



ALASKA STATE PIPE TRADES ASSOICATION
UNITED ASSOCIATION OF JOURNEYMEN AND APPRENTICES
OF THE PLUMBING AND PIPEFITTING INDUSTRY
OF THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA
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April 9, 2021

The Honorable Kelly Merrick
Alaska State House
State Capital Room 511
Juneau, Alaska 99801

The Honorable Neal Foster
Alaska State House
State Capital Room 505
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for HB 30 to increasing substantive workers' compensation benefits

Co-Chairs Merrick and Foster, and members of the committee:

We offer our wholehearted support for HB 30, a bill that will update long-overdue substantive benefits under Alaska's Workers' Compensation system.

Under AS 23.30.001, the Legislature intended Alaska's Workers' Compensation System to be "quick, efficient, fair, and predictable...at a reasonable cost to the employers[.]" While compensation rates have fallen in recent years, substantive benefits have fallen so far behind that the system is no longer fair for workers. HB 30 would increase the Permanent Partial Impairment (PPI) base amount, last increased more than 20 years ago, from \$177,000 to \$273,000 and bring it in line with the average of most states. It would also increase woefully outdated death benefits for dependent non-child family members who's loved one is killed on the job. The aggregate limit, set in 1968, would increase from \$20,000 to a maximum of \$150,000.

Importantly, the bill also addresses the problem of inadequate and inequitable support for orphaned children of single parents killed on the job. Right now, benefits stop at 19 unless the dependent enters a four year post-secondary institution. For those of us in the construction trades, that is an unfair result for individuals who seek to enter our apprenticeship program. HB 30 fixes that problem, and extends benefits from 19 to 23 for all orphaned children. This critical change will allow these young people to pursue training through apprenticeship, enter the military, or elect another career path without the fear of losing critical death benefits.

PRESIDENT
Robert Hubbard

VICE PRESIDENT
Aaron Plikat

SECRETARY- TREASURER
Gene Bay

Our members work hard every day building and improving infrastructure across Alaska. They do so with the highest safety standards in the industry. But their work is often dangerous, and when an accident or tragedy strikes, we need a system in place that is just and fair for Alaska's workers and their families. HB 30 goes a long way to creating a fairer and more equitable system for workers and their families. We thank Representative Andy Josephson for advancing this important legislation for Alaska's workers, and are eager to see it advance through the committee process.

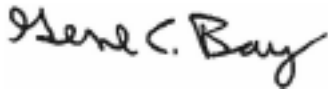
Sincerely,



Robert Hubbard, President
Business Manager, UA Local 375 (Fairbanks)



Aaron Plikat, Vice-President
Business Manager, UA Local 367 (Anchorage)



Gene Bay, Secretary-Treasurer
Business Manager, UA Local Union 262 (Juneau)

CC: Representative Andy Josephson