

Alaska State Legislature

Select Committee on Legislative Ethics

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ETHICS COMMITTEE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION DISMISSAL OF COMPLAINT H 25-01

The Ethics House Subcommittee (Committee) hereby dismisses Complaint H 25-01 against Representative Chuck Kopp.

On June 17, 2025, the Legislative Ethics office received a complaint against Representative Chuck Kopp. The complaint was designated Complaint H 25-01.

The Committee met on July 25, 2025, to discuss Complaint H 25-01.

ALLEGED VIOLATIONS

The complainant cites multiple sections of the Legislative Ethics Act, AS 24.60, and the Executive Branch Ethics Act AS 39.52. The complaint contained the following allegations:

1. Conflict of interest (AS 24.60.030(e)(3), AS 39.52.110)
 - a. Kopp's firm, Winfluence Strategies, received \$100,000-\$200,000 from the AFL-CIO in 2024 for consulting services, constituting a substantial "financial interest" (AS 24.60.030(j)(3)).
 - b. Kopp authored and voted for HB 78 (2024), which enhances public employee collective bargaining and retirement benefits, directly benefiting unions such as ASEA/AFSCME and AFL-CIO.
 - c. HB 78's passage likely strengthens AFL-CIO's position, potentially securing future contracts for Winfluence Strategies, providing a "substantial benefit" greater than that to union members generally (AS 24.60.030(j)(2)).
 - d. These actions were not required by Uniform Rules, violating AS 24.60.030(e)(3).
 - e. Violation: By authoring and voting for HB 78, Kopp used his legislative position to advance his financial interests, contravening AS 24.60.030(e)(3). This conduct also violates AS 39.52.110, which prohibits state officials from using their office for personal gain beyond authorized compensation.
2. Failure to Disclose or Recuse (AS 24.60.030(g), AS 24.60.080)

- a. Kopp did not disclose his AFL-CIO income or recuse himself from HB 78 authorship, voting, or related legislative actions, despite a clear conflict.
 - b. As a civilian, Kopp threatened then-Rules Chair Craig Johnson: "If you do not bring this bill to the floor, I will run against you," implying union support would ensure his victory in the 34th Legislature, enabling HB 78 authorship.
 - c. No evidence indicates Kopp sought Ethics Committee guidance or filed disclosures under AS 24.60.030(g).
 - d. **Violation:** Kopp's failure to disclose or recuse violates AS 24.60.030(g), which mandates disclosure and recusal for conflicted votes, and AS 24.60.080, which requires mitigation of conflicts, including abstaining from sponsorship or coercive actions
3. Appearance of Impropriety (AS 24.60.010, AS 39.52.010)
- a. Kopp's 2024 campaign received \$21,350.00 from 19 union PACs (62.7% of \$34,068.13 total income), including \$1,000 from the Alaska AFL-CIO Gaming Account (09/16/2024).
 - b. The threat to Johnson and use of the 34th Legislature's binding caucus to secure HB 78's passage suggest a donor-driven agenda.
 - c. Public distrust, evidenced by Representative Kevin McCabe's House floor objection and
 - d. Must Read Alaska (May 13, 2025), reflects perceived impropriety.
 - e. **Violation:** Kopp's actions create a significant appearance of impropriety, breaching AS 24.60.010's mandate to uphold legislative integrity and AS 39.52.010's requirement to maintain public trust.
4. Misuse of Leadership Authority (AS 24.60.050(a), AS 39.52.120)
- a. As Majority Leader, Kopp influenced the House agenda, committee assignments, and debates, prioritizing HB 78.
 - b. He leveraged the 34th Legislature's binding caucus to ensure HB 78's passage, amplifying union influence.
 - c. The threat to Johnson indicates coercive use of leadership to secure legislative outcomes tied to his financial interests.
 - d. **Violation:** Kopp's actions violate AS 24.60.050(a), which requires impartial leadership, and AS 39.52.120, which prohibits misuse of official position to influence outcomes for personal gain.

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION ANALYSIS

The Ethics Administrator completed a preliminary examination under the provisions of AS 24.60.170(c) Proceedings before the committee; limitations, and Committee Rules of Procedure, Section 14(d) Complaints, Preliminary Examination of Complaint.

Jurisdiction and Time Limitation

The committee has jurisdiction over the subject of the complaint, Representative Chuck Kopp, pursuant to AS 24.60.020(a).

The acts alleged in the complaint occurred within five years before the date the complaint was filed with the committee. AS 24.60.170(a).

EXAMINATION ANALYSIS

Multiple Executive Branch Ethics Act, AS 39.52, Violations

The Executive Branch Ethics Act is not applicable to legislators. Correspondingly, those alleged violations are not subject to the Legislative Ethics Committee's review.

Allegations Referencing the Legislative Ethics Act, AS 24.60

Review of the evidence provided by the complainant, the House Journal, and Gavel-to-Gavel records, Advisory Opinion 24-01, and the subject's letter of response refuted the allegations as noted below:

Conflicts of Interest AS 24.60.030(e)(3)

- The House Finance Committee in 2025 sponsored/authored HB 78, An Act relating to the public employees' retirement system and the teachers' retirement system; and providing certain employees an opportunity to choose between the defined benefit and defined contribution plans of the public employees' retirement system and the teachers' retirement system. Representative Kopp is not a member of the House Finance Committee.
- As required in AS 24.60.030(e)(3) and AS 24.60.030(g), on May 12, 2025, Representative Kopp requested to "be excused from voting on a question before a house of the legislature if the effect of the vote is likely to substantially benefit or harm the financial interest of the legislator..." See page 1093 of the Legislative Journal.
- The Legislative Ethics Act does not prohibit specific employment. AS 24.60.010(4) states, "The legislature finds that a part-time citizen legislature implies that legislators are expected and permitted to earn outside income..." As noted in the complaint and in Alaska Public Offices Commission (APOC) filings, Representative Kopp filed the required disclosure, the Public Official Financial Disclosure (POFD), verifying the income received from the AFL-CIO for consulting services.

Failure to Disclose or Recuse AS 24.60.030(g) and AS 24.60.080

AS 24.60.030(g) is addressed under Conflict of Interest above. AS 24.60.080, Gifts, is not relevant to the allegations outlined in the complaint.

Appearance of impropriety AS 24.60.010

AS 24.60.010 Legislative Findings and Purpose does not address specific conduct or activities.

Misuse of Leadership Authority AS 24.60.050(a)

AS 24.60.050(a), State Program and Loans, is not relevant to the allegations outlined in the complaint. Further, leadership duties are not covered by the Legislative Ethics Act.

The Ethics Administrator recommended the complaint be dismissed under the provisions of AS 24.60.170(c) "... If the committee determines that the allegations, if proven, would not give rise to a violation, ... that there is insufficient credible information that can be uncovered to warrant further investigation by the committee, ... the committee shall dismiss the complaint and shall notify the complainant and the subject of the complaint of the dismissal."

DISMISSAL

The Ethics Committee, for the reasons stated above, adopts the Administrator's recommendation. Therefore, Complaint H 25-01 against Representative Chuck Kopp is dismissed in its entirety pursuant to the provisions of AS 24.60.170(c).

Pursuant to the committee's Rules of Procedure, Section 17(c) Complaints – Decisions, Dismissal Prior to Investigation, complaints dismissed after a preliminary investigation will not be made public. However, as the subject of the complaint waived confidentiality pursuant to the requirements of the committee's Rules of Procedure, Section 14(e)(2)(A), Complaints, Waiver of Confidentiality by Subject of Complaint, Express Waiver form, this dismissal will be made a matter of public record.

Adopted this 25th day of July 2025
by a majority of the Ethics House Subcommittee.

/s/

H. Conner Thomas, Chair

Members Participating

H. Conner Thomas, Chair
Joyce M. Anderson
Deborah Fancher
Dennis "Skip" Cook
Carl White
Representative Alyse Galvin
Representative Jeremy Bynum