

Alaska State Medical Association

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March 3, 2026

**Co-Chair Carolyn Hall and
Co-Chair Zack Fields
Members of the Committee**

Sent via email

Re: Support for HB 352

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee:

The Alaska State Medical Association (ASMA) represents physicians statewide and is primarily concerned with ensuring access to high-quality health care for all Alaskans. After careful consideration and a thorough internal review, ASMA writes in support of House Bill 352.

ASMA's position on interstate licensure compacts has evolved over time. In earlier discussions, the Association expressed concerns that participation in a compact could encourage the growth of traveler physician business models or expand telehealth in a manner that might negatively affect access to in-person care in Alaska. Those concerns were rooted in protecting Alaska's already fragile healthcare workforce and ensuring that licensure policy supports, rather than undermines, patient access.

Through a thorough and deliberate reconsideration process, ASMA has re-evaluated these concerns in light of current market realities. It has become clear that organizations employing traveler physicians and telehealth providers already ensure their clinicians are appropriately licensed to practice in Alaska. As a result, ASMA does not believe that adoption of the compact will meaningfully change or expand those business models. While ASMA remains attentive to the broader impacts of traveler staffing, we no longer believe the compact itself will materially influence those dynamics.

Conversely, ASMA now recognizes meaningful benefits associated with participation in the compact. In particular, the compact has the potential to reduce administrative delays in physician recruitment and onboarding. Alaska continues to face persistent workforce shortages, and the ability for physicians to relocate to Alaska and begin practicing sooner would be a tangible benefit to patients, communities, and healthcare systems across the state.

ASMA is also aware that rural health transformation incentives and certain federal funding opportunities are sometimes linked to compact participation. While ASMA strongly supports sustainable solutions to improve rural healthcare access, we do not believe that policy decisions should be driven solely by funding availability. ASMA's support for HB 352 is based on its merits as sound licensure policy and its anticipated benefits to Alaska and Alaskans, not on financial incentives.

After reconsideration through a thorough and thoughtful process, ASMA believes that participation in the compact will provide net benefits to Alaska's healthcare system, improve workforce mobility where appropriate, and support timely access to care for patients.

For these reasons, the Alaska State Medical Association supports passage of HB 352.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Merkouris', written over a horizontal line.

Rhene Merkouris, M.D. President
Alaska State Medical Association