

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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North to the Future

Senator Cathy Giessel Senate District N

Senate Bill 47 Sponsor Statement Physical/Occupational Therapy Bd/Practice

Senate Bill 47 amends the governing statutes for physical therapists and occupational therapists practicing in Alaska. Its amendments are technical in nature and are designed to bring Alaska statutes in line with national standards and terminology.

In an effort to place public interest first and foremost, the Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists support more balanced representation on its Board and proposes to replace the seat for a physician with an occupational therapist or occupational therapist assistant.

When the membership of the board's guiding statute was first enacted, physical and occupational therapists were supervised by physicians. Physician supervision is no longer required since PT/OT are independent professions with the vast majority of its professionals possessing doctorates as well. This change would bring improved representation from both professions to the board.

Senate Bill 47 also removes from statute, specific names of organizations who historically exercised certification oversight of the PT/OT professions. The new language affords latitude for the board to conform to changing educational certifiers should they become obsolete or irrelevant to Alaska's PT/OT professions.

The Board also recognized there were some statutes requiring clarification related to foreign - trained (FT) applicants. Senate Bill 47 makes necessary changes to clarify licensing requirements for FT applicants.

Included in the bill are several housekeeping amendments to clean up outdated terminology to achieve alignment with national trends and standards.

Please join me in support of Senate Bill 47.

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