

Ward, Tamera

Subject: FW: New Public Comment to Assembly Members

From: Kenai Peninsula Borough <webmaster@borough.kenai.ak.us>

Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2023 3:41 PM

To: BoroughAssembly <Borough-Assembly@kpb.us>; Mayor's Department <MayorDepartmental@kpb.us>

Cc: Turner, Michele <MicheleTurner@kpb.us>

Subject: New Public Comment to Assembly Members

Your Name: Kristine Schmidt

Your Email: kschmidt110@gmail.com

Subject: Resolutions 2023-048 and 2023-053

Message:

Please vote no on Resolution 2023-048, putting an advisory vote on the next Borough election ballot to change the Borough election date to the State and Federal election date.

Resolution 2023-053 may be helpful, but it should be amended to require a random survey of nonvoters as part of the work of the task force.

1. NO DATA. The purported reason for changing the election date is to increase voter turnout, but there is no actual data to support this. There are many reasons why Borough citizens are disengaged from municipal government, and don't vote. The Borough needs to figure out what those reasons are, rather than assuming that changing the election date will solve the problem.
2. NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES. As pointed out in Assembly Member Derkevorkian's memo, changing the date may or will have serious negative consequences, such as increased costs, two separate elections on the same day, voter confusion, unfairness to Borough candidates (who will be drowned out by state and federal election issues and candidates).
3. CONSIDER OPTIONS SUPPORTED BY DATA. The resolution is too narrow, as it offers only one purported solution to the problem of low municipal election turnout. The Assembly should consider all options for increasing voter turnout that are supported by data, and implement them first.

4. SURVEY NONVOTERS. But first, the Assembly should conduct a random survey, using the population of people who don't vote, don't vote very often, or aren't registered to vote, and find out why and what would encourage them to vote. Not "Survey Monkey" which is not random and relies on volunteer participants – who are unlikely to be nonvoters.

5. ANOTHER WORKING GROUP IS NOT THE ONLY ANSWER. While a Voter Turnout Working Group might be helpful, there should be a random survey of nonvoters first, to guide the task force work. And though it may be helpful to get feedback from municipal clerks and other interested parties who conduct the municipal elections, they aren't the ones disengaged from municipal government, and it is unlikely that the nonvoters communicate their reasons to municipal clerks, election workers or election groups. The Borough needs to reach out to nonvoters directly.