



Governor Walker's Proposed FY 2018 Budget

The Governor's budget proposal is not good news for GGU employees and ASEA. Your Union, is already working to oppose privatization and to moderate to the greatest extent possible the overall reduction to departmental budgets and the number of our members that will be negatively impacted.

This is just the first step in the process of a FY 2018 budget being adopted. As you are aware, the Alaska Legislature will consider the Governor's proposed budget. It is impossible to predict what actions they may take or changes they will make.

ASEA will be communicating with the Legislature on a daily basis regarding the impact of the budget on our ability to provide needed services to the citizens of Alaska. Also, we are preparing to take every step available to us to overcome the Governor's recommendations on privatization.

The Governor's announcement of legislation to freeze Merit Steps and Pay Increments for all Exempt (EX) and Partially Exempt (PX) employees marks a regressive step in maintaining a quality State of Alaska workforce.

ASEA will strongly oppose the legislation even though it will have no immediate effect on GGU members. Merit Steps and Pay Increments are included in ASEA's current

Collective Bargaining Agreement which doesn't expire until June 30, 2019. The State is required to honor Merit Steps and Pay Increments for GGU members until our current contract expires.

However, successfully opposing this proposed legislation now is important so it won't be an issue when ASEA begins negotiation on a new Collective Bargaining Agreement in late 2018.

ASEA staff is currently developing materials and talking points that will be important for communicating with our elected officials, friends, and neighbors about the Governor's Budget proposal. Beginning in January we will be conducting worksite meetings to review with you the talking points and to assure you are fully informed on what the Union is doing to moderate the Governor's Budget proposal.

Go to the ASEA website at <http://www.afscmelocal52.org> and click on the button "Governor's Proposed FY 2018 Operating Budget" for current information and updates.

Members with questions should contact their ASEA Business Agent or Executive Director Jim Duncan. Please check the ASEA website <http://www.afscmelocal52.org> for contact information.

Alaska's Next Legislature Features Coalition Caucus

A significant outcome of the 2016 Primary and General elections is a new Majority organization in the Alaska State House, replacing decades of Republican party control over the chamber.

Twenty-two legislators—Republican, Democratic and Independent—allied themselves as a new caucus under Speaker

of the House Rep. Bryce Edgmon, (D)-Dillingham and Majority Leader Rep. Chris Tuck, (D)-Anchorage. Rep. Louise Stutes, (R)-Kodiak will serve as the Majority Whip.

The new House Majority leadership also includes Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux, (R)-Anchorage as Chair of the House Rules

Continued on page 2

What You'll Find in this Issue

COVER

- ◆ Governor Walker's Proposed FY 2018 Budget
- ◆ Alaska's Next Legislature Features Coalition Caucus *(continued on page 3)*
- ◆ Famous Words of Solidarity

Page 2

- ◆ Did You Know ?
- ◆ AFSCME Free College Benefit
- ◆ From The Desk Of The Executive Board President—Year End Message

Page 3

- ◆ ASEA Health Trust News -
Trustee Runoff Election And Other News
- ◆ Alaska's Next Legislature Features Coalition Caucus *(continued from page 1)*

Page 4

- ◆ ASEA Never Quits

Famous Words of Solidarity

*Labor Unions are the leading force for democratization and progress.—
Noam Chomsky*

*The labor movement means just this: It is the last noble protest of the American people against the power of incorporated wealth.—
Wendell Phillips*

Labor never quits. We never give up the fight – no matter how tough the odds, no matter how long it takes.—George Meany

Solidarity Update

Did You Know?

Did You Know That:

New Year customs actually date back to ancient times.



NOISY NEW YEARS

- In ancient Thailand, guns were fired in an attempt to ward off demons
- In China, firecrackers are set off to route the forces of darkness
- In Italy, they let the church bells ring to bid farewell to the old year

LUCKY FOOD

- In the Southern United States, black-eyed peas and pork are eaten for good luck
- The Dutch eat ring shaped treats to symbolize coming full circle and it is considered good luck
- In Rosh Hashanah tradition, apples dipped in honey are traditional

DRINK

- Wassail, the Gaelic term for Good Luck is served in some parts of England
- The Scottish version of wassail or spiced hot pint is traditionally drank to each others' prosperity

A NEW START

- The making of New Year's Resolutions was started by the Babylonians around 2600 B.C. as a way to reflect on the past and plan ahead

OLD CUSTOMS/FOLKLORE— sayings and beliefs

- On New Year's Eve, kiss the person you hope to keep kissing
- If the old year goes out like a lion, the new year will come in like a lamb

AFSCME ~ Free College Benefit

Dear Members,

Back in July, we announced a [new AFSCME benefit](#) available to you and your family: a *free* associate degree from Eastern Gateway Community College. Your response has been overwhelming, with nearly 20,000 inquiries made, more than 5,000 applicants and more than 2,000 students currently enrolled in classes. We are thrilled that so many of you are taking advantage of this great benefit.

Having a college degree is more important than ever for getting ahead these days, but tuition costs just keep getting higher and higher. That's why the [AFSCME Free College Benefit](#) is **absolutely free**. You, your spouse, your children and grandchildren can earn a college degree without digging into your own pockets or piling on student debt. And because Eastern Gateway is a public, regionally accredited college, the credits you work hard to earn are transferable to other schools. This can literally save you and your family thousands of dollars.

You won't be left to figure this out for yourself, either. Every student gets to talk to real people who will help you through the process. The classes are online, so they fit into anyone's busy schedule, and there are tutors and coaches who make sure you aren't on your own.

An associate degree can be your pathway to new opportunities, greater responsibility, a better job and higher wages. This is a unique opportunity — available only to AFSCME members, your families and retirees. [You can find more information about the benefit and available degree programs here.](#)

You work hard for your community, and that work can often go unsung. The [AFSCME Free College Benefit](#) is one more way AFSCME helps members secure the opportunities and the respect you deserve.

Enrollment for the first spring session is now open and Early Childhood Education degrees are now offered. Classes begin on January 17. Don't wait to start this exciting new program and help grow your career!

In solidarity,

Lee Saunders, AFSCME President



FREE COLLEGE BENEFIT

From The Desk Of The Executive Board President ~Year End Message

Sister and Brothers

The most important goal I would like to encourage and foster is member activism, which means getting you involved in Your Union. The more members we have actively involved, the stronger we will be. If you are and have been actively involved in union functions— THANK YOU! Unity in our communities is so important because collectively we can make positive changes.

By reaching out and attending meetings either in person or telephonically, I know that ASEA chapters and committees have been actively working on various activities and supporting their local communities through member volunteerism.

What's Next:

As a Union, we need to better represent ourselves in the public's eye. Be strong and be proud to be a union member. ASEA represents working families in the public sector and we need the public to stand behind us as we faithfully provide vital services in our local communities. I believe we must endeavor to be who we say we are, AFSCME STRONG! and demonstrate that with love and kindness.

Continued on page 3

Solidarity Update

Trustee Runoff Election And Other News



**ASEA HEALTH
TRUST NEWS**

TRUSTEE RUNOFF ELECTION

Result Announced!

Brittany R. Staker has been elected to the ASEA Health Trust Board of Trustees. She was officially seated at the Board of Trustee meeting on December 13, 2016.

FAIRBANKS COALITION HEALTH CENTER

Coming soon! Watch the ASEA Health Trust website homepage for news about the grand opening in mid-December.

CONTACT THE ASEA HEALTH TRUST SECURELY

Communicate Online with Confidence

Did you know that you can communicate online directly and

securely with the ASEA Health Trust Administrator?

The 'Contact Us' feature on the ASEA Health Trust website protects your personal information. It also keeps your questions about your benefits and claims completely confidential. Go to aseahealth.org to log in with your secure password and then click Contact Us to use this feature.

You'll get a reply within two business days. Watch for an email advising you to log in to your account on aseahealth.org to view the response. As an added plus, a history of your messages and the Administrators' responses are permanently stored with your account and you can always go back to review them.

Alaska's Next Legislature Features Coalition Caucus

Continued from page 1

Committee and Reps. Paul Seaton, (R)-Homer and Neal Foster, (D)-Nome as Co-Chairs of the House Finance Committee. Rep. Les Gara, (D)-Anchorage will serve as Vice-Chair of the House Finance Committee.

In addition to assignments to the powerful Rules and Finance Committees, the coalition caucus has selected chairs, co-chairs, and vice-chairs for the remaining House committees from its membership.

More than 20 years have passed since the House was organized by a Majority other than a Republican caucus.

In comparison to recent legislative sessions, the State House will now be operated with a geographic balance instead of a bias toward roaded population centers.

The new Speaker of the House, Rep. Edgmon, hails from far-west Dillingham and is the first legislator of Alaska Native heritage to hold the position.

Moderate Republicans Reps. LeDoux, Seaton, and Stutes won their respective races against primary campaign challengers who were supported by their own party and joined the new coalition caucus to cement the majority. During the 29th Alaska Legislature, the three moderates—along with Rep. Jim Colver, (R)-Palmer and

Democrat Reps. Edgmon and Foster—were called the "Musk Ox Coalition."

In what has been called the "Musk Ox Revolt," these six legislators resisted the Republican House Majority plan to draw billions of dollars from Permanent Fund earnings to avoid negotiating a bi-partisan budget in 2015.

Colver wrote in an Aug. 2, 2016 op-ed piece for the Alaska Dispatch News that he was "one of two Republican legislators to vote against leadership's bill to put three legislators on the Alaska Gasline Development Corp. (ADGC) Board," citing a provision in the Alaska Constitution prohibiting Legislators from serving in another branch of government.

Rep. Colver earned the endorsement of the ASEA Political Action Committee for House District 9 ahead of the August primary, losing the contest to a party-backed challenger who went on to win the seat.

The ASEA PAC also endorsed, based on their political record and commitment to state services, each of the twenty-two incumbent law-makers and legislative new-incomers who now make up the house majority.

From The Desk Of The Executive Board President ~ Year End Message

Continued from page 2

ASEA Never Quit is a short video branding campaign we are embarking on to make ASEA more visible to the public by highlighting the work we do for the State of Alaska. The campaign will showcase ASEA so it is seen and heard through your voice as a State of Alaska public sector employee. Remember, the service we provide to others is delivered at the high service level we expect for ourselves. The more the public sees us, the more the public will know we are their families, friends and neighbors. Contact your chapter president to find out how you can become involved.

Worksite Meetings: Worksite meetings are held during the lunch hour and address topics that inform members about issues that directly affect them. Attend and participate in the next meeting at your worksite so you can learn about specific issues, ask questions and share your experiences and concerns.

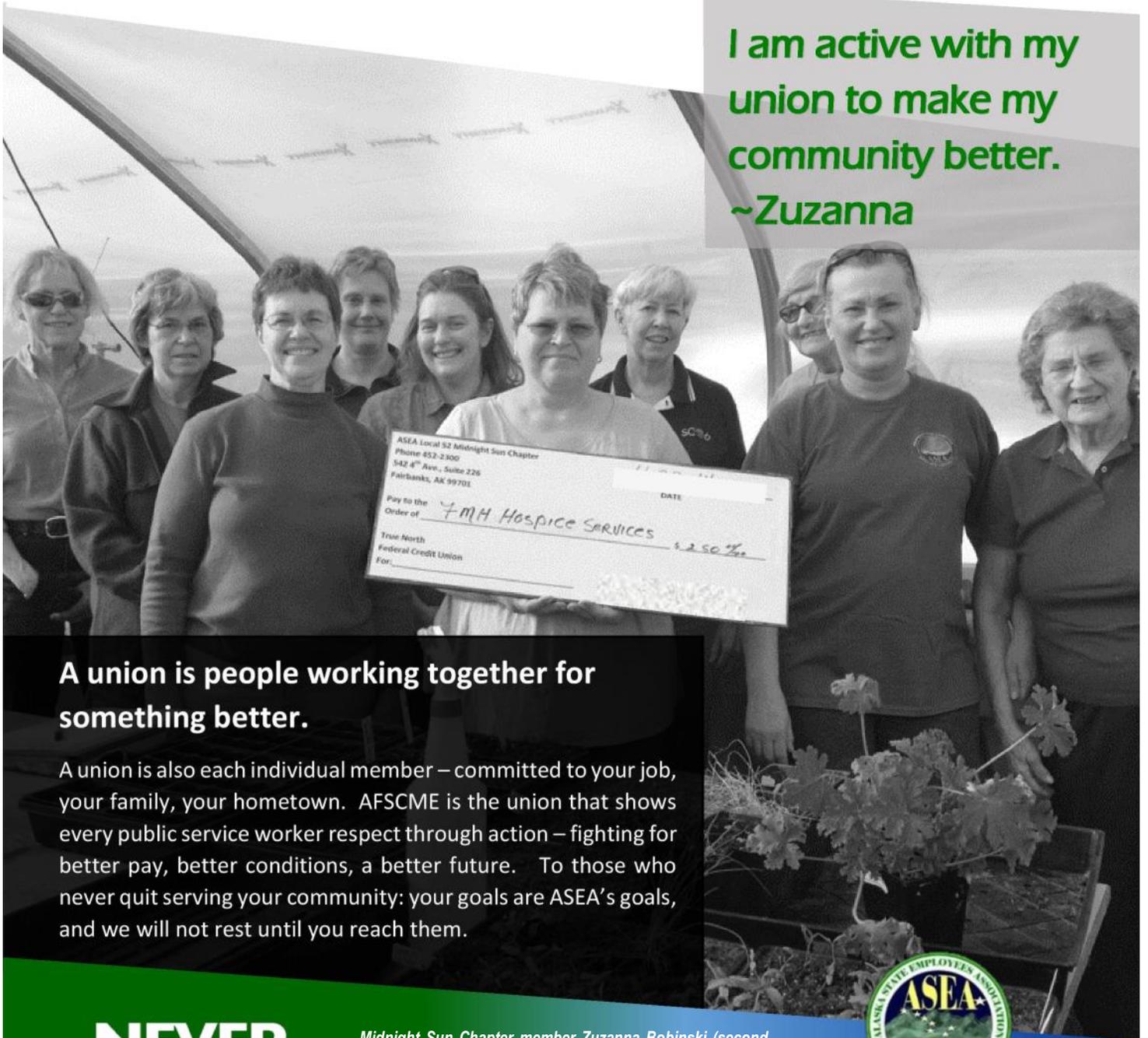
I would like to hear from you about your success stories as a proud member of our Union.

*In Solidarity and Friendship,
Happy Holidays!
Dawn F Bundick,
Executive Board President*

Solidarity Update

ASEA NEVER QUILTS WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITIES FOR A BETTER FUTURE.

I am active with my union to make my community better.
~Zuzanna



A union is people working together for something better.

A union is also each individual member – committed to your job, your family, your hometown. AFSCME is the union that shows every public service worker respect through action – fighting for better pay, better conditions, a better future. To those who never quit serving your community: your goals are ASEA’s goals, and we will not rest until you reach them.

NEVER QUIT
AFSCME

Midnight Sun Chapter member Zuzanna Bobinski (second from the right) presenting a \$250 donation to the Memorial Hospital Annual Fairbanks Hospice fundraiser 2015.

