

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE REPRESENTATIVE STANLEY WRIGHT

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Juneau, Alaska 99801 (Jan. -April)
State Capitol, Room 412
907.465.2095

HOUSE BILL 126 *Associate and Professional Counselors*

SPONSOR STATEMENT

House Bill 126 allows qualified candidates to obtain licensure as Associate Counselors and creates a pathway towards full accreditation as Licensed Professional Counselors in Alaska. Currently over 65% of states offer a pre-licensing process that is overseen by the state board. Creating a tiered system will help align Alaska with national standards for the professional counselor licensure while creating a more structured process during the required supervised experience and exam.

This tiered licensure system would identify and address any gaps in training or experience while ensuring that counselors are providing services that are ethical and effective. It would attract and retain talented professionals to the state by providing opportunities for career advancement and professional development.

Ensuring Associate Counselors have met a minimum standard of training and experience would also increase public confidence in the counseling profession, reduce the stigma around mental health, and encourage more Alaskans to seek help when they need it. Providing guidance and support for those working towards licensure will improve the quality of care- particularly in rural or remote areas where access to mental health services may be limited.

I urge my colleagues of the 33rd legislature to support this bill to streamline the steps toward obtaining full licensure, in turn, helping Alaskans obtain the mental health services they need.

*For any questions regarding House Bill 126, please contact Rachael Gunn (907) 465-2095,
Rachael.Gunn@akleg.gov with the Office of Representative Stanley Wright*