

To: House Labor and Commerce Committee
CC: Representative Fields and Representative Hall

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

Date: May 2, 2025

Subject: HB 193: UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS; PAID PARENT LEAVE



The Alaska AFL-CIO supports HB 193 on the following grounds:

Recruitment and retention: Alaska must recruit and retain the working age population due to our outmigration problem. As families consider relocating outside or staying in Alaska, they look at policies impacting working conditions and family planning. This bill eases the burden on parents by helping families take important time off for childbirth, adoption, or fostering. This is a pro-family, pro-worker bill that ensures that parents have economic security that reduces stress and helps mothers re-enter the workforce after childbirth or adoption. In order to compete with other states for the working age population, we should pass mass pro-worker, pro-family bills like HB 193. Polling found that Generation Z workers identified paid family leave as the number one policy they consider when relocating for work. Currently, states such as Washington, Oregon, and Colorado, states Alaska regularly competes with for talent, all have paid parental leave policies.

Positive public health and societal benefits: Paid parental leave is known to help improve the health and life outcomes of infants and parents of newborns and allows for fostering and adoption. Experts recommend that mothers need at least 6 weeks to recover from vaginal birth with no complications, 12 weeks for a C-section. Women who take paid leave have a 51% reduction in the odds of being rehospitalized within 21 months of giving birth. Additionally, with paid parental leave fathers are more likely to report greater engagement in children's lives, boosting cognitive and developmental benefits for children. Public health is a prerequisite for a thriving society.

Economic development: If women in Alaska participated in the labor force at the same rate as women in countries with paid leave, there would be an estimated 8,000 additional workers in the state and \$313,870,000 more wages earned statewide. Paid leave can also reduce working women's reliance on public assistance and SNAP by as much as 40% compared to women who do not have this benefit. Studies have found that firms implementing these policies have greater revenue and profit per full time equivalent employee; technology companies saw a \$2.64 return for every \$1.00 invested. Manufacturers saw a \$2.57 return for every \$1.00.