

• Rep. Tom Brice's Labor Report •

A legislative update regarding Labor issues

ALERT – HB 309/SB 230 – Right to Work

SB 230, which makes Alaska a right to work State, remains active. While no date is set, a hearing before the Senate Labor & Commerce committee is *expected to occur in early March*.

Legislative Action on Pending Bills

HB 224 – PERA Notice Before Strike.

A hearing before the House HESS committee was held last week on this bill, which would require K-12 educational unions to give three days notice before a strike. School districts told the committee that three days notice are necessary for public safety reasons. According to them it takes parents three days to find alternative babysitting for their children. This is in contrast to when schools are closed due to weather; somehow arrangements can be made in a few hours! The bill was passed out of the committee and has been sent to Labor & Commerce committee.

Bills of Interest Recently Introduced

HB 370 - Youth Minimum Wage Exemption.

Representative Norman Rokeberg introduced a bill which would allow an employer to pay employees under the age of twenty 85% of the minimum wage during the first 90 days of employment. 85% of minimum wage (\$5.65) is \$4.80. Let's see - we want older teens to act like responsible adults but we are too cheap to reward them when they do! This bill was assigned to the Labor & Commerce committee. No hearing is scheduled.

HB 378/SB 272 - Worker's Compensation.

This bill restructures how worker's compensation is paid by requiring employers to pay annual service fees in lieu of taxes paid on worker's compensation insurance premiums. This bill should affect a positive change as the intent of the bill is to make the worker's comp program self-sufficient and not dependent upon the latest legislative budget battle. The bill was assigned to the Labor & Commerce committee. No hearing is scheduled.

HB 382 – Social Worker Licensure

Representative Jeannette James introduced this bill which would provide a method for a temporary social worker license and permit persons who are presently working as social workers to continue in their present employment even if they do not meet the licensing requirements. It is not presently scheduled for a hearing.

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A copy of any bill may be obtained by request of Rep. Brice or on the web at: <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis21.htm>.
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