

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

House Bill 28

“Equal Pay and Living Wage Act”

Sponsor Statement

A minimum wage that rises faster than the cost of living is needed to reduce poverty and income inequality. Working Alaskan families not earning a living wage are struggling to make ends meet.

By requiring an annual report on fair pay practices and setting the minimum wage at \$15 an hour, House Bill 28 directly addresses income inequality, housing and food security, and ensures a healthy economy. Alaskans need a living wage that takes into consideration the high cost of living in this State.

In Alaska, far too often, residents work for inadequate wages. We must do better. House Bill 28 ensures that no full-time worker lives in poverty. Alaska’s current minimum wage is \$9.89 an hour and it has only risen 14 cents in the past three years. This is not a livable wage considering the high cost of goods, services, health care and housing.

According to a living wage calculator from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, a living wage for a single parent with one child in Alaska is \$27.49 and the living wage for an adult without children is \$12.89. While House Bill 28 does not ensure parents will be able to support their children earning a minimum wage, it is a step in the right direction.

In addition to setting the minimum wage at \$15.00, House Bill 28 also establishes a working group to calculate the annual living wage within our state. In the future, the report that this group generates will inform lawmakers and members of the public what a fair wage is in Alaska.

A strong middle-class result in a strong economy. We ask for your support on HB 28, to bring security, stability, and fairness to our families.

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