

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE July 14th ,
2005
Contact: Steve Cleary, AkPIRG - 278-3661

AkPIRG Urges Rep. Young to Oppose 527 "Fairness" Act

In a letter to Alaska Representative Don Young, the Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AkPIRG) called on Rep. Young to oppose H. R. 1316 - The 527 Fairness Act.

The legislation is being touted as leveling the playing field for 527 organizations. In reality, it would erase almost 30 years of campaign finance reform, allowing a single individual to give more than \$1 million to party committees and more than \$2 million to federal candidates.

"AkPIRG is working on the state level to get Big Money Out of Alaska Politics," stated AkPIRG's Steve Cleary. "We don't want to see the federal government open the floodgates to special interest money. The bill would definitely be a step backwards."

Letter attached.

July 14th, 2005

Dear Representative Young:

We are writing to strongly urge you to oppose H.R. 1316, The 527 Fairness Act, sponsored by Representatives Mike Pence (IN) and Albert Wynn (MD). As a nonprofit organization that works on a variety of issues in Alaska, we have seen first hand the undue influence that well-funded special interests have in elections and on policy decisions that effect the lives of individuals and their families who live and work in Alaska.

"This anti-reform proposal would make matters worse by removing the overall limit that an individual could contribute in any election cycle and raise contribution limits to parties and political action committees."

Under H.R. 1316, we fear that the growing influence of corporate and other special interest money will amplify the already powerful voices of the wealthy few and drown out those of average Alaskan.

If passed, the bill would erase campaign finance reform advances made, not just in recent years, but over the last thirty years. Provisions in H.R. 1316 would allow a single individual to give more than \$1 million to party committees and more than \$2 million to federal candidates. Current rules that place reasonable limitations on the solicitation of executives by special interest trade associations would be removed. The bill provides a blanket exemption for any campaign activity done over the Internet including disclosure requirements for paid advertising.

H.R. 1316 encourages a system in which wealthy special interests increasingly battle for electoral supremacy, while average Americans are forced to the sidelines. Contrary to what the sponsors have argued, the measure does nothing to level the playing field, encourage citizen involvement, or broaden our democracy. Real reform would seek to engage more of us in elections, not stifle our voices.

The 527 Fairness Act does not address 527 organizations or fairness. It represents a threat to community interests and we call upon you to oppose this measure.

As this bill is expected to come to the House floor for a vote in the coming weeks, we ask that you let us know where you stand. Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Steve Cleary, AkPIRG Director