Senators,

Please reconsider defaulting on your contract with State Employees.

While the current oil prices have obviously reduced the State's spending abilities, it is neither rational nor fair to expect State Employees to bear the brunt of this budget deficit. Alaska's State Employees provide valuable professional services to the people of Alaska, at a very economical cost to the State.

The net savings to the State garnered by breaking faith with State Employees are insignificant against the current budget deficit, and are certainly not worth compromising the State's integrity and eroding any trust remaining between State Employees and their employer, the State of Alaska.

The 2.5% increase in wages was negotiated to compensate State Employees for ever-increasing costs of living in this State. Wages in private industry respond to inflation and increased cost of living "naturally", through economic mechanisms. Wages for public employees do not likewise respond "naturally" and therefore must be adjusted deliberately, which is why the 2.5% increase was negotiated, and agreed upon by both the State of Alaska and State Employees.

Removing funding for this wage increase, and repealing the contract language, is breaking a promise between the State of Alaska and her public servants, imposing hardship on the very professionals that have dedicated the best years of their working lives towards advancing the State's interests.

Please consider cutting fat out of the budget (such as astronomical rent for the legislative offices in Anchorage), before cutting away the best meat in the budget: wages that keep Alaska running, keep Alaskans employed, and ultimately end up as money circulated within Alaska, supporting Alaskan families.

I am writing as a life-long citizen of Alaska, who intends to remain here for the next 50 to 60 years, or as long as I get. I am also writing as a State-employed wildland firefighter, a member of a group of professionals who regularly, and quite frequently, risk everything to serve the people of Alaska.

We negotiated a fair contract with the State. In exchange for our good service, the state committed to certain compensation. Please do not back out on your end of the deal. As "Class 1", strike-exempt employees, we won't be backing out on ours. We will continue to serve.