



Municipality of Anchorage
Mayor Dave Bronson

Office of the Mayor

Date: June 27, 2022

To: Anchorage Assembly

From: Mayor Dave Bronson

Subject: Veto of Ordinance No. AO 2022-69

Pursuant to Section 2.30.100 of the Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) and Section 5.02 of the Municipal Charter, I hereby veto AO 2022-69 passed at the Assembly's regular meeting of June 21, 2022.

I have reviewed the ordinance, heard the testimony, arguments and discussions presented for and against the ordinance, and understand the sentiments expressed during public testimony. It has become apparent that this Ordinance, as passed, has become a vehicle for attempting to silence the voice of youth in our community.

Anchorage benefits from the work of its Youth Advisory Commission, whose dedicated members, consisting of individuals as young as 14 years of age, are charged by Anchorage Municipal Code with providing advice to both the mayor and assembly on issues, services and programs from the unique perspectives that our youth may possess. A cornerstone of this invaluable work is the Commission's nomination of individual youths to serve as the Youth Representative and Alternate Youth Representative to the Anchorage Assembly.

According to Assembly Memorandum 331-2022, a principal purpose of AO 2022-69 is to "widen the pool" of individuals who may potentially serve as Youth Representative to the Anchorage Assembly. The current criteria established in the Anchorage Code is that "the Youth Representative shall be at least 16 and not more than 19 years of age." It remains unclear whether the Assembly is seeking individuals for this position who have yet to attain the level of judgment and self-reliance that psychologists advise are the differentiating features of the typical 16-year-old when contrasted with their younger cohorts, or whether the Assembly is seeking individuals who may no longer be accurately described as youth. Either way, the current pool of 16 to 19 year olds seems appropriate.

The Assembly further claims that a purpose of the Ordinance is to allow the Assembly to "set the term" of each appointment, where the Code currently provides that "the youth advisory commission shall determine the term of appointment at the time of sending nominations to the chair, with a minimum term of six months and a maximum of one year." The unfortunate reality is that the Assembly's self-admitted use of AO 2022-69 to grab for themselves the power of establishing terms for Youth Representatives is not the only power grab inherent in this Ordinance. The primary effect of this legislation is to enable the Assembly to bypass the Youth Advisory Commission and select a Youth Representative who has not been selected by the youth of Anchorage. It is sadly instructive in this regard that the Ordinance was introduced to the Assembly without the Assembly first consulting the Youth Advisory Commission or even advising them that it was on the horizon.



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Democracy is government by the people, and in this great nation, the people are able to act through representatives elected by them. Our youth, however, can't vote, and so they have limited opportunities to participate in our democratic institutions. Anchorage's Youth Advisory Commission serves to ameliorate this problem by giving the youth of this Municipality a meaningful voice and opportunity to participate in our government. Diminishing the role of youth and stripping them of the few powers that they have is simply unacceptable.

The Alaska Supreme Court has instructed that government should guard against tyranny in the form of unchecked aggrandizement of power and preserve our constitutional framework enabling citizen participation. Accordingly, I am compelled to veto AO No. 2022-69.