

Alaska State Legislature

Select Committee on Legislative Ethics

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HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE Complaint H 17-04: Representative Geran Tarr

DETERMINATION OF PROBABLE CAUSE

Dennis “Skip” Cook, Chair of the House Subcommittee on Legislative Ethics, filed a complaint dated August 23, 2017 in this matter on behalf of the House Subcommittee. The House Subcommittee met on January 12, 2018 and on March 8, 2018. The Subcommittee determined there was probable cause to believe that a violation of the Ethics Law had occurred, and that Representative Geran Tarr committed such a violation.

The facts supporting the Committee’s belief that a violation of the Act occurred:

Date(s) or time period during which alleged violation occurred: Beginning in the 2017 regular session and continuing until June 10, 2017.

Part of the Ethics Act that was allegedly violated:

AS 24.60.030(a)(2) Prohibitions related to conflicts of interest and unethical conduct

A legislator ... may not use ... government asset or resource for a nonlegislative purpose ... or for the private benefit of the legislator, legislative employee or another person ...

Description of the activities that are an alleged violation of Legislative Ethics Act:

Representative Geran Tarr instructed staff to perform organizing and fundraising activities for the Mountain View Street Fair Festival held on June 10, 2017. Representative Tarr and staff performed these organizing and fundraising activities on government time with the use of government assets and resources for a nonlegislative purpose. These activities provided a private benefit to the legislator and/or another person.

THE INVESTIGATION

A contract private investigator was used to conduct an interview with Representative Tarr and others regarding the allegations in the complaint. The investigator report to the committee was reviewed at the House Subcommittee meeting on January 12, 2018 and on March 8, 2018.

DETERMINATION OF PROBABLE CAUSE ORDER AND DECISION

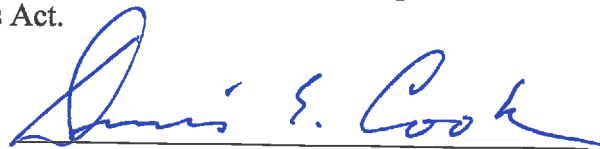
The House Subcommittee on March 8, 2018, found probable cause that Representative Geran Tarr violated AS 24.60.030(a)(2) by using state government assets and resources for a nonlegislative purpose and for the private benefit of the Mountain View Street Fair Festival.

RECOMMENDATION:

Regardless of intent, the committee recognizes the fact that substantial state resources from the office of Representative Geran Tarr were used to organize and plan the Mountain View Street Fair event, along with other private individuals and entities. One part-time staffer of Representative Tarr expended more than 120 government time/staff hours planning and organizing this event with other members of the street fair organization. Other staffers of Representative Tarr also performed similar tasks related to this event. This use of government resources was prohibited by, and a violation of, AS 24.60.030(a)(2) of the Legislative Ethics Act. The prohibited activity noted by the committee is distinguished from Representative Tarr renting a booth for legislative community outreach during the Mountain View Street Fair event.

The committee determined no corrective action was warranted. However, to prevent possible future violations, the committee strongly recommends Representative Tarr seek guidance of the Ethics Office before committing government resources to a project which would provide a clear private benefit in violation of the Legislative Ethics Act.

Adopted April 21, 2018
by a majority of the House Subcommittee


Dennis "Skip" Cook, Chair**Members Participating**

Dennis "Skip" Cook, Chair
Representative Chris Tuck
Representative Colleen Sullivan-Leonard
Deb Fancher
Lee Holmes
H. Conner Thomas