



HB186: Volunteer Labor Compliance Officer Program

Sponsor Statement

In Alaska, the construction industry plays a vital role in our state's economy, employing hardworking individuals who contribute to the growth and development of our communities. While many employers treat their workers fairly, some engage in unfair practices that harm workers. Wage theft remains a persistent issue, impacting countless workers who rightfully deserve fair compensation for their efforts. To address this problem, House Bill 186 proposes the creation of a Volunteer Labor Compliance Officer Program, aimed at promoting compliance with Alaska's labor laws, educating workers about their rights, and harnessing the power of community volunteers to ensure a fair and competitive construction industry.

The creation of a statewide Volunteer Labor Compliance Officer Program will serve multiple purposes:

1. **Provide Technical Assistance and Support:** Contractors and subcontractors will receive technical guidance to ensure proper worker classification and adherence to Alaska's labor laws.
2. **Empower Workers:** More workers will be educated about their wage-related rights, ensuring awareness of their entitlements.
3. **Leverage Community Volunteers:** Authorized community volunteers will be trained to interview workers at worksites concerning wages, benefits, and hours, reducing the burden on government resources, and fostering labor law compliance.
4. **Reduce the Budget:** Alleviate state budget pressures while enhancing labor law enforcement in Alaska's construction industry.

Creating a new program like the Volunteer Labor Compliance Program raises the ceiling by lifting the floor, ensuring that workers are protected on the job while simultaneously promoting economic development and growth within our state. By ensuring compliance with labor standards, we can prevent unfair competition resulting from unscrupulous employers who exploit workers and undermine responsible businesses. This will create an environment that encourages fair and ethical practices, fostering healthy competition and attracting businesses that prioritize the well-being of their workforce.

In conclusion, we urge you to support and champion the passage of House Bill 186 to create a Volunteer Labor Compliance Officer Program in Alaska. By doing so, you will demonstrate your commitment to the rights and well-being of workers, the promotion of fair business practices, and the overall prosperity of our state.

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