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Testimony of Patricia Senner MS, RN, ANP
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HB 187
February 17, 2014

My name is Patricia Senner and I am speaking today on behalf of the Alaska Nurses Association.

The Alaska Board of Nursing licenses 11,732 Registered Nurses, 907 Licensed Practical Nurses and 3,399 Certified Nursing Aids for a total of 16,038 licensees. This represents about 1/3rd of the professionals receiving licenses from the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing. This also means that nurses pay about 1/3rd of the overhead for the Division.

The Alaska Nurses Association has no objection to the Division's attempt to reduce the number of small fees it collects. We also have no objection in calculating licensing fees based on a 2 year license renewal cycle rather than yearly. We are also not opposed to "amortizing" individual Board expenses over a longer period of time. In order to increase efficacies and reduce costs we think these changes are needed.

We are however opposed to shifting the total cost of paying for investigators from licensing fees to general funds. In a time of billion dollar budget shortfalls it does not make sense to increase the cost to the general fund by 1.7 million. This bill effectively reduces the income coming into the State by 1.7 million.

We understand that smaller Boards have difficulty covering expensive investigations because of their small licensee base. We would suggest that a cheaper alternative would be to create a fund to help pay for expensive investigations. For instance, a fund could be set up to pay for investigations that cost over \$10,000. There are fewer investigations that have a large cost so this approach should be much cheaper to the State.

From a historical perspective, the decision to have licensee fees pay for the costs of Boards was made during a time of diminishing state revenues. We do not think that over the next several years the Division is going to want to be reliant on a diminishing source of general fund revenues when they could have had a more steady income source with licensee fees. If the Division can't get enough general funds to pay for their investigators how are they going to prioritize investigations?

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There is also some concern about what the Division means by licensing groups. Within the Board of Nursing there are three many groups of licensees, each which has a different license fee. These fees are based in part on the income levels of that particular group of licensees. For instance, the license fees for RNs are higher than those for Nurse Aids. We do not want to see all the Board of Nursing licensees lumped into one group.