

# The Alaska Psychological Association

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*Advancing Psychology as a Science, a Profession, and as means for  
Promoting Human Welfare in Alaska*

Senator Lesil McGuire  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
State Capitol Room 121  
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: SB 41

Senator McGuire,

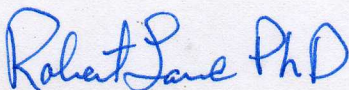
I write in regard to SB 41 as a representative of the board of directors of the Alaska Psychological Association (AK-PA). Thank you and the Judiciary Committee for another opportunity to provide input as the bill is being considered.

We understand the Licensing Board desires to perform background checks and SB 41 provides statutory authority for the Licensing Board to do so by requiring fingerprints to be submitted for initial licensure and opening the door for requiring the same of those re-licensing, or even a new set of fingerprints for each license holder at each re-licensing. This raises two areas of potential concern for members of our association.

1. The bill is silent on privacy and other concerns. We can only assume requirements related to records storage and subsequent disclosures are intended. If historical crimes are uncovered what happens? Is there an intent to tie records to barrier crimes? Are there look-back limitations? It has been explained to us this is expected to be covered in drafted regulation. But the entity drafting the regulations, and appropriately so, has as its mission protection of the public through licensing rather than specifically advocating for practitioners. We would hope for a statement from the committee that the legislation intends for regulations that provide for an appropriate balance between the need to provide further protections for the public with the basic and reasonable protections for current and future professional psychology licensees.
2. Alaskan psychologists pay a biannual re-licensing fee that is among the highest of the fifty states. SB 41, as written, potentially adds a significant cost to that fee while arguably not adding any more safety for the public than currently exists. If it is necessary to go forward with fingerprinting as the manner in which the Licensing Board is authorized to require background checks, AK-PA would request the bill be amended to make the background check and fee a one-time expense to be added to the initial cost of licensure only. Removing the language related to re-licensing helps to keep the re-licensing fees low and respects the nonexistent base rate of the problem background checks are designed to solve.

Despite the concerns and requests noted above, AK-PA as a group representing practicing psychologists and psychological associates strongly supports the mission of the Licensing Board and also counts protection of those the profession serves among its highest values. We would be happy to work with committee staff to address concerns prior to releasing the bill from committee.

Respectfully,



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