



The Voice of Small Business®

ALASKA

March 25, 2009

The Honorable Johnny Ellis
State Capitol Building
Juneau Alaska 99801-1182

RE: Senate Bill 170

Dear

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business/Alaska, I wish to express our appreciation and understanding of your introduction of Senate Bill 170. The National Federation of Independent Business is the largest small-business advocacy group in Alaska.

As you know, NFIB/AK had strong reservations about the state taking stimulus money for the Unemployment Insurance Program. We worked with you over the last two years to update our program and we had no desire to have the federal government dictate revisions to our program that were nor in the best interest of Alaskan businesses and their employees.

I am pleased to tell you that the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development has done a great service to Alaska by fighting the US Department of Labor and winning! As a result of their efforts, Alaska will not need to change any of its statutes relative to eligibility or determinations of able and available for work. Because of this great victory for Alaska, NFIB/AK withdraws our opposition to accepting federal stimulus funds for the Unemployment Insurance Program.

NFIB/AK understands that we will need to amend our statutes relative to the base period for the calculation of eligibility. This is a relatively simple administrative change the cost of which will be born by stimulus funding. The larger benefit to Alaska will be the availability of funding that can be used for additional vocational training to assist unemployed Alaskans get back into the workforce more quickly. This is good for individual Alaskans, employers and Alaska's economy.

NFIB/AK is pleased to have been able to work with Governor Palin, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development and you, Senator Ellis, to find this

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solution that allows Alaska to accept a portion of the stimulus funding without making any significant or inappropriate changes to our Unemployment Insurance Program.

Sincerely yours,



Dennis L. DeWitt

Alaska State Lobbyist

- Cc: Senate Labor & Commerce Committee
Governor Sarah Palin
Karen Rehfeld, Office of Management & Budget
Commissioner Clark Bishop
Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Representative Mike Hawker
Representative Bill Stoltze