

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



## REPRESENTATIVE ZACK FIELDS

Fairview • South Addition • Forest Park • Downtown • North Star

### **Sponsor Statement: HB 46**

Child care is a critical sector in the American economy. It is key to social and emotional learning for children and helps parents work and continue their own education. Yet this sector suffers from poor worker pay, high costs for parents, chronic issues regarding access, and high demand for quality. The result is high turnover, chronic stress, and a consistent shortage of workers.

Nationwide, up to 53% of child care workers are on some sort of public assistance. 25-30% do not have health insurance. By allowing child care providers to organize and collectively bargain, Alaska can better support high quality child care, address chronic issues such as the gender pay gap, and increase worker job satisfaction, child safety, and opportunity for workers.

HB 46 would empower our small business child care providers to negotiate with the state to improve wages, working conditions, and training. Strengthening the child care sector will enable more Alaskans to go back to work, supporting our families' economic security and employers' need to fill job openings.