



926 Aspen St • P.O. Box 73511 • Fairbanks, Alaska 99707
Phone (907) 451-8208 • Fax (907) 451-8207
www.hopecounselingcenter.org

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I write this letter in strong support of SB41. I have served as a psychologist on the Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners (Board) for the past 8 years and have lead the Board as the chairperson for the past 3 years. During my entire tenure we've attempted to complete background checks on applicants for licensure as part of our due diligence. This effort is in keeping with the Board's primary mandate to protect the public. Our efforts to complete even rudimentary background checks have been frustrated by the Board's lack of statutory authority to complete background checks on the individuals who apply for licensure as Psychologists or Psychological Associates.

Psychologists and psychological associates work with vulnerable populations. Most professions that work with vulnerable populations or are in positions of authority are subject to background checks that require finger printing. It is appropriate that the same requirement be made for psychologists and psychological associates. In recent years the Board has been processing a growing number of applications for licensure. As that number grows, so does the risk of providing a license to practice psychology to an individual with a prior history of perpetrating criminal activity on vulnerable individuals. What makes SB41 so important is that when individuals are injured by a psychologist or psychological associate, the Board is only made aware of the problem if a report is filed. From that perspective it is not possible to know what damage is actually being done and not reported. By screening out individuals applying for licensure who have a prior history of criminal activity, the chance of an individual being licensed who is likely to harm someone (reported or not) is significantly decreased.

The passage of SB41 is a fundamental tool the Board will use to protect the vulnerable populations of our State. I strongly support SB41 as it is currently written.

Respectfully,

John DeRuyter Psy.D
Clinical Psychologist
Executive Director
Hope Counseling Center Inc.

~Helping People, Healing Families~