



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

House Labor & Commerce Committee

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Co-Chair
State Capitol, Room 406
Juneau, AK 99801
907.465.3732

Rep. Zack Fields
Co-Chair
State Capitol, Room 24
Juneau, AK 99801
907.465.2647

Rep. Calvin Schrage
Rep. Liz Snyder
Rep. David Nelson
Rep. James Kaufman
Rep. Ken McCarty

HB 276 Sponsor Statement

Many states are taking up legislation to improve the pipeline between higher education and fields of advanced practice or study, including psychology.

HB 276 follows best practice implemented in other states that are working to ensure that psychologists who are entering the workforce can earn on the job experience and compensation by replacing the requirement that a one-year post-doctoral candidate complete 3,000 hours of supervised experience with the option that allows them to instead combine a practicum, internship, postdoctoral experience, or a combination of all three. This change is still subject to board approval under the legislation and creates a more attractive and competitive option in the State of Alaska while retaining high quality standards.

State statute currently limits a psychologist's experience to pre and post-doctoral programs. In other fields and industries, Alaska has worked to lower barriers to workforce entry by removing the expectation that graduates have an advanced degree or credentials achieved by spending years making little to no pay. Without these measures, students face the prospect of high interest loans, years of unpaid work, and delays in practicing in the state.

In addition, HB 276 also introduces a Part-Time and Inactive License, and the requirements to obtain each. The bill also better defines who the practice of psychology does not apply to by including contractors of a Tribal Health Organization licensed in another state.

If Alaska is to truly become a better place to live, work and play, while addressing the chronic deficit of behavioral health experts, this bill is a timely and important measure to attract qualified applicants to our state.