

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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Sponsor Statement

HB 88

“An Act extending the termination date of the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association; and providing for an effective date.”

The Alaska Bar Association was established in 1955. The Bar Association’s primary functions are to screen applicants for admission, thereby ensuring all successful applicants are fit to practice law, and to provide discipline by investigating grievances against members of the Bar. The Bar Association also performs a wide variety of other functions including offering classes for continuing legal education, lawyer referral services, and fee arbitration.

The Board consists of twelve members, nine attorneys elected by the active membership of the Bar Association, and three non-attorney, public members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Legislature.

The Division of Legislative Audit, in its November 4, 2008, report concluded that “the board, through the Alaska Supreme Court, protects the public by ensuring that persons licensed to practice law are qualified. It also provides for the investigation of complaints and has established a disciplinary process designed to promote licensed individuals to act in a competent and professional manner.” The Division of Legislative Audit further recommended that the termination date of the board be extended to June 30, 2017.

The Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association is currently scheduled to terminate on June 30, 2009, and would have one year to conclude its administrative operations unless the legislature acts this session. House Bill 88 will extend the termination date for the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association for another eight years.