



To: Members of the House Finance Committee

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

CC: Rep. Andy Josephson

Date: February 14, 2022

Subject: House Bill 30 - WORKERS' COMP: DEATH; PERM PARTIAL IMPAIR

The Alaska AFL-CIO supports HB 30 on the following grounds:

Protecting workers and their families: The Alaska AFL-CIO is hypervigilant that workplace hazards persist on many job sites and that this legislation is prescient. Alaska has many dangerous jobs and, as a state, it is important to protect these workers and their families. In the case of permanent partial impairment (PPI) or death, the loss caused by work injuries should be borne by the industry itself and not suffered alone by the injured worker and their families. Our fight for working people doesn't end when they leave the workplace, even in the cases of PPI or death. Losing a primary breadwinner can cause a downward spiral for working families, resulting in poverty and homelessness. The PPI rate is woefully out of date and undervalues partial permanent impairment. This legislation proposes a \$96,000 increase for PPI, which has not been updated in roughly twenty years, even for inflation. This increase is long overdue, as Alaska ranks among the states with the lowest PPI benefits. HB 30 is a crucial step toward making protection and respect for workers a reality.

Helping workers get back on their feet: In the case of PPI, the worker's ultimate goal is to find a new vocation suitable to their respective condition. The compensation outlined in the legislation is necessary to afford retraining for new lines of work. The Alaska AFL-CIO understands workers want to be on the job, and we support any legislation that helps them in this effort.

Respecting grieving families: The Alaska AFL-CIO applauds Section 4 of the bill, which provides for funeral expenses up to \$12,000. This benefit shows respect for grieving families and the dignity of deceased workers. A loss of a family member, neighbor, or colleague, can be traumatic for any community. This benefit allows affected communities the opportunity to honor the deceased in their chosen way.