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EMBARGOED UNTIL 2PM

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Press Release

Community advocates, labor leaders march to protest Dunleavy's budget in Anchorage

Anchorage, AK – A coalition of community members, labor leaders and grassroots activists delivered a cease-and-desist letter to Governor Dunleavy's office today. The letter demands the administration halt plans to outsource public services without appropriate due process.

The Dunleavy administration recently contracted with Wellpath - a hospital management company with ties to the private prison industry - to operate the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API). The state used an emergency procurement process to accelerate the sale of operations at API– community advocates and union leaders argue the process was flawed from the start.

"The state has violated our collective bargaining rights, and we will fight to preserve those rights," Jake Metcalfe, Executive Director of the Alaska State Employees Association (ASEA) stated. "The lack of transparency throughout this process has been unprecedented."

Wellpath brings a history of federal lawsuits and safety violations – almost 1,400 lawsuits were filed in the last ten years. State employees at API are deeply concerned that record will continue in Alaska, and the administration will force the sale of additional state services to other out-of-state contractors.

"My concern for our members is this process will be repeated throughout state government", ASEA President Dawn Bundick explained. "Alaskan jobs and livelihoods are at stake. We need to fight for Alaskans first."

Dunleavy has shown interest in outsourcing other facilities besides API, such as eldercare and the Marine Highway system. Many studies have shown outsourcing rarely produces the savings claimed by advocates, and often ends up costing taxpayers much more over the long run.