

Alaska State Legislature

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Sponsor Statement

CS SS HB 251- Version R: Veterinary Examiners

Veterinarians provide a wide swath of services to animals and their owners and companions. From cancer to diabetes, eating disorders to wounds and infections, Veterinarians see all manner of health care issues.

There are 350 veterinarians in Alaska **(as of 12/22)**. Yet, as with many issues of health, there are numbers of Alaskans who rely on their animals and cannot always afford to send an animal for care or pay the overhead costs naturally included in services provided by veterinarians with established brick and mortar clinics.

CS SS HB 251 offers Alaskans who need a choice, just that, a choice. They can find veterinarians who are willing to come to their communities and provide badly needed services without worrying that providing a cup of tea and a gym floor to sleep on will run afoul of the State's oversight.

The notion of "professional incompetence" is a matter of some judgment under current statutes. The changes in CS SS HB 251 make clear that a finding of professional incompetence cannot solely be based on unconventional practice that does no harm to the animal patient.

Careers can be destroyed through the complaint process. CS SS HB 251 addresses the process and limits the amount of time to file a complaint. It sets out a clear path for the investigation.

Finally, CS SS HB 251 mandates the Veterinary Board to work with the Alaska Federation of Natives to address the shortage of services and report back to the Legislature by December 31, 2012.