

March 4, 2024

To: Alaska Senate Judiciary Committee
From: Americans for Tax Reform
Re: **Support Senate Bill 60**

Dear Senator,

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform (ATR) and our supporters across Alaska, I urge you to support Senate Bill 60, legislation that would repeal the Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission. This common-sense reform would cut unnecessary government bureaucracy while saving the state government nearly half a million dollars per year.

Most attempts to cut state spending involve taking away dollars from individuals, families, businesses, or other entities who may have come to rely on government handouts and subsidies. That is not the case with SB 60. The Workers' Compensation Appeals Commission may be the closest thing to a useless government entity that Alaska has ever seen, providing direct benefits to no one except its two high-paid employees.

With just 4 cases filed with the commission in all of 2023, Alaska taxpayers are on the hook for well over \$100k per case. **Yet for all that excess spending, the Commission has demonstrably failed to accomplish its goal of handling cases faster than the state court system.**

Thankfully, the “work” currently performed by the commission can easily be absorbed by the existing judicial structure – namely, the Alaska Superior Court – **at no cost to the state.** That holds true even if 30 cases were to be filed annually (as in 2013), rather than last year’s total caseload of 4. Under SB 60, the Workers’ Compensation Board would remain fully functional, and the workers themselves would retain their ability to appeal decisions handed down by the Board. In fact, SB 60 simply moves Alaska back to the system it employed before 2005.

Half a million dollars is not an extraordinary sum of money, but the job of reining in government spending and bureaucracy must be undertaken one step at a time. Moreover, in light of budget deficits currently faced by the broader Workers’ Compensation system, repealing this appeals commission is the natural first step toward making the fund solvent once again, all without raising taxes or fees. **For these reasons, ATR supports SB 60 and urges you to vote yes on this bill at the first opportunity.**

Sincerely,



Grover G. Norquist
President
Americans for Tax Reform