

Juneau Building Trades Council



Brad Austin
PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS
LOCAL 262

Corey Baxter
OPERATING ENGINEERS
LOCAL 302

Trenton English
LABORERES
LOCAL 942

Jesse Young
INTERNATIONAL
BROTHERHOOD of
ELECTRICAL WORKERS
LOCAL 1547

Chris Dimond
CARPENTERS
LOCAL 1281

Anthony Ladd
IRONWORKERS
LOCAL 751

Bronson Frye
PAINTERS
LOCAL 1140

Chris Dimond
PILEDRIVERS & DIVERS
LOCAL 2520

Randy Golding
SHEETMETAL WORKERS
LOCAL 23

Antwon Dungey
TEAMSTERS
LOCAL 959

Todd Mitchell
HEAT/FROST INSULATORS
LOCAL 97

January 25, 2024

House Labor and Commerce
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99824

To House Labor and Commerce,

My name is Brad Austin, and I am writing to your committee on behalf of the Juneau Building trades and all our affiliated construction trades in support of House Bill 186.

Human labor trafficking, wage theft, tax fraud, worker misclassification and other crimes of this type are rampant across the construction industry. These practices hurt all workers, they hurt contractors who operate within the laws, and they hurt our State.

We are aware of the budget issues our state has been facing, and the direct result those budget issues have had on our state's ability to ensure labor laws are being followed. House bill 186 is a great example of how a private/public partnership can help ensure the entire Alaska construction industry is protected from the above-mentioned crimes. Alaska is on the precipice of an historic construction boom, and we have been failing to enforce our labor laws. The crimes mentioned above are only going to grow if we don't get a handle on this situation now.

I have read through some of the letters of opposition, and I have not seen one legitimate concern. These volunteers will have to adhere to strict Department rules and guidelines. The premise that contractors are going to send volunteers to "spy" on their competitors is laughable, especially regarding public construction projects. There can be no solicitation, there can be no unionizing, there can be no sharing of confidential information, business practices are not going to be attacked. This is simply a way to help the department enforce laws already enacted.

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The idea that "this could be a pathway into oversight into non-construction industries" should not be a concern, rather it should be a point of positivity. As the great late Labor Commissioner Tom Cashen famously said, "Alaska should not be a chickenshit place to work" Enforcing and protecting Alaska's workforce and honest businesses should be WELCOMED!

I would suggest that the committee look at adding an amendment to include the ability for volunteers to verify certificates of fitness and mechanical administer licenses. This may already be covered but I would suggest the committee ensure that they are.

The members of the Juneau Building Trades are grateful for the forward thinking of this committee and your clear desire to protect Alaska, and we look forward to this bill passing and becoming law.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "BRAD AUSTIN". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Brad Austin
President Juneau Building Trades

Juneau Building Trades Council

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