

Proud to Represent Wasilla

By: Rep. Vic Kohring, April 9, 2002

An editorial in the University of Alaska Anchorage's student newspaper, the "Northern Light," concerning my 10-point budget plan to devolve Alaska's government was very revealing, perhaps more than they realize.

First, the editorial was not signed. Thus, whoever wrote it hid behind the anonymity of the newspaper. A friend called the paper last Friday and was told by a staffer that Matt Hayes, the paper's Editor, wrote it. If this is true, may I suggest he show the courage to be more open and forward so his fellow students know exactly who is writing what.

Second, the editorial mocked my hometown of Wasilla as the "hillbilly portion of the state" with "strip mall development." This is false. Does not Anchorage, where Mr. Hayes goes to school, have numerous strip malls? As for hillbillies, all one has to do to find them in Anchorage is walk into Chilkoot Charlie's on a Friday night at 11:00 pm.

Third, he wrote that I don't say *where* the wasted money would come from that I intend to cut from government. Pardon me, but my proposal is a detailed list of *where* to cut. For example, I mentioned specifically by name the Departments of Natural Resources, Environmental Conservation, Law, Economic Development and Fish & Game for consolidating and cost cutting. I wrote we should eliminate the Department of Administration. And I wrote we should eliminate tax dollars to tourism, fisheries, agriculture, public TV and radio, the arts, and close the Governor's mansion. These tax subsidized non-essentials alone would save us millions of dollars.

Mr. Hayes really ought to read my column again. It's in the Daily News and Frontiersman archives.

Fourth, twice he bought into the Daily News' story about my so-called "living" in Portland. He obviously did so *without* first bothering to check the facts. And he never called me or my staff to see if the story was true. It's back to Freshman Journalism 101 for Mr. Hayes.

Another of his grossly inaccurate facts pertains to the residency issue. I have lived in Alaska for almost 40 years. I was building a home off Fairview Loop Road near Wasilla in preparation for my new bride and daughter, but Tony Knowles and his redistricting gang literally drew a line around and cut our home out of my legislative district. So, in self-defense, I moved to my family's Wasilla subdivision *inside* my newly formed district. And when I married, my wife desired to be near her sister and mother in Oregon while I was in Juneau for the four-month legislative session. So I acquired a *second* home there. All of these facts were documented in a piece I wrote for the Daily News. He could have found out *if* he had bothered to check their archives or call me. But he did neither!

Fifth, when Mr. Hayes bemoans that I propose consolidating school districts to save public dollars, he stated that it would make "basic education close to impossible." Read and learn here

sir. Does he expect a teacher and a swimming pool in every Bush home? What I also propose is making our university system more productive and less costly. And for those who **choose** to live in rural Alaska, there is now a realistic and inexpensive way to deal with the vast distances involved, such as Distance Ed Courses using computers. The future of education is turning “virtual,” making brick and mortar increasingly obsolete. The socialistic mind-set expressed in his woes is very Last Century!

And finally but most important, when Mr. Hayes claimed my ideas of cutting the government bureaucracy would lead to “severely curbed services, a high percentage of homeless and a culture limited to Hollywood low-brow productions,” he is exposing his philosophy of **dependence** on government. Freedom has never produced “homelessness.” It has produced the greatest economy in the history of the world. It is taxes, swarms of laws and regulations and hundreds of social programs that has reduced a once active people into jelly. For proof, look at Indian reservations in the United States. Ask Russell Means what he thinks of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Before government-run PBS began dominating television opera and symphony presentations, sucking in millions of tax dollars each year, NBC in the 1950’s had its own symphony orchestra conducted by none other than Arturo Toscanini. Only big government advocates who don’t trust the common man are openly elitist enough to think forcing people to pay for tax financed arts is somehow good.

That’s the difference between Thomas Jefferson and Josef Stalin. Jefferson backed freedom, free-markets and individual liberty, none of which require government intervention. Stalin was a vast criminal butcher who used Marxism to justify the slaughter of about 40 million people over a 30-year period.

You choose.

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