

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Local 1547

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DAVE REAVES
BUSINESS MANAGER • FINANCIAL SECRETARY

KNUTE ANDERSON
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April 4, 2018

The Honorable Mia Costello
Chair Senate Labor and Commerce
State Capitol Room 504
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Sent via Email

RE: Support for HB 142

Chairwoman Costello,

I write to you to express IBEW Local 1547's strong support of House Bill 142 which makes overdue updates to Alaska's Unemployment Insurance (UI) Program.

In general, unemployment insurance programs bridge the economic gap for individual workers and stabilizes the local economy by providing benefits to eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own, work less than full-time, and/or meet other eligibility requirements. IBEW Local 1547 supports HB 142 because it finally increases the Maximum Weekly Benefit Amount (MWBA), which has been unchanged since 2009, to \$458 in 2018 and to \$510 in 2019.

Notably, Alaska is only one of three states where both employers and employees pay into the UI fund with Alaska's workers paying the most of the three states; yet Alaska ranks 37th in MWBA despite being one of the most expensive places to live in the United States. The proposed changes will bring Alaska from a 36% wage replacement rate to the nationally recognized 50% wage replacement rate. IBEW Local 1547 strongly supports passage of HB 142 because it will provide the necessary financial support Alaska workers need while actively seeking employment.

I am respectfully requesting that you schedule a hearing on HB 142. This Unemployment Insurance Bill will help Alaskan working families who are continuing to seek employment by providing a manageable temporary source of income. Alaska's Unemployment Insurance is low compared to Washington, Oregon, and California and HB 142 will also help keep Alaskans in state for future projects with Alaskan employers.

Sincerely,

Dave Reaves
Business Manager
IBEW Local 1547