

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brent Johnson, Assembly President
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

FROM: Tyson Cox, Assembly Vice President *TRC*
Brent Hibbert, Assembly Member *BH*

DATE: July 20, 2023

SUBJECT: Resolution 2023-*53*, Establishing a Voter Turnout Working Group to Explore Actionable Options and Ideas Aimed at Increasing Awareness, Participation, and Voting in Local Elections (Cox) (Hibbert)

This resolution is brought forward for consideration in response to the comments made during our July 11th Assembly meeting regarding Resolution 2023-48, proposing to place an advisory question on the ballot regarding changing the Borough's regular election date. Many of the comments, in favor of and in opposition to, by the public and Assembly members, echoed the same sentiment: establishing a higher voter turnout in local elections is important.

Changing the Borough's regular election date should be considered, but not as a cure all for our dismal local election voter turnout. It should be considered as a part of the possible solution as there may be other actionable items that can assist or even outproduce an election date change when considering cost, functionality, and the increased voter participation from such changes for both even and odd years.

In recognition of our need for increased local election involvement this resolution is an alternative to Resolution 2023-48 that would establish a Voter Turnout working group comprised of members with experience in elections so we can ask them what actionable recommendations they think will help raise awareness of upcoming elections, participation, and voting in local elections. The group will only meet for a short time as to not create a long, drawn-out process. The group will end after it submits its recommendations on or before the Assembly's first meeting in March of 2024.

Local elections are important. They greatly impact the day-to-day lives of Borough residents. We should always strive to provide objective and factual election information with the goal of increasing civic engagement. Our entire Kenai Peninsula Borough community benefits from a collective commitment to holding secure, accessible, nonpartisan, local elections with a high voter turnout. An informed, high voter turnout in local elections leads to a better representative form of government for our Borough.

Your consideration is appreciated.