

March 16, 2013

Dear State Representative:

I beseech you to listen as you read my words here on the question of COLA for AMHS employees. For me, COLA is vital; as I believe for all the Alaskan AMHS workers. I know and believe we too are crucial to the state's economic growth as we give \$ back to local economy. Especially, when we (AMHS) employees have to travel to an AMHS dispatch job; as many in S.E. Alaska must travel to Ketchikan (or Juneau) for dispatch port/crew change. COLA subsidizes the ability to pay for winter oil or electricity, which has quadrupled in my area. Consequently, gas prices go up > raises the food Home life will be genuinely affected, as I have a full house including grandkids! For me/ the priority here is to clarify my AMHS job, and the pay.

There is a major difference between the AMHS maritime union employee based and the State's public work sector onshore.

AMHS (ferries) are the roads in S.E. Alaska! That is "especially heartfelt" in winter, when there are no planes flying > AMHS still goes thru the thick of it. (There are hardly any days when AMHS shuts down due to weather).

To further exemplify the differences of an AMHS job vs. state onshore job: how many public office employees are required to lift 50lbs (or more) as part of their job? The maritime field is a physical labor industry. As such- we are required to have various certificates to be qualified to work by the U.S. Coast Guard (even for a steward position). And- each employee personally pays for these! Whereas, the other state public union base are only office personnel. Each maritime job is not just one specific job duty, but a facet of the day-to-day operations; i.e. it is not unusual for physical activity of stores (taking on food, etc. on pallets & storing away) /or laundry (whether clean or dirty....always a task which must be done for the whole). Why? Part of the customer service industry. Plus- other tasks may be vacuuming & garbage pickup.

Again/ these credentials are always updated, for safety requirement of all involved, and again paid by the AMHS employee!

AMHS union employees work and work hard, actually- in earning their living money.

Another **REAL IMPORTANT ISSUE**: as an AMHS union employee I work 84 hrs in one week (than I have to wait one whole week before next dispatch). Hence > my pay of \$23/hr x 84 hrs = (2) weeks (work)!!! Plus, I cannot go home at night as a regular onshore state office employee. I must sleep onship nightly with someone I do not know, (same cabin). And- I will remain "on- call for boat emergencies" (fire/abandon ship) (or/a missing passenger) (or a code green: bomb/or something unknown.)

For the record/ I worked hard to get the certificates required to get this job: (lifeboat, cpr, food card, TAMS card, computer trng., industrial cleaning trng., +more). It's a job where you need to keep-on-toes while you work, as well as your offschedule time. Must be alert!

On a strategic note for this AMHS job role: it really is a matter of life and death, when we must depend on each other in a real emergency. And- the maritime field does have them. But- you never see AMHS in the newspaper i.e.> Captain/or crew left the ship without the passengers. International incidents which only bring our awareness up. AMHS has also on several occasions assisted SOS calls from other local fishing vessels (or such).

Please. Please understand the maritime job is quite different from the sit-in-office, state onshore job. AMHS hours are really all hours of the work week, until relieved at crew change.

Take into consideration the on-call duty. Take into consideration our personal endeavors to maintain the certificates to keep our AMHS job. Take into consideration the hours as shown for an actual work week.

Please take time to try to understand wholly the AMHS job/hours.

I just don't understand why you want to penalize the Alaska resident here by trying to take our COLA as an AMHS employee. Why bring our pay down to level of a non-resident that does not contribute back to local economy as a resident. You will really hurt your fellow Alaskan if you take the COLA.

As the last earmark (as stated before) we work hard for the gross \$966/week = to a net income of approx.. \$650/per week. Can you live on that? Honestly, I have to clip coupons to make ends meet:

Claudia M Boyd Cashier/AMHS Job  
  
PO Box 235339, Ketchikan, Alaska 99901

P.S. As a grown-up I have household bills: mortgage, car payment, <sup>stove</sup> all water/sewer bill, utility bill, TV bill, phone bill, cell bill, & auto insurance.

A.M.H.S. - Our net pay covers the essentials  
so- Yes! I need the COLA! <sup>left over</sup> play money is for "Food bill."