

Alaska State Legislature

Select Committee on Legislative Ethics

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NEWS RELEASE

LEGISLATIVE ETHICS COMMITTEE ISSUES A COMPLAINT DECISION IN S 17-01

Committee dismisses complaint against Senator Donald Olson

Anchorage, Alaska – The Senate Subcommittee of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics today issued a public decision regarding Complaint S 17-01 filed against Senator Donald Olson.

The complaint alleged that AS 24.60.030(a)(2) and AS 24.60.030(a)(3) of the Ethics Act were violated.

Sec. 24.60.030(a)(2). Prohibited conduct and conflicts of interest.

A legislator ... may not use public funds, facilities, equipment, services, or another government asset or resource for a nonlegislative purpose, ..., or for the private benefit of the legislator

Sec. 24.60.030(a)(3). Prohibited conduct and conflicts of interest.

A legislator ... may not knowingly seek, accept, use, or award public funds ... for a purpose other than that approved by law, or make a false statement in connection with a claim, request, or application for compensation, reimbursement, or travel allowances from public funds.

The complaint alleged that Senator Donald Olson used public funds, facilities, equipment, and services for the shipment of personal goods that were not eligible household goods under the

Legislative Council Moving Policy dated July 9, 2014, for a nonlegislative purpose and for the private benefit of the legislator and accepted public funds for the shipping. The Senate Subcommittee conducted an investigation and reviewed the investigative reports.

On April 21, 2018, the Senate Subcommittee determined that Senator Olson did not violate AS 24.60.030(a)(2) and AS 24.60.030(a)(3) because the Legislative Council Moving Policy in effect in 2015 and 2016 did not clearly prohibit Senator Olson from shipping the household goods. The Senate Subcommittee determined Senator Olson did not use public funds and services for his private benefit and did not make a false statement or claim to transport these items. As a result, the complaint was dismissed.

The Senate Subcommittee also noted that while Senator Olson's aggressive use of the moving policy was not a clear violation of the letter of the moving policy, the fact he used state funds to move a significant number of personal goods that were questionable household goods was contrary to the Legislative Ethics Act findings and purpose and to the spirit of the moving policy and therefore, resulted in a very strong appearance of impropriety.

View Complaint Decision and Dismissal S 17-01 at <http://ethics.akleg.gov/decisions.php>. For additional information, please contact Jerry D. Anderson, Ethics Committee Administrator.

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