

Rep. Tom Brice's Labor Update

A legislative update on the Department of Labor

BILLS OF INTEREST

HB 345 - PROHIBITION OF NEGOTIATION OF HEALTH INSURANCE, BY ROKEBERG

This bill, just introduced and innocuously titled "an act relating to state employee health insurance", amends the public employment relations act to add **health insurance** to the list of items **NOT subject to negotiation**. HB 345 has been assigned to the Labor and Commerce committee. No hearing is scheduled.

HB 224 - PERA NOTICE BEFORE STRIKE, BY REP. KOHRING

HB 224 would force K-12 educational unions to give at least three days notice to their respective school district before going out on strike. This bill, if enacted would dramatically interfere with the contract negotiation process and significantly reduce the effectiveness of K-12 educational unions. HB 224 is currently before the Health and Social Services Committee.

HB 230 - 20 YEAR RETIREMENT FOR POLICE/FIRE DISPATCHERS, BY HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

This bill would place Police and Fire dispatchers in the 20 year peace officer retirement system. The purpose of the bill is to reduce turnover and motivate dispatchers to stay with their departments. The State will not incur additional cost as the dispatchers will make up the PERS contributions for both the employer and employee. After a hearing before the State Affairs committee it was referred to the Finance committee with a due pass recommendation.

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR BUDGET

The Labor subcommittee of the House Finance committee has held several meetings reviewing and revising the Departments mission as well as the measures which will be used to evaluate the departments' work. A serious look at the Departments' budget will begin this week. The Governor has proposed a general fund budget of \$14.7 million, approximately the same as last year. The House Majority in its gusto to indiscriminately cut state spending has set a cap on the general fund appropriation to the department of \$12.9 million, over 10% less than FY 00. Last year the subcommittee chose to turn OSHA over to the Feds. Luckily, due to the hard work of Don Etheridge, we were able to get those funds restored by the Finance committee. It is unknown where the cuts may come from this year but it is a good guess that OSHA will be on the block once again.

A copy of any bill may be obtained by calling Rep. Brice at 456-7423 or on the web at: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis21.htm> If you would like to have Rep. Brice's Labor Updates e-mailed to you please e-mail a request to Rep Brice and we will add you to our e-mail list.

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