

# Alaska State Legislature

Session:  
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**Representative Justin Ruffridge**  
District 7 - Kenai/Soldotna

## **HB 309**

### **Sponsor statement**

Currently, the state of Alaska optometry statutes does not allow Optometric assistants to perform testing under the supervision of a licensed optometrist. This issue affects practices throughout Alaska. Without the ability to delegate testing to assistants, the efficiency of Optometric offices would be greatly reduced and may result in the closure of some practices. Closures could negatively impact areas of the state that may not have many optometrists in a region.

The issues addressed by HB 309 were only realized recently, but they have existed for many years undetected. Other similar healthcare practices in the state of Alaska such as medical, dental, veterinarian, and other allied health professions have provisions in Alaska statutes which allow for the delegation of tasks.

The passage of HB 309 would remedy this exclusion and would add delegation authority to Optometrists and bring Alaska's statutes into compliance with recommendations that the state law department has provided to the board of optometry. Delegation of tasks, testing and medical practice and optometric practice is commonplace across the nation. This proposed legislation will keep Alaska in alignment with what is customary among healthcare practices in our state.

The passage of HB 309 will not negatively impact rates residents pay and there will be no ongoing or future costs to the state as a result of this legislation. HB 309 is a simple and effective way to ensure that optometrists in our state stay in compliance with statutes and regulations that are ordinary and customary.