

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE GERAN TARR

Sponsor Statement – HB 30

“An act relating to the payment of sick leave by employers; and providing for an effective date”

The National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago in September, 2015 stated wage and job loss due to illness are very real threats for workers without paid sick days. Nearly one in four workers report that they have lost a job or were threatened with job loss for taking time off due to personal or family illness.

HB30 would allow employees to earn paid sick leave by accruing paid time off at a rate of one hour for every 40 hours worked. This equates to approximately 6.5 days of paid sick leave per year for the average full time employee.

Recent estimates by the U.S. Department of Labor reveal approximately 122,000 Alaskans currently work full-time with no policy for paid sick leave. Without a single guaranteed paid day off, these Alaskans are forced to choose between their own health and their paycheck. Low-wage workers are hit hardest, with retail, hospitality, restaurant and daycare workers unable to care for themselves or their loved ones if they become sick. According to data from a new **national survey** released by the National Partnership for Women & Families, only 14 percent of women working in the fast food industry say they have access to paid sick days. **That means that as many as 86 percent of women employed at fast food restaurants may have to choose between going to work sick – and risking their own health and the health of the public – or staying home and losing income or even their jobs.**

Alaskans who handle our food, groceries or care for our children and elderly are being forced to decide whether their paycheck or their health are more important. People coming to work sick is not only a public health risk but is also bad for business. Providing paid sick leave to those who earn it saves businesses money through decreased turnover and more productive employees.

I urge your support of HB30 for the health of our working families and their paychecks.