

**To:** Senate State Affairs Committee

**CC:** Senate Kawasaki

**From:** Joelle Hall, President of the Alaska AFL-CIO

**Date:** April 15, 2025

**Subject:** SJR 13: Appointment of judges by governor



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## **The Alaska AFL-CIO opposes SJR 13 on the following grounds:**

These changes are unnecessary, run counter to the intent of Alaska's constitutional framers, and will politicize the process by which Alaskans appoint Superior Court judges and Supreme Court justices. This amendment would end the merit selection process for appointment of these judges. In doing so, it will hurt Alaska's workforce.

Removing the Council from the recommendation process and allowing the governor - any governor - to choose any one of the applicants dangerously changes an otherwise exemplary process. It jeopardizes and increases the real risk that the appointment process will be politicized. The governor would have free reign to choose a judge who shares his political views, rather than someone who is firmly committed to following the law. It sets up a process that could easily be co-opted - one that could easily accommodate a quiet quid pro quo between applicant and governor.

Make no mistake - the governor's proposed constitutional amendment jeopardizes Alaska's workforce. If workers cannot rely upon judges to uphold the rule of law, workers' health and safety is placed at potentially great risk of harm for no reason other than a blatant, political power grab.

The Council has more than proven itself over the last 60 plus years of Alaska's statehood. Count Alaska's workers among the many Alaskans who want judges who know the law and remain committed to following it, judges who serve with integrity, NOT judges who feel beholden to the governor who appointed them, or to a political party or other ideology. We urge you to resist the request to remove the protections against politicized courts embedded in our Constitution for more than 60 years.