
From: Tristan Walsh
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2022 6:07 PM
To: Sorcha Hazelton
Cc: House Finance Legislation; Rep. Zack Fields
Subject: Fwd: HB 149

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Daniel Volland <drvolland@ursaoptical.com>
Date: March 7, 2022 at 4:18:00 PM AKST
To: "Rep. Zack Fields" <Rep.Zack.Fields@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB 149

Dear Representative Fields,

Thank you for meeting with members of the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Legislative Committee at our recent Juneau fly-in, as we advocated for the priorities of our members in the Anchorage business community. We greatly appreciated your time and the opportunity to hear more about the work that you and your staff are doing to help spur workforce development in Alaska.

You will likely recall that we sent a survey to all Chamber members, from which our priorities were derived, and that lack of access to quality, affordable child care was identified by the Anchorage business community as being a major barrier to workforce development. This was rated as the second greatest barrier, right after lack of qualified applicants.

In my personal view, as a local business owner in Anchorage, these two barriers to growing and diversifying our workforce are clearly related. In a post-pandemic world, many professional families have had to make the difficult choice of whether or not parents would return to work or remain at home to take care of children. Without affordable childcare options, there will simply be less qualified applicants looking to be hired.

For this reason, I'm writing to voice my personal support of HB 149, which would give child care workers the right to collective bargaining. There is currently a high turnover rate of childcare providers due to lack of competitive pay/secure benefits. This creates a supply and demand imbalance. There aren't enough available child care workers, so costs go up for the consumer, or financial pressure forces parents to seek care in unlicensed facilities. This imbalance doesn't serve parents, employers looking to hire, or child care workers well.

We all desire a strong economic bounce back from COVID and I believe that with many folks starting to travel again, this has the potential to be a huge boom year for the tourism and hospitality industries. But those industries need workers if they are going to prosper and run at capacity. And many of those workers need access to child care.

Sincerely,
Daniel Volland

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URSA

O P T I C A L

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