
From: Evelyn Bass <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, February 20, 2024 2:53 PM
To: House Finance
Subject: HB 126

Dear Representatives,

HB 126 would make it easier for Alaskans to access mental healthcare. The years of working as an Associate Counselor are currently years that are largely lost to our community. Not only do these unlicensed years make counseling less accessible to clients, but they make pursuing counseling as a profession difficult. Further, they create difficulty for counseling supervisors in private or community-based practice who want to mentor and employ Associate Counselors.

Lack of licensure for Associates puts up significant roadblocks for clients in need of mental healthcare. During my years as an Associate Counselor, I had to turn away some clients. Others had to self-pay. Still others had insurance that covers Associates, but not in Alaska because we don't license Associates. At least one client in the middle of therapy for trauma-related care was taken by surprise that their new insurance plan didn't cover Associates when they changed jobs.

What is the ethical solution to these types of situations? It's a very difficult position to be in as a therapist.

Juneau is already extremely underserved in terms of mental healthcare. Not licensing Associates creates problems and unnecessary roadblocks for clients, for counselors and those considering entering the counseling profession, and for our community as a whole.

Please pass this bill as part of ensuring adequate mental healthcare for Southeast Alaska.

Thank you for your consideration,
Evelyn Bass

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Evelyn Bass (she/her)

We must not allow other people's limited perceptions to define us.
--Virginia Satir

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