

# • Rep. Tom Brice's Labor Report •

**A legislative update regarding Labor issues**

## **Alerts on Bills of Interest**

### **HB 370 - Youth Minimum Wage Exemption**

This bill would permit 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. A **teleconference hearing** is scheduled for this bill before the House Labor and Commerce Committee **Monday, March 6, 2000 at 3:15.**

### **HB 345 - Health Insurance**

This bill would make health insurance non-negotiable during public employee contract negotiations. A **teleconference hearing** is scheduled for this bill before the House Labor and Commerce Committee **Friday, March 17, 2000 at 3:15.**

## **Legislative Action on Pending Bills**

### **HB 309/SB 230 - Right to Work**

The House State Affairs committee held a hearing on this bill. A Washington DC import representing the National Right to Work Committee flew in to explain to the committee why this was good for Alaska. Little did he know he was walking into the Lion's den. The testimony was overwhelming against the bill. Nearly all members of the committee had little regard for his arguments and did not mince words in sharing their feelings. The committee took no action. The Senate Labor & Commerce committee also heard the bill. Upon the conclusion of the DC import's testimony the committee had no comment and moved on to other matters.

### **HB 378 - 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 encourage employers to provide for worker safety as their fees are based on the claims made against them. The week the House Labor & Commerce committee held a hearing on this bill; after a couple of minor amendments it is expected to pass out of the committee.

## **The Budget**

The budget for the Department of Labor was cut by \$1.5 million. Worker's comp was cut by a million dollars and Occupational Safety was cut by ½ a million. However, the budget subcommittee passed intent language which clearly stated that cuts were predicated on the passage of HB 378.

### **Contact Rep. Brice**

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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>.  
If you would like to have Rep. Brice's Labor Updates e-mailed to you please e-mail a request.

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