

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senator David Wilson

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 173

“An act relating to the practice of dentistry; relating to dental radiological equipment; and providing for an effective date.”

Senate Bill 173 does two things. It transfers dental radiological equipment inspections from the Board of Dental Examiners to the Department of Health and Social Services and it establishes a specialty dental license in the State of Alaska.

For the first part, the Board of Dental Examiners currently certifies inspectors of dental radiological equipment who in turn conduct inspections at dental offices. This bill would move the authority and responsibility for inspections to the Department of Health and Social Services, which already inspects medical radiological equipment and employs state inspectors. This bill also allows for the collection of fees to cover the costs associated with inspection.

The second part of the legislation is a “truth in advertising” concept. It simply establishes that if a dentist advertises as a specialist in a field, they must meet certain minimum qualifications as a specialist as established by the Alaska State Board of Dental Examiners (board). There is currently no definition in statute for what a dental specialist is, and the board does not have the authority to define the term.

A dentist in Alaska can legally promote themselves as specialist in fields such as orthodontics, oral surgery, endodontistry, etc., even if they have no specialty training in that fields. The board cannot stop this practice if it does not have the authority to set standards for what a specialist is. This lack of authority for the board makes its difficult to police misleading advertisements to the public.

Please contact Jasmin Martin in my office at 907-465-8165 or by email at Jasmin.Martin@akleg.gov for more information. I respectfully ask for your support of this legislation.

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