

LOCAL GOVERNMENT – 1977

Representation and Reapportionment

The League of Women Voters of Juneau supports our present system of Assembly representation which requires that Assembly persons live in prescribed districts but be elected at large and that the Mayor be elected at large. However, the League believes that our present districts need to be reapportioned. The main criteria for reapportionment should include size of population, sense of community and geographical continuity.

Prevailing Vote

The League believes the Charter provision requiring five affirmative votes for Assembly action should be revised to state, "A majority of those qualified to vote." This change would be similar to the requirements of the Municipal Code for non-home rule municipalities. An Assembly person would not be "qualified to vote" if he/she had a conflict of interest.

The League believes the prevailing vote requirement for Boards and Commissions should be the same as that of the Assembly.

Charter Revision

The League believes that the Assembly should revise Sections 3.6 and 3.7 of the Charter providing for forfeiture of office and vacancy.

The League believes that the Assembly should adopt a rule defining incapacity for medical reasons and should make provision for a temporary appointment to fill the vacancy created during the incapacity.

The League urges the Assembly to revise the forfeiture rule for absenteeism by discontinuing the present system provided for in Section 3.7 (failure to attend three consecutive regular meetings unless excused by the Assembly) and replacing it with a system requiring Assembly persons to attend a certain percentage of all meetings (regular meetings, committee of the whole meetings, etc.) And eliminating the categories of excused and unexcused absences.

Recall

The League of Women Voters believes that the Municipal Code Section 29.28.160 which states that the "municipal clerk shall review the petition for content and signatures" is unclear as to the role of the clerk in determining the acceptability of the recall petition because the word "content" is subject to varying interpretations. We urge that appropriate action be taken to clarify this section.

The League does not support term limit for local government officials. This includes members of the assembly, school board, and boards and commissions. The local election process allows voters ample opportunity to make changes.

The League believes that the mayor/assembly/manager form of government established by the Charter meets the criteria enumerated in the LWV Principles which provide for a

government responsive to the will of the people. We further support the following objectives of a local charter:

It should be flexible, concise, and adaptable to changing needs.

It should provide for a government that has accountability, representativeness, and decision-making.

It should provide for the basis procedures and practices of the assembly and administration.

It should provide popular controls over the government.

September 25, 1992 - Local Government Study Juneau League of Women Voters' Local Government Study, chaired by Karen Crane on August 29, 1992 held a panel discussion on two issues concerning local government. (1) City Manager/ Full Time (compensated) Mayor, and (2) Term of Office Limits for Elected and Appointed Officials. Susanne Williams invited former members for their experience. Lois Stiegmeier moderated the panel in the assembly chambers. Past mayors attending were Ernie Polley, Wayne Johnson, and Bruce Botelho. Former assembly members were represented by Kay Diebels, Alexander Hoke, Peter Freer, Ed Kalwara and Fred Baxter.

Robyn Boysen and Sandy Villars gave out the reprints gathered by Karen from other municipalities on both sides of term limits and manager/full time mayor/assembly government. Members' issue questions responses were gathered and compiled by Karen. The following consensus was reached and approved by the board.

A recommendation to the assembly:

The League recommends that the borough assembly undertake a formal review of the mayor's required and perceived duties. The review should include the issue of compensation. Should the assembly recognize the need for additional compensation, the issue should be taken to the voters.