

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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North to the Future

## Senator Cathy Giessel Senate District N

### Senate Bill 41      Sponsor Statement Psychologists & Associate Criminal History Check

Background checks are standard gatekeeping practice for most professions that serve vulnerable populations. Senate Bill 41 would mandate that applicants submit to a background check as a requirement for a license to practice as a psychologist or psychological associate in the state of Alaska.

Currently a background check is not required for a psychologist to practice in Alaska, however it is prudent that this public safety tool be implemented by the Board of Psychology as is utilized by other professional boards. There have been cases in other regions outside Alaska where unethical practitioners have been able to move from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, opening up new practices in new places, preying on the public while their past transgressions have gone unknown to the local licensing authority. Because it has never happened here to our knowledge does not mean it never will.

Without the authority to conduct background checks, the Board of Psychologists and Psychological Associate Examiners cannot fully carry out their mandate to protect the public.

Please encourage the implementation of this important tool for public safety by supporting Senate Bill 41.

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