetings, and the Greg Renkes scandal in 2005.

Rep. Crawford sponsored HB72, to require open legislative meetings. Crawford and Rep. Eric Croft led the charge on limiting campaign contributions and donations by lobbyists, a bill they succeeded in getting passed as an initiative this August. Gara and French proposed HB194 & SB 127, to prevent conflicts of interests like that engaged in by former Attorney General Gregg Renkes, who owned \$100,000 worth of a company that would have benefited from a coal project he tried to promote. And Gardner & French (HB 461 & SB 285) sponsored legislation to prevent legislators for taking so-called private "consulting fees" for work they don't truly perform. Gara, Crawford and other Democrats co-sponsored that legislation as well. This ethics reform legislation was blocked by the Legislature the past 2 years.

For more information, contact Rep. Les Gara, 269-0106, Rep. Harry Crawford, 269-0100, or press secretary Frank Ameduri at 360-0768.

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