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Alaska Miners Association Statement in Opposition to Ballot Measure 1

Ballot Measure 1, formally filed as 23 AMLS, described as *“an initiative to increase Alaska’s minimum wage, provide workers with paid sick leave, and protect workers from practices that violate their constitutional rights,”* will appear on the November General Election ballot.

Like so many other ballot measures, AMA believes that this is bad policy with no opportunity for public input to improve the harmful provisions and retain the good. Ballot Measure 1 presents itself as a law to increase the minimum wage in Alaska, but also includes unclear provisions requiring mandatory paid sick leave for businesses of any type and size, and prohibiting employers from sharing “political matters” and religious information with employees

AMA is proud of our industry’s average annual wage of \$122,000 and is a firm believer in training Alaskans to be skilled workers in our mines. Mining remains one of the top wage providers in Alaska. In fact, the majority of employers in the State of Alaska are paying far above what the wage would be raised to in 2027 should this measure pass. We certainly applaud efforts to help Alaskans cover the increased costs of living, but that concept is merely a façade to promote a full package containing separate, harmful provisions.

Ballot Measure 1 contains a mandatory sick leave provision that, in AMA’s opinion, is the most threatening part to Alaskan employers. It is a “one size fits all” application that ignores Alaska’s industries that are seasonal and industries that have rotational work schedules. Should the measure pass, *all* businesses that provide paid sick leave must alter their current policy to meet the minimum standards set by this initiative for how the sick leave can be used, and who it applies to. Employers would be required to pay sick leave for the mental and physical care of the employee, a family member, OR “someone whose close association is the equivalent of a family relationship.” The policy is poorly written, lacking clarity and giving broad definitions that will lead to employer-employee disputes, and will certainly increase the cost of doing business in our state.

Finally, AMA is gravely concerned with the section in the Ballot Measure that restricts an employer’s ability to share “political matters” with its employees. The ballot measure broadly defines “political matters” to include “matters relating to elections for political office, political parties, candidates, proposed legislation or regulation, and the decision whether or not to join or support any political party or political, civic, community, fraternal or labor organization.” Again, with more lack of clarity, the way this provision is written makes it possible that sharing this very statement with employees would be prohibited. Employers must be able to communicate attacks on business to their workforce, period.

For these reasons, AMA opposes Ballot Measure 1 and will encourage its members and the public to oppose the question on the November 5, 2024 ballot.