

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Alaskans File Legal Challenge to Repeal Ballot Language

*Voters deserve transparency*

ANCHORAGE— Alaskans took action today to ensure that the ballot question seeking to repeal Alaska’s election system is impartial and accurately describes what Alaskans are voting on. Plaintiffs, Cathy Giessel, Joelle Hall, and Waahlaal Gidaag Blake, filed a complaint today in Superior Court to require that the ballot language be truthful and free from partisan persuasion.

“Voters deserve transparency in elections. The language explaining what they’re voting on must be simple, complete, and impartial,” said Cathy Giessel. “Alaska has uniquely strong dark money disclosure laws that ensure voters know who is spending money on political campaigns, and yet the current ballot language fails even to mention it would repeal these laws, along with open primaries and ranked choice voting.”

“Almost 21% of voters have only voted under our current system. It’s an issue of fairness - voters are entitled to have all the information they need to make the best decision,” said Joelle Hall.

“Like me, most Alaskans don’t register with a political party,” said Waahlaal Gidaag Blake. “Alaska’s election system guarantees our right to vote for any candidate we want, in every election. Voters deserve to know how this initiative will impact our ability to vote for our preferred candidates, and could exclude us from voting in primary elections entirely—even though those primaries are paid for with public funds.”

Alaska law requires that ballot measure language:

- Give a true and impartial summary of the proposed law that enables voters to reach informed and intelligent decisions on how to cast their ballots; and
- Include information on all parts of the ballot measure that would give voters serious grounds for reflection before supporting it.

The ballot language proposed by the State of Alaska fails by both measures and actually is different from the language that was provided on the signature petitions circulated by the repeal campaign. Plaintiffs’ suit contends that the new ballot language:

- Suggests in multiple places that the ballot measure would result in the opposite of what would actually do. For example, the ballot language states that the measure would “restore campaign finance laws.” The measure does not impose a single disclosure requirement— instead it actually repeals many disclosure laws and fines, including laws that ban the use of Dark Money in Alaska’s elections and the requirement for groups funded by a majority of out-of-state money to disclose that information in their ads.

- Fails to disclose that, not only will the measure end open primaries but it will also give political parties the unilateral power to exclude voters who are not members of their party, *including Nonpartisan and Undeclared voters*, from voting in their primaries. The over 60% of Alaska's voters who are not registered with either party could be prohibited from voting in primaries entirely.
- Uses unlawfully partisan and one-sided language in multiple places.

The full text of the Complaint for Injunctive and Declaratory Relief can be found [here](#).

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