

ALASKA AFL-CIO

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VINCE BELTRAMI
Executive President



JAKE METCALFE
Secretary / Treasurer

Jan 28, 2019

Alaska Senate
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator,

On behalf of thousands of workers in Alaska in industries from city government to pipe crafts, I respectfully submit this letter of opposition to SJR 3.

When the system intended to protect workers through collective bargaining and labor practice standards fails to come to resolution, the courts are the last refuge for workers.

Workers depend on the judiciary to help resolve issues that arise in arbitration, protecting steward and worker rights on the job site and in the final adjudication of unfair labor practices. The consequences of these decisions are often precedent setting and usually involve great sums of money.

Workers and employers are both dependent on a fair and impartial judiciary to come to a final resolution of issues that arise in bargaining. Each party can be certain that under the current make up, the courts findings will be based in the law and free from political bias.

By inserting legislative approval of the Alaska Judicial Council's attorney members in to the process, or any other changes to the state's judicial selection and retention process as outlined in the constitution, the Legislature would be excessively politicizing the applicant pool.

This is deeply concerning to us and is dangerous to workers. We bargain with employers in good faith, but if the employers knew they had a court that would see their side, they would simply drive bargaining to impasse and jump straight to a friendly court.

We urge the Legislature to leave the Constitution as is and to let a system that has worked well since statehood remain. Alaska workers and employers too often require a fair and impartial judiciary to decide the final status of a collective bargaining process. Fairness is essential for both parties.

The current system is fair. It should be retained.

Respectfully,

Vince Beltrami
President