

Special Session was Almost a Disaster, with Exception that POMV Failed

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The legislature's recent visit to Juneau was nearly disastrous. I say nearly because we could have caused a lot more damage than we did. We regrettably passed a new tobacco tax (I voted "no"), adding on still another dollar to a pack of cigarettes, making your state government Alaska's largest drug lord. We have again pulled the wool over the eyes of the public, pretending to limit teen smoking, but in reality merely finding another group of victims to pilfer.

The real victory was avoiding a much more grievous invasion of our pocketbooks, that of the so-called "POMV" raid on the Permanent Fund. I commend my colleagues for rejecting this.

I've argued that we still have a large and inefficient bureaucracy, that we have numerous redundant programs to trim or consolidate and that the real problem is government itself and its unfortunate tendency to grow. Whenever I bring this up in Juneau, I often get a sneer, a roll of the eyes or occasionally a downright disdainful snarl, but never a reasoned counter argument to justify increasing taxes.

I wait impatiently for the day when enough citizens say, "No more; we demand our freedom, wallets and independence back." Until then, I inwardly wince as politicians gradually grind more dollars from us and continue to evade the ideas of 1776.

— *Rep. Vic Kohring*
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