

Berkowitz1.mp3:

Berkowitz: Well, I appreciate the difficulty of trying to operate this PPT picket without any kind of knowledge or information, because that's the kind of blinders that my caucus has been operating on since this operation began.

You know Mr. Speaker, you got a telephone call. I walked out into the hallway, surrounded by dozens of lobbyists. All screaming about the great injustice we've done to them. They all had the chance to testify. They all had a chance to come and peer into our office and tell us what was wrong.

But this is our floor. Our floor. No telephone call is supposed to change what we're doing. No lobbyist is supposed to peer over the railing and tell us to change our mind. Never should happen. I'm frankly dismayed about the course this debate has taken. I expect more from this legislature. We're talking about Alaska's oil. Not the companies' oil. The companies didn't elect us. The people elected us.

We serve the people. We see a rescission action up there. I hear all these great catastrophic things. People huddling, coming out of these huddles talking about these catastrophic consequences. This shouldn't be secret, Mr. Speaker. The underlying truth about what's gone on with this amendment, is that it might, just might, have done some damage to a gas-line deal. But we don't know.

\*\*Representative Bruce Weyhrauch: Your honor, I object. I mean, Mr. Speaker I object. That impugns the motive of an individual legislator. It assumes things that are happened that are absolutely incorrect and I object to the characterization and that is nothing to do with the debate before us on an oil tax bill.

Berkowitz: Mr. Speaker, it has absolutely everything to do. Prior speaker talked about his lack of knowledge, and I'm talking about things I know. Things I've seen. Things we all know. The things we haven't talked about. You know, I said all along this debate should not be rushed.

**\*\*Objection by Rules Chair.**

Berkowitz: I appreciate the comments of the Rules Chair. Now it's my turn to speak. We should wait until Wednesday. If we don't have the answer to this question, and it's an important question, we should wait until Wednesday when we have the time to get it right. When we have the time to analyze this bill and see what it does. With all the changes we've made. When we've had a chance to see the gas contract and the impact of the decisions we're making tonight on that contract. We should wait and we should get it right. Our failure to get it right is going to be a real problem. We have a responsibility to go slow and do the right thing. We don't have to rush. Tomorrow is just one day. We can continue past tomorrow; and that's what we ought to do. And I'm speaking to this motion for rescission. Because there's a question out there as to whether this is a good policy call for the state. We don't have all the answers and we could if we just took the time to wait. And that's what we ought to do.

Berkowitz2.mp3:

Berkowitz: I haven't heard the term compromise used that way since the Romans talked to the Sabine women. You know, Mr. Speaker, we've compromised, and compromised, and compromised. I've been negotiating for a long time. I've negotiated in this business, I've negotiated as a prosecutor, but I have never ever seen an entity negotiate against itself as successfully as the State of Alaska has against the oil companies. We keep negotiating our way downwards, and downwards, and downwards. Seem to forget that our obligation isn't to the health and profitability of the companies as they report to their shareholders. Our obligation is to the people of the State of Alaska. Our obligation is constitutional and is to get the maximum benefit from our oil, and our gas. That's what we swore an oath to do. We did not swear an oath to increase profitability for companies headquartered in Houston, and London, and elsewhere around the globe. So, others may want to compromise. I say enough.

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