

# The best service

Nothing is simple any more these days and the case of Bethel Sen. George Hohman, convicted of accepting bribes in connection with his office, is certainly not simple.

Hohman has been the senator representing the Bethel, Bristol Bay district for many years and his dedication to improving the conditions and providing necessities for the people of those areas cannot be disputed.

We wish that people who are so venomously critical of Hohman would remember that he has served the people who elected him so well that they are the one group in the state that doesn't want to see him expelled from the Senate.

But on the other hand, Sen. Hohman has been convicted of a crime that we regard as the worst that a public official can be convicted of — using his office to benefit himself. A public official who uses his office to put money in his pocket is the worst kind of criminal and we feel that anyone who does that — from former presidents to clerks in the smallest courthouse in the land — should be sentenced to the maximum because public officials should know better.

Any official who is convicted of such a crime should be removed from office immediately and any argument against immediate removal for any reason should be ignored. Our reason for this assertion is simple. A convicted felon would not be allowed to register and run for office even if his or her appeal was being considered, therefore a convicted official should not be allowed to remain in office pending appeal. That may be a narrow view but it is a straightforward one.

The Senate has expelled Hohman — almost.

The problem with the expulsion of Senator Hohman is the manner in which it is being handled. Hohman was expelled from the Senate but will not officially be expelled until he is sentenced, some time in March.

The reason for delaying the official expulsion escapes us. The only thing the delay in expulsion does is delay appointing a replacement for the senator.

And the only thing that delaying the appointment of a replacement does is assure that the people of Senator Hohman's region don't have adequate representation at a crucial time in the state legislative process.

The entire state and the Bush areas especially are facing a very important legislative session, a session which will address massive federal cutbacks to many programs in the Bush, and priorities in future state programs and spending.

The people of that region deserve more than to be left hanging without a representative who is devoted to their interests.

We feel that Senator Hohman should resign immediately and allow the governor to immediately appoint a replacement for him. There are three excellent candidates who have been forwarded to Hammond.

Senator Hohman has served the people of his region well in the past. He would be doing them the ultimate service if he resigns his post now.