

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate Labor & Commerce Committee

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Alaska State Capitol, Room 121
Juneau, Alaska 99801
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Senator Gary Stevens, Vice Chair
Senator Mia Costello
Senator Josh Revak
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson

SB 240 Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to unemployment benefits during a period of state or national emergency resulting from a novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak; and providing for an effective date."

SB 240 is critical legislation as the State faces a COVID-19 crisis and potential layoffs of many Alaskans. This legislation would ensure that employees can receive unemployment insurance (UI) benefits whether they are furloughed, laid off, lose work hours, are quarantined, or are forced to stay home to provide childcare or care for a sick family member due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Alaskan employees have been paying into our UI trust fund with every paycheck, and it is our duty to allow them to access those benefits they have paid for if they are unable to work due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

This legislation adds uncodified law to make clear that no insured worker who is affected by the outbreak be disqualified for failure to meet the able to work and willing to work requirements if they are:

1. Providing care, including medical care, to one or more persons
2. Preventing or limiting the spread of COVID-19
3. Preventing or limiting economic loss or harm

SB 240 would increase the weekly per-dependent benefit from \$25 to \$75 to help cover costs for families who have lost childcare and income simultaneously.

Please join me in support of Alaskan workers by providing some economic relief and support this important legislation.