

ASEA AFSCME Local 52 Newsletter

Jan - Apr 2023

Public Employees Call and Write in Support of Returning to a Defined Benefit Plan

With more than 40% vacancy rates in some offices, State of Alaska employees are asked to do more with less as co-workers leave state service in search of employment with better retirement benefits. Senate Bill 88 (SB 88) is a bill offering current PERS/TRS Tier IV employees an option to convert their 401(k) accounts to credit in a defined benefit pension system.

Public employees across the state and across sectors – including wildland firefighters, police officers, teachers, and nurses – have been calling and writing in support of SB88 - citing climbing vacancy rates, burnout, and little to no incentive to stay in Alaska absent a secure retirement. ASEA Executive Director Heidi Drygas remarked, "SB 88 provides a path to stabilizing employment in public service for the benefit of families and communities across our great state. The current defined contribution retirement plan has placed a turnover tax on the delivery of essential public services. With marketable experience and a nest egg, many employees soon look for new jobs that offer certainty in retirement elsewhere."

SB88 is sponsored by Sen. Cathy Giessel with a long list of co-sponsors. The bill must pass out of all of its assigned committees, and receive a majority of votes from the full Alaska House of Representatives and Alaska Senate.

Text "AKLEG" to 237-263 for this and other ASEA legislative alerts



Message from President Dawn Bundick

2023 has been a busy year already! February was Black History Month and events were held across the state recognizing the contributions people of color have made in our communities and our country. I am proud to be the first African American President of our union and welcome and celebrate our current and previous African American members that have served our Union in leadership positions. Representation is important and it is also important to continue to share these stories, especially in our Unions, and recognize critical African American leaders of the labor movement including Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and our very own AFSCME International President Lee Saunders. Check out AFSCME's exclusive I AM podcast feature, streaming now, exploring the history and legacy of the 1968 Memphis Sanitation Workers' strike.



Visit iamstory.com

Staff the State Rally for our Neighbors



During ASEA's Political Education Leadership (PEL) Conference which took place in Juneau in February, ASEA members gathered on the capitol steps in a Staff the State Rally for our neighbors. Standing in solidarity with our members on the frontlines of the SNAP Benefit backlog and crisis - calling on our legislators to do what they can to staff these vacant positions and to pay employees fair wages that reflect the complexity of the work. ASEA members met with nearly every State House Representative and State Senator during the PEL conference, discussing the importance of returning to a defined benefit (SB88 was later introduced that addresses just that), adequate staffing, adequate pay, and more. Following the rally, the State took several actions to address the staffing crisis including recently adding funding to fill positions in DPA. **Check out the ASEA DPA Committee - a place for ASEA members in DPA to support one another, come up with solutions, ideas, and more!**

Want to see your artwork or photos featured in our offices?

We are decorating! Please send your best photos of ASEA meetings or events - or anything that represents ASEA, unions, and/or public service to our photo upload link/member story link!

afscmelocal52.org/memberstory

Upcoming Events

- Steward Training | April 12-13
- ASEA Executive Board | May 10-11



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President Bundick Message Continued-

March was Women's History Month. Did you know that on average, women in unions earn 22% more than nonunion women? And African American Union members make \$173 more per week than their nonunion counterparts! That is the power of collective bargaining!

In April, ASEA will host Steward Training (Basic & Advanced). The State of Alaska GGU contract allows 1 steward for every 30 bargaining unit members. That adds up to about 262 stewards. Right now, we have about 160 Stewards - so there is room for plenty more! If you would like to be a Steward or want to nominate a co-worker, please complete the steward application and nomination form on the ASEA website or send your interest to aseahq@afscmelocal52.org. Your Chapter will check your eligibility and appoint qualified stewards.

Let's keep Honoring ourselves and Celebrating you. This may sound selfish but I heard this statement during a self-care webinar, "It's all about me in 2023". Our days are special each day we wake up. Take care of yourself.

Thank you for all you do for our State and City government. As always, I will continue to HONOR AND SERVE YOU WITH STYLE AND GRACE!

Dawn Bundick
ASEA AFSCME Local 52 President



ASEA Committee Spotlight

ASEA Women's Issues Committee has had a tremendous impact on working conditions for breastfeeding mothers in state employment.

Thanks to the work of our committee, every working mother has access to comfortable and safe nursing stations. Our committee also made sure that the ASEA Health Trust covers important gynecological procedures that are used for the detection and diagnosis of various cancers.

Congratulations to our new Committee Chair, Supanika Ordonez, Juneau Chapter Board Member. Consider joining the Women's Issues Committee or supporting it by purchasing our Pink Wear!

Visit afscmelocal52.org/union-leadership/pink-link



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Who We Are



We are Alaska's public service workers, and we work everywhere our communities need us. We take care of our elders and pioneers and people with disabilities so they may live with dignity and independence. We keep our streets clear and our water clean. We provide the direct services that protect our children and connect families in need to vital support and services. We are dispatchers and the front line for emergencies and natural disasters. We fight fires and protect homes in the rural bush. We are the administrative and clerical backbone to public agencies. We are the nurses and safety inspectors who see to the health and safety of our communities. And so much more. We are proud Alaskans, and proud public service workers. We are AFSCME Local 52, the largest union in Alaska. Together, we make Alaska happen.

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