

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SESSION ADDRESS:

Alaska State Capitol
Juneau Alaska 99801
Phone: 907-465-3743
Toll-free: 1-800-565-3743
Fax: 907-465-2381
Rep.Shelley.Hughes@akleg.gov

**INTERIM ADDRESS:**

600 E Railroad Avenue
Wasilla AK 99654
Phone: 907-376-3725
Fax: 907-376-4768

Representative Shelley Hughes
House District 8 ~ Greater Palmer

Honorable Representative Kurt Olson, Chair
Labor and Commerce Committee
State Capitol Room 24
Juneau, AK 99801

HB253 Private Investigators

Sponsor Statement

March 17, 2014

Private investigators are professionals that perform quasi-authoritative tasks most often for law enforcement and legal entities. With a presumption of authority by the public, Alaska's citizens are often willing to participate and give personal information that might otherwise be guarded.

It was brought to my attention that a felon could become a private investigator simply by purchasing a business license. That individual could then obtain personal information about individuals with their presumption that the private investigator maintains some level of authority. HB253 regulates business licensing for private investigators by requiring them to complete a background check and show specific education or experience related to investigative activity.

The DCCED, Division of Corporations, Business and Occupational Licensing currently conducts reviews for other professions such as collections agents and guardians/conservators without the establishment of a costly professional review board. HB253 is patterned after this model to save costs while providing needed public protection.

The bill would not increase the authority of private investigators, but would improve privacy for individuals who willfully share personal information to a private investigator because they commit an act or make a statement intended to convey official status.

The bill would also offer an increased level of personal safety for Alaskans. Recently a state licensed private investigator solicited his services to a missing person's family to help find their daughter. The PI was later to be found to have been convicted of a sex crime felony in another state and had committed other unethical acts in other states before arriving in Alaska. This bill would prevent such a scenario from occurring in Alaska in the future.

In conclusion, HB 253 will help to insure that any professional who presumes authority to gather personal and private information as a private investigator, be qualified to do so. This bill is necessary to provide better personal safety and privacy protection to Alaska's citizens.