



# ALASKA STATE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

## American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees Local 52

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Local Union Leaders Respond to Dunleavy Administration Attack on Workers' Rights**

Today, the State of Alaska sued the Alaska State Employees Association in an attempt to implement parts of a plan to attack workers' rights on the job. This gross overreach is part of the Administration's continued efforts to undermine worker's rights.

Public service workers across the country are sticking with their unions because they know when people come together in a union, they can improve their workplaces, lift up their families and use their collective voice to make services better and more efficient for their communities

Americans across different sectors – grocery services, newspapers, health care, and others – and workers across the country are organizing because they see the value of unions. In fact, 64% of Americans support labor unions per a recent [Gallup poll](#). [Half of all non-unionized](#) workers say they would join a union if given the chance.

At issue is a recent reinterpretation (or misinterpretation) by Dunleavy Attorney General Kevin Clarkson of the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision known as *Janus v. AFSCME*. Prior to this recently released memo from the Dunleavy administration, 14 states including Alaska had the same basic understanding of the decision and had implemented the changes outlined in *Janus*.

“The *Janus* decision solely involves non-union members, plain and simple, and ASEA has worked diligently to comply with the new law. In contrast, Governor Dunleavy's actions violates the Supreme Court decision and turns a blind eye to the contract he signed with us,” said Jake Metcalfe, Executive Director for the Alaska State Employees Association/AFSCME, Local 52. “Dunleavy is interfering with his employees' contractual rights, violating their First Amendment rights and attempting to take all power away from them. This is ‘big brother’ government at its worst. His actions are shameful.”

The Clarkson memo that today's lawsuit is based on wrongly asserts that the *Janus* decision should apply to union members, and that existing union members must reaffirm their choice regularly. No other state has interpreted *Janus* in this way. Minutes after Clarkson shared his memo with the press, the far-right Alaska Policy Forum sent an email revealing the real intent of the new interpretation:



*“In the coming weeks, we will provide expert analysis and commentary to the media and public as well as write articles and op-eds about how the Attorney General’s decision is a win for worker freedom. We have a plan to make our case nationally and showcase how this ruling should be precedent for other states to follow suit.*

*Our goal is a reduction {in union membership} of 20 percent by 2022.*

*Let’s make that a reality! We have access to the tools and expertise to educate union members, and now we have the legal opinion to make our work even more effective.”*

“It is plainly evident that the Clarkson memo and Governor Dunleavy’s lawsuit are all part of a larger attack on workers’ rights, orchestrated by Americans for Prosperity and the Alaska Policy Forum – secretive groups funded through the Koch Brothers’ network,” said Vince Beltrami, President of the Alaska AFL-CIO. “We will continue our fight to protect workers’ rights to ensure they have a collective voice in the workplace.”

Find more information at the following website: [www.akafclcio.org/attack-on-workers-rights](http://www.akafclcio.org/attack-on-workers-rights)

