

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

REPRESENTATIVE ALAN DICK

HOUSE DISTRICT 6

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"STRONG VALUES IN UNCERTAIN TIMES"

Sponsor Statement SS HB 251: Veterinary Examiners

Alatna
Allakaket
Alcan
Aniak
Anvik
Arctic Village
Beaver
Beluga
Bertles
Birch Creek
Boundary
Central
Chalkyitsik
Chandalar
Chandalar Lake
Chicken
Chistochina
Chitina
Chuathbaluk
Circle
Coldfoot Camp
Copper Center
Crooked Creek
Deltana
Dot Lake
Dry Creek
Eagle
Eagle Village
Evansville
Flat
Fort Greely
Fort Yukon
Fortuna Ledge
Gakona
Galena
Georgetown
Grayling
Gulkana
Healy Lake
Holy Cross
Hughes

Huslia
Kaltag
Kennicott
Kenny Lake
Koyukuk
Lake Minchumina
Lime Village
Livengood
Manley Hot Springs
Marshall
McCarthy
McGrath
Medfra
Mentasta Lake
Minto
Nabesna
Nenana
Nikolai
Northway
Nulato
Ophir
Rampart
Red Devil
Ruby
Russian Mission
Shageluk
Slana
Sleetmute
Stevens Village
Stony River
Takotna
Tanacross
Tanana
Tazlina
Telida
Tetlin
Tok
Tonsina
Tyonek
Venetic
Wiseman

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.

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 SS HB 251 make clear that a finding of professional incompetence cannot solely be based on unconventional or experimental practice that does no harm to the animal patient.

Careers can be destroyed through the complaint process. 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.

There are numbers of veterinarians who desire to provide low cost or free services to rural Alaskans. SS HB 251 will provide the assurance they need to practice their mercy.

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