

## **Blankenship, Johni**

---

**From:** Kenai Peninsula Borough <webmaster@borough.kenai.ak.us>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 13, 2017 5:47 PM  
**To:** BoroughAssembly  
**Subject:** New Public Comment to Assembly Members

**Your Name:** Catherine Cassidy

**Your Email:** cark1@att.net

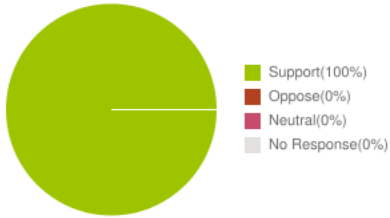
**Subject:** Invocation

**Message:**

I am another one of the many, many Borough residents who would appreciate the Assembly removing the pre-meeting invocations. Obviously it is controversial, that is why prayers have no business as a part of government business. Assembly members are free to meet their spiritual needs on their time. I object to having my Borough tax money spent on defending unconstitutional government-sponsored prayer.

Thank you for your consideration.

## Overall Sentiment



### Heidi Chay

Location:

Submitted At: 6:44pm 02-14-17

Dear Assembly Members: Please support the introduction of Ordinance 2017-02 by Willy Dunne. As a baptized Christian, I agree with Mr. Dunne and the many Borough residents who have testified that the Borough should not be wasting money on an indefensible lawsuit that, even if won, would not protect the religious freedoms we cherish. I encourage you to pray at home, bring your heartfelt values and those of your constituents to quality deliberation of Borough business, but please do not allow your personal religious beliefs to divide us.

### Wayne Aderhold

Location:

Submitted At: 6:22pm 02-14-17

I have resided in the Kenai Borough since 1977, received 12 years of excellent Catholic education, am not currently a member of any established church but consider myself highly religious. My opinions are formed through my own experiences and free will. The implications and statements by some members of this Assembly and public that opposition to the current policy is generated by “outside” influence is both insulting and wrong. In fact, the opposite is true – this policy has driven me to join the ACLU as a matter of conscience.

I believe the current policy is being driven by unfounded fear by some well-meaning individuals as well as others who President Andrew Jackson kindly termed “religious enthusiasts”. I also believe there is significant confusion between “church” and “religion”. The prime motive behind the 1st Amendment (U.S.) with respect to religion was protection of the church from the State. I don’t know of any effort by the State to take over the pulpit of any church in the U.S. On the other hand, there have been repeated attempts to force the pulpit into government.

We do have a “public religion” in this country. Religion is infused in our constitution in the form of basic fairness and human decency. The founding fathers consciously avoided any sectarian influence and established a secular form of government, which does not mean the absence of religion. Consider some excerpts from Robert Ingersoll’s 1887 essay on the secular creed:

“Secularism is the religion of humanity; it embraces the affairs of this world; it is interested in everything that touches the welfare of a sentient being; it advocates attention to the particular planet in which we happen to live; it means that each individual counts for something; ..... it means that the pew is superior to the pulpit, that those who bear the burdens shall have the profits and they who fill the purse shall hold the strings. It is a protest against theological oppression, against ecclesiastical tyranny,...

... Secularism means food and fireside, roof and raiment, reasonable work and reasonable leisure, the cultivation of tastes, the acquisition of knowledge, the enjoyment of the arts, and it promises for the human race comfort, independence, intelligence, and above all liberty. It means the abolition of sectarian feuds, of theological hatreds.

.....

Secularism is a religion, a religion that is understood. “

I respectfully request you see the light in Ordinance 2017-02, adopt it, and end the divisiveness and strife. We need to move forward as a united Borough.

## Blankenship, Johni

---

**From:** Kenai Peninsula Borough <webmaster@borough.kenai.ak.us>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 14, 2017 8:02 PM  
**To:** BoroughAssembly  
**Subject:** New Public Comment to Assembly Members

**Your Name:** H S Norwood

**Your Email:** rohobawr@alaska.net

**Subject:** Eliminating Invocation

**Message:**

Please add the following names to the list to ELIMINATE Invocation ... in lieu of returning it to the format that will not result in a law suit ... because we are VERY ANGRY that our taxes continue to go up without any explanation or increase of services ... and yet the Borough Assembly sets aside \$75 K for a lawsuit. Here's hoping the assembly gets back to business of roads and schools in 2017!

Clifford R Norwood  
HS Norwood  
Nikiski

## Blankenship, Johni

---

**From:** Kate Finn <hundredthmonk21@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 15, 2017 10:23 PM  
**To:** Blankenship, Johni  
**Subject:** Invocation at Assembly meetings

Dear Assembly Members,

I wholeheartedly agree with Willy Dunn's Ordinance. Personally, i think, a moment of silence for people to tune into their Higher Nature at the start of your meetings would be a beneficial focus. But as an Assembly, you have seen fit not to allow that. So in order to get past this divisive issue AND to save the Borough residents the cost of a court battle with the ACLU, i strongly suggest that Mr. Dunn's Ordinance be accepted.

Maybe one day we will recognize, as the wise Sufi Master Rumi has said, "The lamps may be different, but the light is the same".

Thank You,  
Kate Finn  
POBox 3364 Homer 99603  
235-5329

## Blankenship, Johni

---

**From:** Dunne, Willy  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 15, 2017 5:42 PM  
**To:** Blankenship, Johni  
**Subject:** Fwd: Invocation policy

Another to be forwarded to the rest of the Assembly.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Nicole Szarzi <njszarzi@alaska.net>  
**Date:** February 14, 2017 at 8:26:20 PM AKST  
**To:** <wdunne@kpb.us>  
**Subject:** Invocation policy

Mr. Dunne, Thank you for putting forth an ordinance to revoke the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly invocation policy. I have long chafed at the Christian invocations read at the beginning of the Assembly meetings. I don't think religious invocations of any kind are appropriate accompaniments to a government meeting. They smack of favoritism of one belief over another which, I believe, is illegal. Not to mention, religious belief is a personal choice and should not be foisted on others without their consent. I do not consent to have any religion called upon publicly before any Borough Assembly or other government meeting.

I won't be in the state on the March date where public testimony will be taken on this subject. Is there a venue for me to submit written testimony?

Thanks for your service on the Assembly,  
Nicky Szarzi

## Blankenship, Johni

---

**From:** Dunne, Willy  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 15, 2017 5:41 PM  
**To:** Blankenship, Johni  
**Subject:** Fwd: Invocation

Hi Johni,

This comment was sent to me only, can it be forwarded to the rest of the Assembly?

Also, can people reach all Assembly members via the email address "[assembly@kpb.us](mailto:assembly@kpb.us)"?

Thanks,  
Willy

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** <[brandy4662@gmail.com](mailto:brandy4662@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** February 15, 2017 at 9:13:13 AM AKST  
**To:** <[wdunne@kpb.us](mailto:wdunne@kpb.us)>  
**Subject:** Invocation

Willy

Thank you for bring forth the ordinance regarding the invocation prior to borough meetings. As a life long Homer resident I find it very troubling that the borough is refusing to recognize the separation between church and state. Furthermore, religious discrimination supported by a government entity is not only bad practice, it is illegal. Please allow Homer residents to testify on March 21st from the assembly annex building.

Thank you  
Brandy McGee

Sent from my iPhone

## Blankenship, Johni

---

**From:** sharon whytal <swhytal@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 16, 2017 9:55 PM  
**To:** Blankenship, Johni  
**Subject:** Ordinance 2017-02

Hi Joni,  
Please distribute my comment (below) to all assembly members:  
Thanks in advance,  
Sharon Whytal  
Homer resident

Dear Borough Assembly members:

I appreciate the many hours you spend reading background material, listening to testimony, reading correspondence like this from borough residents, and making decisions for the good of our entire borough. Thank you for your dedication to this place we call home. I know the emotional content that has arisen over the issue of invocations has taking up much of your time for some time now, even beyond the regular responsibilities, and I hope that this new ordinance can allow business to resume, not as usual, but with an appropriate and more even more equitable solution as this ordinance proposes. Invocations don't need a place in borough assembly meetings, and unless they are totally inclusive, they actually stand in the way of democratic function. Because inclusiveness has become so divisive a topic at this time, ironically, I think it means that invocations have lost any positive function for meetings. Please vote yes and adopt an agenda format that allows you to focus on the governing topics that you are elected to discuss.

Thanks again~  
Sharon Whytal

## Blankenship, Johni

---

**From:** Kenai Peninsula Borough <webmaster@borough.kenai.ak.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 17, 2017 12:51 AM  
**To:** BoroughAssembly  
**Subject:** New Public Comment to Assembly Members

**Your Name:** Daniel Dykema

**Your Email:** ddykema@hotmail.com

**Subject:** Meeting invocations

**Message:**

I'd like the assembly to know I support giving religious invocations at meetings. This is a great tradition for the assembly to invite people to give these irregardless of which religion.

Thank you

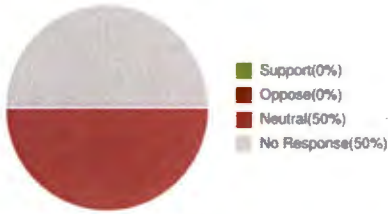


## Assembly on 2017-02-14 6:00 PM

02-14-17 18:00

Agenda Item: eComments for a. 2017-012 A Resolution Expressing the Intent of the Borough Assembly Regarding its Adoption of the Invocation Policy in Resolution 2016-056 (Bagley) [Notice of Reconsideration given by Dunne]

### Overall Sentiment



### Julia Person

Location:

Submitted At: 12:49am 02-15-17

I oppose the current policy of invocation. I support reconsideration of the resolution, and strongly urge the Borough Assembly to stop this practice and stop using tax payer funds to fight to retain an invocation.

### Wayne Aderhold

Location:

Submitted At: 6:03pm 02-14-17

I support Mr. Dunne's "reconsideration" - current policy is unconstitutional and divisive. I support Ordinance 2017-02 which deletes item C, Invocation.

### Peggy Peterson

Location:

Submitted At: 8:01pm 02-13-17

To: Borough Assembly  
Subject: Invocation Policy

It is far past the time to drop invocations from the assembly meetings. Assembly members serve the borough residents, not their church or particular sect of religion.

It should be clear by now, to all assembly members, that the vast majority of their constituents don't want a penny of their tax dollars spent on litigating this issue. They also do not want the meeting to begin with a public prayer. If the personal preferences and individual perspectives of assembly members has utmost relevance, then I suppose we will next hear of their individual preferences and perspectives on activities in the bedroom. Just as sexual preferences do not belong at assembly meetings, neither do religious preferences.

### Diana Conway

Location:

Submitted At: 11:20pm 02-07-17

Both Resolutions 2016-056 and 2017-012 serve to establish religion in a governmental organization. They purport to treat all religions on the Peninsula equally but do not treat all citizens equally. What about we agnostics, humanists, and atheists?

I strongly support separation of church and state. Past and present we have too many examples of what can go wrong for both religion and government when that line is blurred. Thank you Mr. Dunne for your notice of reconsideration. Let our representatives pray at home and attend to government at Assembly Meetings.

Diana Conway