

ALASKA AFL-CIO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JUNE 2, 2017

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Alaskans to Rally Across the State on June 11 to Keep Alaska Open for Business

Yesterday pink slips went out to nearly 19,000 state employees, warning them that if the legislature doesn't reach a budget deal by July 1st, they will lose their jobs. With two weeks until the end of the special session, zero progress is evident between the Senate and House majorities on reaching a deal on a comprehensive plan.

Simultaneous rallies will take place at 1:00 pm on June 11th in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau encouraging lawmakers to come up with a plan they can agree on before the scheduled June 16th end of the current special session. A government shutdown looms just two weeks later on July 1st if a deal is not reached.

Over the past eighteen months, credit rating agencies, businesses, economists, chambers of commerce, labor organizations, foundations, and an assortment of diverse coalitions and people of all political stripes around the state have concurred that a comprehensive fiscal plan is necessary to deal with the state's \$2.5 billion budget deficit.

Governor Walker and the House Majority Coalition have done the heavy lifting, working diligently in proposing and passing a plan that includes budget reductions, a structured use of Permanent Fund earnings, and new broad-based revenue. The Senate majority on the other hand has only passed one fiscal measure all session, which would still leave a hole in the budget approaching a billion dollars, while hoping oil prices recover.

"Hope is not a strategy," said Vince Beltrami, president of the Alaska AFL-CIO. "The priorities of the Senate Majority are out of whack. While hundreds of teachers lost their jobs last week and contemplate having to leave the state for jobs Outside, the Senate Majority has proposed an austerity plan that will undoubtedly and unnecessarily prolong and deepen the state's recession. It is past time to get the job done and set Alaska on a path to diverse longterm fiscal stability and a new time of economic prosperity. That won't happen until we are on sound fiscal footing."

More information on rally locations can be found here: www.akaficio.org/rally-for-alaska #####