



ALASKA STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local 52

Press Release
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 5, 2023
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ASEA Files Class Action Grievance over Payroll Delays *calls on State leadership to solve its staffing crisis across all sectors*

Juneau – On Thursday, ASEA AFSCME Local 52 filed a class action grievance with the State of Alaska over payroll processing delays resulting in employees not being paid accurately or in a timely manner. Concerns expressed by state employees and state labor unions have not been addressed and payroll-related issues have developed into a widespread and unmanageable crisis. Impacted employees across the state are challenged to meet daily personal financial obligations including mortgage, rent payments, groceries, childcare, medical expenses and other basic needs.

Every two weeks, the Alaska Division of Payroll Services staff review and process more than 14,000 timesheets. This undertaking requires a team of seventy-five qualified individuals for payroll to run smoothly so paychecks can be delivered on time and in the correct amount. As of Sept. 10, only 37 people were employed at Payroll Services, making an already complicated job a nearly impossible task.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the State of Alaska and ASEA outlines pay procedures providing recourse for employees to alert payroll over problems in payment amounts or delivery times. However, chronic understaffing has hamstrung the Division of Payroll to the point of disrupting basic services to employees. Meanwhile, management inaction to staff and support state payroll services has resulted in employees waiting months—or over a year—for a resolution to their pay problems.

ASEA Executive Director Heidi Drygas emphasized that this isn't an issue caused by payroll staff, "*[t]his is a symptom of what happens when teams of employees are asked to do more with less, when employees are treated and paid poorly, and when state operating budgets are ratcheted down so tight that failure is all but assured. The consequence of these policies will affect more than state employees, this spells a breakdown of state services to all Alaskans and a failure of leadership to provide basic and essential services to constituents.*"

Ensuring dignity on the job with better pay and a more secure retirement will help the state and public employers around Alaska with recruitment and retention of qualified and career-minded workers. All of Alaska will benefit when the Department of Administration completes its comprehensive state pay study and the Legislature passes Senate Bill 88 to restore a pension for public employees.

More than 8,000 ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 members deliver the critical public services Alaskans rely on every day. ASEA is a member-driven, member-run organization providing professional services and representation for public employees across the state. ASEA members are Alaskans working for Alaska and keep Alaska running!

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