



# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## Senator Bill Wielechowski

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### **CSSB55 (FIN) Sponsor Statement:**

### **Extend Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives and State Medical Board**

*"An Act extending the termination date of the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives; extending the termination date of the State Medical Board; and providing for an effective date."*

CSSB55 (FIN) will extend the termination date of the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives to June 30, 2027, and extend the termination date of the State Medical Board to June 30, 2031.

The most recent legislative audit of the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives found the board operated in the public's interest by conducting its meetings in an effective manner, by supporting statutory changes when deemed necessary, and by actively amending regulations. The audit also concluded that the board and Division of Corporation, Business and Professional Licensing (DCBPL) staff did not consistently certify midwives in accordance with statutes and regulations and expressed concern that a threat to public safety was not addressed effectively.

As a result of these findings, the Division of Legislative Audit proposed in October 2022 that the Alaska Legislature extend the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives termination date to June 30, 2027, which is half the eight-year maximum allowed in statute. The reduced extension reflects the need for more timely oversight.

The most recent legislative audit of the State Medical Board found they effectively licensed physicians, osteopaths, and podiatrists. However, emergency courtesy licenses for physician assistants were not issued in accordance with state law during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was remedied in November 2021 when corrective action was taken by sending letters to non-compliant licensees. Furthermore, the board developed and adopted regulations to protect the public, improve the licensing process, and expand access to care during the COVID-19 public health emergency.

As a result of these successful implementations, the Division of Legislative Audit proposed in July 2022 that the Alaska Legislature extend the State Medical Board's termination date to June 30, 2031, which is the maximum extension allowed per statute.

I respectfully request support from my colleagues to pass SB 55 in a timely manner.