



Representative Chris Tuck

Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 216
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 465-2095
Toll-free: (866) 465-2095

House Bill 372 – Eliminate Minimum Wage Exemption

Sponsor Statement

In 2018, the State of Alaska repealed regulations allowing employers to hire a worker with a physical or mental disability and pay them a subminimum wage. While the regulations were repealed, the section of state law authorizing the payment of a subminimum wage to disabled persons remains on the books. House Bill 372 seeks to change the subminimum wage law by removing all references to those whose earning capacity is impaired by physical or mental deficiency, age, or injury. As a result of this action, it would no longer be legal in Alaska to pay disabled persons a wage below the minimum wage.

Paying subminimum wages to those with physical and mental disabilities is a discriminatory policy that assumes those with disabilities are lesser than other workers. Every day in Alaska persons with disabilities prove those assumptions wrong.

For both disabled and nondisabled persons, work plays an important role in social and economic well-being. People often find purpose and structure in their work. Disabled persons have abilities and skills that are valued in the marketplace and those abilities and skills should not be undervalued by an antiquated law.

HB 372 seeks to clean up an unused and unneeded section of state law that, if left in place could result in disabled persons in Alaska being paid less than other workers based on their perceived capabilities rather than their demonstrated abilities.