



ALASKA STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local 52

Press Release
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Contact: ASEA Headquarters
ASEAHQ@afscmelocal52.org
(907) 277-5200

ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 Calls on Senators Murkowski and Sullivan to Support Aid for Alaska

Frontline workers call on Senators and Congressman Young to pass significant aid to states, cities, towns, schools and tribes supported by a majority of Alaskans, top economists, business interests and state and local elected leaders

Anchorage – the Alaska State Employees Association (ASEA) shares the growing concern that delayed, flexible federal assistance for states, cities, towns, schools, and tribes poses a significant threat to the nation’s ability to beat the virus and its economic recovery after the COVID-19 recession. Ample evidence shows that the absence of aid to fund state and local public services across the country has already slowed a 2021 rebound.

ASEA Executive Director Jake Metcalfe sees a common cause in the Biden proposal that has exactly the right priorities, including fund for public services every community- red or blue, rural and urban - needs to contain the virus and get the economy moving again. “I’m glad to see that ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce agree on the Biden plan. After nearly a year, the pandemic has presented unexpected challenges at a devastating, sobering cost,” he said. “The toll has been huge. The time is now to help Alaska, its communities, and our families. We cannot beat this virus, open small business and get our communities on a path to recovery if we lay off frontline workers and cut public services.”

Massive budget shortfalls caused by the virus are hurting Alaska’s communities:

The [Anchorage Daily News reported](#) that Canada has extended its ban on cruise ships through February 2022. This news adds salt to already wounded coastal communities that have been hammered by lost tourist cashflow, cuts in ferry services, and natural disasters exacerbated by climate change. For Interior Alaska, the [Fairbanks Daily News Miner reported](#) that a flat budget proposal from Governor Dunleavy, coupled with reduced federal funding, will force school districts to make difficult decisions including increasing classroom sizes and eliminate hundreds of jobs.

[Bloomberg Municipal finance reporter Fola Akinnibi](#) reported that cuts to states, cities, and towns “are exerting the biggest drag on the U.S. economy in more than a decade as they eliminate jobs and cut spending in the wake of the pandemic, underscoring President Joe Biden’s push to extend aid to make up for lost tax revenue.”



Metcalf agrees that aid for our states, cities, towns, schools and tribes, can't come soon enough. "As revenue plummets, demand for public services have skyrocketed due to the pandemic. We need our congressional delegation to fight for the resources our state needs now. We cannot afford to wait while more Alaskan's lose their jobs and valuable services are gutted," Metcalfe said.

Alaskans overwhelming support significant aid, and economists agree it is a smart investment.

71% of Alaskans surveyed last summer said they want Congress to go big on aid to fund public services, supporting \$1 trillion in aid to states, cities, towns, tribes, and schools.

Economists are echoing the warnings of unions and elected officials, calling for the urgent need of federal relief for states, cities, counties, and schools - stating that without it, the health and economic crises we face will be prolonged.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce joined the chorus of groups and officials last year urging for state and local assistance, listing that priority among its top five for coronavirus relief legislation.

Metcalf said, "We must go big and we urge Senators Murkowski and Sullivan and Representative Young to support the President's plan."

As vaccine distribution continues, the health crisis could be eclipsed by economic stagnation and job loss if local programs, community services, and the public employees who deliver them are lost.

[The Bloomberg article](#) continues, "In a conference call Thursday held by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties, officials warned of more job and service cuts as they contend with the increased expenses that come with battling to the pandemic."

ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 is an affiliate of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). AFSCME represents more than 1.4 million public service workers across the country. ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 is the largest union of state and municipal public service workers in Alaska with more than 8,000 hardworking public employees. ASEA members include public health nurses, virologists, guardians, emergency dispatchers and responders, firefighters, and public safety officers. They work in 24-hour facilities, ensuring our most vulnerable Alaskans are cared for. Alaska can't recover our economy or end this pandemic without the dedicated work from ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 members.

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