

REPRESENTATIVE KEN McCARTY

HOUSE DISTRICT 13 — CHUGIAK/EAGLE RIVER/JBER



March 1, 2021

Respect of a town hall but most importantly of our community

A Statement Regarding the February 27th Town Hall Meeting

Chugiak / Eagle River is a marvelous community with a rich heritage. A shadow box is being made to display the values of our community in your representative office in Juneau. Several small items serving as symbols of our community will be placed inside the box. The American flag, as we are so proud of our statehood and our military neighbors who wear the flag on their uniforms. Small tractors and excavators, representing our community pioneers who farmed the land and built our roads. There is a symbol of Lions Park and the hundreds of men and women who voluntarily enhance it for the benefit of our neighbors and their children. There are many more symbols within the box, the Birchwood Airport, Loretta French Park, St. Johns, St. Andrews and more. As you can imagine, with so much rich history our shadow box is full of symbols of love, community, and respect for one another. A small shadow box cannot contain the essence or spirit of our community- respect, unity, and collective ingenuity.

This weekend I was back in District 13 to meet with community members and hold a town hall meeting to give constituents an opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns. As a statement of respect for everyone's time, each person who wished to speak was given a three-minute time limit. Some who shared had messages so moving that others forfeited their allotted three minutes to allow a presenter to continue. It was inspiring to watch such respect for one another. However, at one point a community member was denied her full three-minute speaking opportunity by the disrespect of disruption, projected accusation, filibustering monolog, or condoning smiles of others in the group. The rant of these disruptive community "leaders" has brought shame upon themselves, our community, and on those values that we hold dear- respect for others.

On Sunday, I was able to meet with the community member who was denied her three minutes as I wanted to honor her right to respectfully share and to be respectfully heard. I have heard from people all over Alaska, who had watched our town hall event. It appears our community of Chugiak/ Eagle River has grown in awareness, influence, and, most recently, shame because of some of our supposed "leaders." Yet the shame does not represent all in the meeting. I have been told that some of those shameful leaders have apologized one on one or requested that an apology be passed on. I suggested that what you did in public by yelling you should apologize for in public as well, via social media or newspaper.

I am honored and proud of our community of Chugiak / Eagle River. I am proud of our neighbors who watch over each other, participate as a village to help raise our children, and overcome adversities. We are a gracious community and I encourage those who were offensive on Saturday to humble themselves, apologize to the community, and help us move forward in those values of respect that makes our home unique to the world.