



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATE LABOR & COMMERCE COMMITTEE

SENATOR JESSE BJORKMAN

Chairman
State Capitol, Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801-1182
(907) 465-2828

Sen. Kelly Merrick, Vice-Chair
Sen. Forrest Dunbar
Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson
Sen. Robert Yundt

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 211 Ver. A

"An Act extending the termination date of the Boards of Professional Counselors, Marital and Family Therapy, Psychologists and Psychological Examiners, Real Estate Commission, and Social Work Examiners; and providing for an effective date."

Senate Bill 211 proposes extending the sunset date of five State Professional Boards, those of Professional Counselors, Marital and Family Therapy, Psychologists and Psychological Examiners, Real Estate Commission, and Social Work Examiners.

Last year, the State Division of Legislative Audit completed sunset audits of these boards; each of them is currently set by statute to sunset on June 30, 2026. Each of the audits concluded that their boards served the public's interest by conducting meetings in accordance with state law and actively amending regulations as needed.

The audit of the Board of Professional Counselors noted that the board effectively licensed professional counselors, but that licensing fees were not sufficient to cover the profession's regulatory cost. The audit further noted that one board position had been vacant for an extended period. The audit ultimately recommended that the legislature extend the board's termination date by six years to June 30, 2032, which is two years less than the maximum allowed by statute and reflects the need for timely legislative oversight in light of the audit's conclusions.

The audit of the Board of Marital and Family Therapy noted that board generally licensed marital and family therapists in compliance with state law. The audit also found that a public board member position had been vacant for 32 months as of March 2025. The audit recommended extending the board's termination date by eight years, to June 30, 2034.

The audit of the Board of Psychologists and Psychological Examiners determined that the board generally issued new licenses in compliance with statutes and regulations. The audit also noted areas for improvement. Renewal licenses were not consistently issued in compliance with state law and courtesy licensees did not routinely comply with monthly reporting requirements. Board related investigations were not conducted in a timely

manner, and fees did not cover the cost of regulating the profession. Additionally, board vacancies were not filled in a timely manner. The audit recommended that the board's termination date be extended by five years to June 30, 2031, reflecting the need for more routine oversight to ensure corrective action is taken to address the deficiencies noted.

The audit of the State's Real Estate Commission concluded that the commission effectively licensed real estate professionals. The audit also found areas for improvement. The commission did not consistently keep minutes for subcommittee meetings and did not update its regulations and forms to include licensees who are independent contractors. Commission related investigations were not conducted in a timely manner, and the Real Estate Recovery Fund appeared to no longer be necessary. Further the commission did not monitor compliance with insurance coverage requirements. The audit recommended that the commission's termination date be extended by four years to June 30, 2030. The reduced recommended extension reflects the need for more routine oversight to ensure timely corrective action.

The audit of the Board of Social Work Examiners concluded that the board issued licenses in compliance with state law except for licenses renewed through the online portal, which lacked adequate documentation. The audit also found that one board position had been vacant for an extended period. The audit recommended that the board's termination date be extended by eight years to June 30, 2034.

SB 211 follows the audits' recommended extensions for each of these State professional boards so that they can continue serving the public's interest. I urge your support of Senate Bill 211.