

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives

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Representative Harry Crawford
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SPONSOR STATEMENT: HOUSE BILL HB 212

HB 212 is a bill to modify the Alaska unemployment insurance statute to comply with requirements of the federal stimulus bill. HB 212 changes the definition of the base period for the calculation of unemployment benefits. The change in the calculation will cause an increase in the yearly payout of benefits by \$ 2 million. This change will allow the Department of Labor to receive \$15.6 million in stimulus money.

The intent language in the bill is provided to give the Department guidance as to how the legislature wants the Department to use the money. If the Department deposits the money into the Unemployment Trust Fund, the money would be available to pay benefits and would more than offset the cost of the increase benefits. This would allow the additional benefits to be paid without any increase in unemployment tax to employers.

I believe this bill will help unemployed workers and benefit employers at the same time. I strongly encourage the Legislature to pass HB 212.