

Publisher's Notes

ALASKANS WAY OF LIFE HAS BEEN INDICTED

The calamitous Grand Jury report released in Juneau this past week did not formally charge Governor Bill Sheffield and his Chief of Staff, John Shively, with specific crimes in connection with their alleged respective roles in the controversial lease of State office space in Fairbanks. The report did much more than that.

There was an indictment, not against anyone in particular, but against the entire state, which has thrown Alaska into a vortex of political change--the like of which is not only unprecedented but almost incomprehensible.

The indictment is against our way of life, against our executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, as well as the electorate, and most of all against our system of conducting the people's business.

The report charges that we Alaskans are guilty of not conforming to the way of life that other states in our Union enjoy or endure, depending upon your perspective.

The Grand Jury, led by Foreman Marylou Madden, has issued a death warrant for a system that sometimes gives the appearances of harboring political favoritism and it holds that our system is "unfit for public service."

The whole astonishing, tangled mess, was tossed to the Legislature, with the recommendation that it impeach the Governor and in doing so, the Legislature will also have to deal with the system.

The ultimate outcome of the Grand Jury's investigation will mean change for Alaska, changes that will affect the way we regard our elected officials, changes that will bring about new standards for governing, and indeed changes that will bring about conformity.

BILL SHEFFIELD AND JOHN SHIVELY

Governor Bill Sheffield and his Chief of Staff, John Shively, are decent guys, who have demonstrated qualities that most Alaskans understand and value. That is, they have, both in and outside public office, held unwavering loyalty to friendship.

Both men are considered by their friends and foe alike to be honest, hardworking, fair minded, and dedicated men, but during the past week, after a Grand Jury report, they have been branded liars, cheats, and "unfit for public office."

Neither the Governor nor his Chief of Staff is a bad man, and neither deserves to be labeled a liar or a cheat. Their fitness for public office should not be judged by a Grand Jury of twelve or even the Legislature. The people of Alaska alone have that responsibility.

Bill Sheffield and John Shively are the hapless victims of a change that is coming to Alaskan politics, and no matter what the outcome of the Special Session next week, both will continue to be decent guys.

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