



Anchorage
Community
Land Trust

RE: Support for HB 146: Disclosure of Wage Information

To Whom It May Concern,

I write in support of HB 146, the Disclosure of Wage Information bill.

I am the CEO of Anchorage Community Land Trust (ACLT). ACLT works in neighborhoods across Anchorage that often face challenges from high levels of under-and-unemployment.

COVID has had disproportionate impact on the low-income workforce in the neighborhoods we serve. Low-income Alaskans in the workforce were furloughed, took lower paying jobs, saw their hours reduced hours, or even exited the system all together for several reasons including caring for a family member or taking care of children.

I firmly believe that HB 146 will help employees and employers as businesses begin rehiring and as the workforce comes back online following the disruption of COVID.

I also believe that women and members of minority communities will benefit from HB 146. This bill is a meaningful step in correcting gender and racial pay gaps.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Kirk', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kirk



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UNITED BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND JOINERS OF AMERICA

April 21, 2021

The Honorable Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State House
State Capital Room 406
Juneau, Alaska 99801

The Honorable Zack Fields
Alaska State House
State Capital Room 24
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for HB 146- DISCLOSURE OF WAGE INFORMATION

Co-Chairs Spohnholz and Fields, and members of the committee:

We are proud to support HB 146, a worker protection measure which will provide greater fairness in the use and disclosure of wage information. In the construction industry, we promote fair wages for all workers through a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with set wages based on an employee's skills and qualifications. But we recognize that many employees in the private sector are not unionized, and do not enjoy the benefit and wage protections afforded in a union agreement.

HB 146 seeks to level the playing field and ensure that employees are paid based on qualifications, and not on historic or perceived biases. It requires employers to include salary or salary ranges in job postings, which will both provide notice to applicants about the wage they can expect and assist employers in narrowing the applicant pool to truly interested individuals.

By preventing employers from requesting an applicant's past salary history, the bill will help prevent compounding inequity in pay and promote hiring decisions based on an applicant's own merit. Finally, the bill allows individuals to freely discuss their wages with others and prevents employers from retaliating against employees for discussing wage information. By eliminating the secrecy surrounding wages, employees are free to inquire and share wage information leading to greater transparency, equity and fairness for workers.

We thank Representative Snyder for introducing this bill and urge members to move it out of committee.

Sincerely,

Chris Dimond, Alaska Regional Manager
Pacific Northwest Regional Council of Carpenters

Cc: Representative Liz Snyder



DISABILITY LAW CENTER

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April 13, 2021

Representative Zack Fields
Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Co-Chairs, House Labor & Commerce Committee
Alaska State Capitol
120 Fourth Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Re: HB 146

Dear Representatives Fields and Spohnholz and Members of the Committee:

Disability Law Center of Alaska thanks you for this opportunity to analyze HB 146, requiring disclosure of wage information, and for the opportunity to comment on what effect HB 146 would have for Alaskans with disabilities.

Disability Law Center of Alaska is the designated Protection and Advocacy System (P&A) and Client Assistance Program (CAP) for the State of Alaska. Disability Law Center is authorized by the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD) Act and the Protection and Advocacy for Mentally Ill Individuals (PAMII) Act to "protect and advocate the rights of such individuals through activities to ensure the enforcement of the Constitution and Federal and State statutes." Congress recognized when enacting the PADD Act that:

Disability is a natural part of the human experience that does not diminish the right of individuals with developmental disabilities to live independently, to exert control and choice over their own lives, and to fully participate in and contribute to their communities through full integration and inclusion in the economic, political, social, cultural, and educational mainstream of United States society.

HB 146 would benefit Alaskans seeking employment in three ways: 1) by requiring employers to post salaries or salary ranges for all job postings, 2) by prohibiting employers from asking applicants about prior compensation, and 3) by prohibiting retaliation from employers against employees who discuss their wages amongst each other.

While HB 146 is not a bill directly addressing the wage or employment disparities that Alaskans with disabilities experience, it would directly benefit those who are most acutely affected by inequitable salary practices, including the disability community.

Individuals with disabilities as a group are employed at a significantly lower rate than their nondisabled peers. Assumptions about the capabilities of individuals with disabilities or about the costs and hassles of accommodating their disabilities may lead to discrimination in many facets of employment, including during the recruiting process, in pay, advancement opportunities, time off, or termination. These labor disparities continue to exist despite the protections afforded by the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Alaska is ahead of the curve nationally when it comes to the labor rights of individuals with disabilities. In 2018, the subminimum wage regulations, which allowed employers to pay individuals with disabilities below the state minimum wage, were repealed. Subminimum wages, while meant to encourage the hiring of individuals with disabilities, often led to their further segregation by creating a class of employees that performed unskilled labor tasks in sheltered workshop environments.

While the subminimum wage is no longer legal in Alaska, the experience of low pay and segregated working conditions is deeply embedded in the culture of disability working experiences. The provisions in HB 146 will directly address some of these problems. For example, when employers post salaries or salary ranges, Alaskans with disabilities will know when applying for jobs that, if hired, they can expect their compensation to fall within the same ranges as their nondisabled peers. Additionally, because HB 146 prohibits employers from asking about prior compensation, Alaskans with disabilities who have experienced the subminimum wage or sheltered workshop conditions in the past will face less risk in having their previous work history negatively influence their current compensation. Finally, because individuals with disabilities do traditionally face a pay disparity in employment, they will be protected from retaliation should they seek to find out their compensation in relation to their peers and advocate for an increase themselves.

The provisions of HB 146 will benefit the negotiating power of all prospective employees in Alaska, and hopefully address pay disparities. While this affects everyone, it is the individuals who have been the most disproportionately affected who stand to benefit the most from HB 146. This includes Alaskans with disabilities who can and should make up a valued part of the Alaskan workforce. For this reason, the Disability Law Center of Alaska supports what the provisions of HB 146 could mean for the disability community.

Thank you,


Mark Regan
Legal Director


Chad Hansen
Staff Attorney