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Representative Jay Ramras
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Sponsor Statement HB 129 Revoking Real Estate Salesperson Licenses

House Bill 129 makes a simple, but needed, correction to existing law. Under current law, the Alaska Real Estate Commission must revoke the license of a real estate broker or associate broker if that person is convicted of a felony or other crime committed while licensed that, in the judgment of the commission, affects the ability of that person to practice as a broker or associate broker competently and safely or who is convicted of forgery, theft, extortion, conspiracy to defraud creditors, or fraud. Unfortunately this current law does not apply to real estate *salespersons*. House Bill 129 simply adds salesperson to the statute and thereby enables the Real Estate Commission to likewise revoke the license of a salesperson who commits the same listed crimes.

A real estate salesperson is different from a real estate broker and associate broker. The later two have more stringent education and experience requirements for licensure. Consequently, there are far more licensed salespersons in Alaska. As of November 2008 there were 1460 real estate salespersons licensed in Alaska; compared to only 411 associate brokers and 483 brokers.

The need for this legislation came to the attention of the Real Estate Commission after a licensed real estate salesperson was indicted on five counts of bribery, money laundering, and importing a controlled substance. After reaching a plea agreement, all but the drug trafficking charges were dropped. After the guilty plea was entered on the drug trafficking charge, the Real Estate Commission discovered that they had no power to revoke this real estate salesperson's license and after serving the sentence imposed, the real estate salesperson continued to work in a field where customers place faith in their agent's trustworthiness and ability to follow the laws of the State of Alaska to the letter. With over 1460 real estate salespersons licensed in Alaska, the urgency and need for this bill is clear. HB 129 empowers the Real Estate Commission to appropriately regulate their profession – including revoking a salesperson's license, and it protects the public interest.