

**From:** [Julie](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** SB53  
**Date:** Monday, April 17, 2023 7:53:37 AM

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> Good morning,

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> Regarding Senate Bill 53

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> I reviewed the amended text to Section 1 AS 12.47.070(a) and take issue with the change from "at least two qualified psychiatrists or two forensic psychologists certified by the American Board of Forensic Psychology" to "a qualified psychiatrist or psychologist".

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> These two disciplines are not interchangeable. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who has received extensive training in the area of mental disorders, their diagnosis, and treatment. They can perform laboratory and physiological tests to diagnose physical and mental health conditions, and are qualified to prescribe medications. A psychologist has no medical training, and their focus is on environmental factors that affect well being. Additionally, the proposed use of a psychologist versus a forensic psychologist certified by the American Board of Forensic Psychology is, in my mind, inadequate to make the evaluation of a person who may end up forfeiting more than 5 years of their life due to an improper diagnosis. The revised text dilutes the qualifications to make such a diagnosis.

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> Removing the requirement for two qualified psychiatrists puts a lot of power in the hands of a single individual. I believe the original text requiring two qualified psychiatrists should remain. The "or two qualified psychologists" should be removed. The next sentence should be revised to say "the psychiatrists may select a psychologist that is certified by the American Board of Forensic Psychology", hence strengthening the qualifications of the evaluators to be made more fitting to this serious assessment of competency.

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> Would you prefer a PA or an oncologist make the diagnosis of a terminal cancer?

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> Julie Dahl

> Anchorage, AK

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> Sent from my iPad