



Alfred Birtz

Supervisory Union Contract Negotiator Nominee 2023

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(Please contact with any questions or suggestions that you may have)

Hello fellow SU members! I wanted to take a moment and introduce myself and explain my interest in the role of contract negotiator for our upcoming SU contract negotiation. I have been a State of Alaska employee for almost 10 years and an SU member for almost 7. I currently work as a regional manager for the Office of Children's Services in Anchorage, Alaska. As such, I see the daily struggles that our current contract metes out regarding hiring and retention of staff.

The past two negotiation cycles for SU have led to unacceptable contracts that failed to provide to the ongoing financial well-being of our members. While I believe that the past negotiation teams tried, now is the time in which SU (as a collective) needs to put their foot down and say enough is enough. Contract after contract we have seen other bargaining units gain much more favorable benefits and salary raises while ours have continued to lag significantly behind national averages. In the past year we have seen the Department of Law provide more than \$10K in raises to their members and in this past legislative cycle, the state legislature and the executive branch saw raises of more than 50%. In the public, the state legislature voiced that much of this was due to inflation. In 2023 the United States provided a Social Security increase of more than 8% to everyone receiving a Social Security benefit. Additionally, private sector has seen between 20% - 25% in pay raises over the past 3 years while our last union contract provided for 3% in year one, 1% in year two and 1% in year three.

Currently, we find it a struggle to hire into many of our positions that are under the SU umbrellas. Most workers can find better pay while working for Target than they would be provided for by the State of Alaska. Now, pay is not the only consideration. Our health benefits have been in shambles for some time and do not come close to matching the benefits of other unions (such as GGU). Whomever you elect to the negotiation teams needs to look at the entirety of the contract negotiations and not become "stuck" in only thinking about wages.

I believe that I am a "big picture" thinker and will be able to do just that. If elected, I commit to providing all ongoing efforts to improve all aspects of the SU contract with the State of Alaska. Additionally, while I will be a voice of reason, I will also be willing to put my foot down and say enough is enough. If that means that the union needs to exercise its ability to go to arbitration or strike, then so be it. The state needs to realize that our union is important to the ongoing operations of all state agencies and provide fair pay and benefits to us all. I welcome any feedback, questions or suggestions for what you would like to see in the next union contract and urge you to contact me at the email listed above.

Thanks!

Al Birtz