



Mayor
Suzanne LaFrance

Anchorage Fire Department



Fire Chief
Douglas Schrage

April 27, 2026

Senator Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senator Donald Olson, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 532
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267 - Employer Contributions for Workforce Training Programs

Dear Senator Hoffman, Senator Olson, Senator Stedman, and Members of the Senate Finance Committee,

I write to express our strong support for Senate Bill 217 and House Bill 267. This legislation represents a practical, timely, and high-impact investment in Alaska's workforce training system.

As a community-based organization, the Anchorage Fire Department has effectively utilized State Training and Employment Program (STEP) funding to supplement and expand—not replace—existing operational resources. STEP grants have enabled us to broaden access to high-quality training for our personnel and regional partners, increase attainment of advanced certifications, and strengthen career pathways within Alaska's public safety workforce. Simply put, STEP dollars are directly invested in training Alaskans for critical, in-demand jobs that must be filled today.

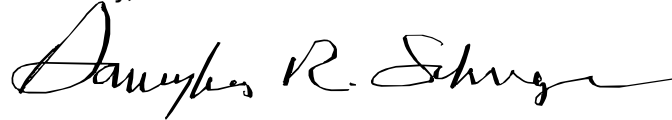
Statewide demand for workforce training continues to outpace available funding. The Alaska Workforce Investment Board has reported requests for STEP funding at nearly twice the level of available resources. At the same time, rising training costs—particularly in Alaska's unique geographic and logistical environment—further strain existing funds. The current funding structure is no longer sufficient to meet the growing need.

SB 217 and HB 267 offer a responsible, forward-looking solution by increasing STEP funding when the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund is solvent. This approach strengthens Alaska's workforce while maintaining fiscal prudence. By investing in training, the state

supports employers, reduces long-term unemployment costs, and equips Alaskans with the skills needed to advance within high-demand public safety careers.

This legislation represents a high-return investment in Alaska's workforce, public safety infrastructure, and economy. We respectfully urge your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Douglas R. Schrage". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D' and a long, sweeping underline.

Douglas R. Schrage