

PRESS RELEASE



Assembly Acting Chair Constant Responds to Court Decision on Office of Equity and Justice Ruling

July 21, 2022

This afternoon the Alaska Superior Court issued its ruling on Assembly Ordinance 2020-79(S). The Court found that the Office of Equity and Justice is a municipal department because it was placed in the wrong section of Anchorage Municipal Code. Therefore, the for-cause protection and term of office provisions enacted for the Chief Equity Officer are invalid.

The Court's decision did not conclude that the Municipality may never enact for-cause protections or a term of office for the head of a municipal office, only that it cannot do so when the office is a "department" by virtue of its placement in the municipal organization chart.

"This is a very narrow ruling specific to a certain section of the code and now that the Court has issued their interpretation, we have a definitive direction to go in when it's time to correct this oversight in the future," said Acting Chair Christopher Constant. "While I am disappointed in this ruling, my focus right now is on the humanitarian crisis unfolding at the Centennial Park campground and this issue does not rate high on my list of priorities for the Assembly to address at this time."

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