



**FAIRBANKS BUILDING
& CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL
AFL-CIO**



Lake Williams
President

Scott Eickholt
Secretary/Treasurer

**A RESOLUTION URGING THE ALASKA LEGISLATURE TO INCREASE
THE MAXIMUM WEEKLY UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT**

Whereas, the US Department of Labor encourages a weekly benefit amount of 50% wage replacement; and

Whereas, twenty-four states have automatic adjustments to the maximum weekly benefit amount tied to the state's average weekly wage; and

Whereas, Alaska residents endure one of the highest cost of living expenses in the Nation; and

Whereas, Alaska ranks: 44th in Average Weekly Benefit Amount (currently \$252), and 52nd in Wage Replacement Ratio (.247); and

Whereas, Alaska significantly trails Washington (\$681), Oregon (\$590); and California (\$450); and

Whereas, a worker who earned \$84,000 during their base year receives the same benefit as a worker who earned half as much in theirs; and

Whereas, Alaska is one of only three states in which employees contribute to the benefit system and currently fund twenty-seven percent of the average benefit costs; and

Whereas, an employer in the average tax class would pay an additional \$58 per employee earning the full taxable wage base in 2019 (approximately \$40,000), and \$84 per employee in 2020; and

Whereas, Alaska is in an economic downturn and our laid-off skilled craft workers need financial security until the next project starts; and

Whereas, if local craft workers can't afford to live in Alaska then they are more likely to move to the continental US, and like so many former Alaskan residents become transient out of state workers; and

Whereas, to be successful our Local Contractors must maintain a pool of skilled workers even when time are lean; and

Therefore be it resolved, the Fairbanks Building and Construction Trades Council requests the Alaska House to pass HB 142, and asks the Alaska Senate to introduce and pass a companion bill.

Adopted this 15th day of March, 2017

President, Fairbanks Building and Construction Trades Council