

# Union Autonomy Bills Keep Appearing in Legislature

**JUNEAU** — A second bill, HB-249, calling for local autonomy for Alaska labor unions met defeat in the House of Representatives on a 16 to 24 vote last week.

HB-83, which was almost identical to HB-249, also was defeated on a 20-20 split vote in the House three weeks ago. That bill needed only one more vote to pass, however, the new bill has been kept alive on a motion to reconsider the issue by Rep. Earl Hillstrand, D-Anchorage, one of the authors of the bill.

The reconsideration was scheduled for last Friday but instead was referred to the House Judiciary Committee for further study. At press time, the bill had not come up for review but it was thought that it could come up at any time.

The purpose of the autonomy bill was designed to provide a greater measure of local control (autonomy) in Alaska labor unions with the hope that conditions would put Alaskans in an advantageous employment opportunities.

The present legislation is aimed at unions with large "locals" that include Alaskans and also members in other states such as Washington. In some cases, members in other states are able to outvote Alaskan members for election of union officials.

Both bills would have required the Commissioner of Labor to conduct a secret election among Alaska "resident" members only, to see if

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they desire local control of their union within the state.

HB-249 has been challenged on constitutional grounds by its opponents. An informal opinion of the Attorney General questioned the constitutionality of permitting only part of union members to vote on an issue.

## New Bill

In the meantime, a new bill has resulted out of the controversy of HB-83 and HB-249. That bill, HB-260, would provide limited local control of unions within the state.

It would require that all unions with more than 100 members would maintain hiring halls in the state and require all men be dispatched for jobs only from Alaskan halls.

This bill may tend to place Alaskans in an advantageous position compared with outsiders. It has been approved by the House Labor Committee and it is reported to be supported by AFL-CIO and Teamsters unions.

This bill was introduced by Rep. Ted Stevens, R-Anchorage, and Rep. Joe Josephson, D-Anchorage, and two other democrats.

From the outset, the autonomy bills were strongly backed by bush representatives and caused a great deal of controversy in the current session that saw both political parties and most legislative factions split on the issue.

One of the sponsors of the original HB-83 was Rep. Christiansen, D-Bethel, along with Reps. Earl Hillstrand, D-Anchorage, Carl Lottsfeldt, D-Anchorage, and Rep. Clem Tillion, R-Halibut Cove.

However, voting for and backing the controversial issue in the recent vote were the following legislators: Rep. Carl Moses, R-King Cove, Rep. Norly Skinner, D-Clear, Rep. Joe McGill, D-Dillingham, Rep. Tom Balone, D-Nome, Rep. Jake Stalker, D-Kotzebue, Rep. Axel Johnson, D-Emmonak, and Rep. Bob Dittman, D-Valdez, the democratic majority leader in the House.

Opposition to the bill came largely from some Anchorage legislators and Southeasterners, main opponents being Rep. Joe Josephson and Rep. Ted Stevens.

However, lending their support to the bill from these areas were Rep. Bill Ray, D-Juneau, Rep. Bruce Kendall, R-Anchorage, Rep. Danny Plotnick, D-Anchorage, Rep. Irwin Metcalf, D-Seward, and Rep. Gene Guess, D-Anchorage, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.