

**CS FOR SPONSOR SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 349(L&C)**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/30/98

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES JAMES, Kelly, Elton, Croft

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 "An Act prohibiting the use of the title 'social worker' without a license; relating  
2 to social workers, licensure of social workers, and the Board of Clinical Social  
3 Work Examiners; and providing for an effective date."

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 \* **Section 1.** PURPOSE. It is the purpose of this Act to promote, preserve, and protect the  
6 public health, safety, and welfare through the licensure of social workers and regulation of the  
7 use of the title "social worker."

8 \* **Sec. 2.** AS 08.01.010(10) is amended to read:

9 (10) Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners (AS 08.95.010);

10 \* **Sec. 3.** AS 08.01.050(d)(1) is amended to read:

11 (1) Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners;

12 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 08.03.010(c)(6) is amended to read:

13 (6) Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners (AS 08.95.010) --

14 June 30, 2005;

1 \* **Sec. 5.** AS 08.95.010(a) is amended to read:

2 (a) There is created the Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners  
 3 composed of five members, as follows: one member [. FOUR MEMBERS MUST  
 4 BE PERSONS] licensed under this chapter as a baccalaureate social worker; one  
 5 member licensed under this chapter as a master social worker; two members  
 6 licensed under this chapter as clinical social workers; and one public member who  
 7 has never been licensed under this chapter. At [, INCLUDING AT] least one **of**  
 8 the licensed members must be a person who is not an employee of a federal, state,  
 9 or local government or of a private nonprofit organization that is exempt from federal  
 10 income tax. [ONE MEMBER MUST BE A PUBLIC MEMBER.]

11 \* **Sec. 6.** AS 08.95.020 is amended to read:

12 **Sec. 08.95.020. Board meetings.** The board shall hold at least two meetings  
 13 [ONE MEETING] each year. The board may hold additional meetings at the call of  
 14 the chair or of a majority of the board members.

15 \* **Sec. 7.** AS 08.95.030 is amended to read:

16 **Sec. 08.95.030. Duties.** The board shall

- 17 (1) issue licenses to qualified applicants;
- 18 (2) [SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT OF ITS PROCEEDINGS TO  
 19 THE DEPARTMENT;
- 20 (3) AFTER A HEARING, IMPOSE DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS ON  
 21 A PERSON WHO VIOLATES THIS CHAPTER OR THE REGULATIONS OR  
 22 ORDERS OF THE BOARD;
- 23 (4)] adopt regulations
- 24 (A) requiring that continuing education requirements be satisfied  
 25 before a license is renewed;
- 26 (B) establishing a code of professional ethics that a licensee  
 27 must observe;
- 28 (C) establishing standards of practice for social work  
 29 performed by a licensee; and
- 30 (D) establishing standards for supervisors and for  
 31 supervision that is required for licensure under AS 08.95.110(a);

1                   **(3) order a licensed social worker to submit to a reasonable**  
 2                   **physical or mental examination if the board has credible evidence that the social**  
 3                   **worker's capacity to practice safely is in question;**

4                   **(4) [(5)]** adopt regulations necessary to carry out the **duties and**  
 5                   purpose of this chapter.

6 \* **Sec. 8.** AS 08.95.040(a) is amended to read:

7                   (a) The board shall adopt continuing education requirements for persons  
 8                   licensed under this chapter. Continuing education requirements **that must be satisfied**  
 9                   **before the first biennial renewal of a person's license** must include a minimum of  
 10                   45 hours [PER BIENNIUM] of education or training with a minimum of **three hours**  
 11                   **in professional ethics**, six hours in substance abuse, and six hours in cross-cultural  
 12                   education **that includes issues relating to Alaska** [EMPHASIZING ALASKAN]  
 13                   Natives. **After the first biennial renewal of a license, continuing education**  
 14                   **requirements for that person's license renewal must include three hours in**  
 15                   **professional ethics, six hours in substance abuse, and six hours in cross-cultural**  
 16                   **education, three hours of which must include issues relating to Alaska Natives.**

17 \* **Sec. 9.** AS 08.95 is amended by adding a new section to article 1 to read:

18                   **Sec. 08.95.050. Disciplinary sanctions.** The board may impose a disciplinary  
 19                   sanction under AS 08.01.075 if it finds that a licensee

20                   (1) secured a license through deceit, fraud, or intentional  
 21                   misrepresentation;

22                   (2) engaged in deceit, fraud, or intentional misrepresentation in the  
 23                   course of providing professional services or in the course of professional activities;

24                   (3) advertised professional services in a false or misleading manner;

25                   (4) violated this chapter, a regulation adopted under this chapter, or an  
 26                   order issued by the board;

27                   (5) is the subject of a disciplinary sanction or other adverse licensing  
 28                   action in another jurisdiction relating to a social work license;

29                   (6) failed to report to the board that the licensee is or was the subject  
 30                   of a disciplinary proceeding or other adverse licensing action in another jurisdiction  
 31                   relating to a social work license;

1 (7) has been convicted of a felony or has been convicted of a  
 2 misdemeanor that reflects on the licensee's ability to practice competently and  
 3 professionally;

4 (8) intentionally or negligently engaged in, or permitted persons under  
 5 the licensee's supervision to engage in, client care that did not conform to minimum  
 6 professional standards or to the standards of practice adopted by the board regardless  
 7 of whether actual injury to the client occurred;

8 (9) continued to practice after becoming unfit due to

9 (A) professional incompetence;

10 (B) failure to keep informed of current professional practices;

11 (C) addiction to or severe dependency on alcohol or other drugs  
 12 that impairs the ability to practice safely; or

13 (D) physical or mental disability;

14 (10) engaged in lewd, immoral, or unethical conduct in connection with  
 15 the delivery of professional services to clients; or

16 (11) while licensed to practice clinical social work, engaged in sexual  
 17 contact with a person during the time period that the person was a client or within two  
 18 years after termination of the licensee's professional relationship with the client.

19 \* **Sec. 10.** AS 08.95.100(a) is amended to read:

20 (a) A person who practices clinical social work without obtaining a license  
 21 under this chapter to practice clinical social work [ISSUED BY THE BOARD  
 22 AND WITHOUT QUALIFYING FOR AN EXEMPTION FROM THIS CHAPTER]  
 23 is guilty of a class B misdemeanor unless the person is

24 (1) licensed under a provision of this title that is outside this  
 25 chapter, is practicing within the scope of that license, and is not representing to  
 26 the public by title or description of service as being engaged in the practice of  
 27 clinical social work; or

28 (2) practicing clinical social work as a student in a social work  
 29 program approved by the board.

30 \* **Sec. 11.** AS 08.95.100(b) is amended to read:

31 (b) A person is guilty of a class B misdemeanor if the person [WHO] is not

1 licensed

2 (1) under this chapter and uses the title "social worker" unless the  
 3 person is exempt from licensure under AS 08.95.911;

4 (2) as a clinical social worker under this chapter [,] or has a clinical  
 5 social worker [WHOSE] license that is suspended, [OR] revoked, or [WHOSE  
 6 LICENSE HAS] lapsed, and the person

7 (A) [WHO] uses in connection with the person's name the  
 8 words or letters "L.C.S.W.," "Licensed Clinical Social Worker," or other letters,  
 9 words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed clinical  
 10 social worker; [,] or

11 (B) [WHO] in any way, orally [,] or in writing, directly or by  
 12 implication, holds out as a licensed clinical social worker;

13 (3) as a master social worker under this chapter or has a master  
 14 social worker license that is suspended, revoked, or lapsed, and the person

15 (A) uses in connection with the person's name the words or  
 16 letters "L.M.S.W.," "Licensed Master Social Worker," or other letters,  
 17 words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a licensed  
 18 master social worker; or

19 (B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by  
 20 implication, holds out as being a licensed master social worker; or

21 (4) as a baccalaureate social worker under this chapter or has a  
 22 baccalaureate social worker license that is suspended, revoked, or lapsed, and the  
 23 person

24 (A) uses in connection with the person's name the words or  
 25 letters "L.B.S.W.," "Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker," or other  
 26 letters, words, or insignia indicating or implying that the person is a  
 27 licensed baccalaureate social worker; or

28 (B) in any way, orally or in writing, directly or by  
 29 implication, holds out as being a licensed baccalaureate social worker [IS  
 30 GUILTY OF A CLASS B MISDEMEANOR].

31 \* Sec. 12. AS 08.95.110 is amended to read:

1           **Sec. 08.95.110. License requirements [TO PRACTICE CLINICAL**  
 2 **SOCIAL WORK].** **(a)** The board shall issue a license to practice clinical social  
 3 work to a person who

4                   (1) has received a master's degree or a doctoral degree in social work  
 5 from a college or university **approved by the board** [ACCREDITED BY THE  
 6 COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION];

7                   (2) has completed, within the 10 years before application for licensure  
 8 and under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker, licensed psychologist,  
 9 **or** licensed psychiatrist [, OR, WITH APPROVAL OF THE BOARD, A CLINICAL  
 10 SOCIAL WORKER WHO IS EXEMPT FROM THIS CHAPTER UNDER  
 11 AS 08.95.910,] either

12                           (A) a minimum of two years of continuous full-time  
 13 employment in postgraduate clinical social work; or

14                           (B) a minimum of 3,000 hours of less than full-time  
 15 employment in a period of not less than two years in postgraduate clinical  
 16 social work; [AT LEAST 100 HOURS OF SUPERVISION REQUIRED  
 17 UNDER THIS PARAGRAPH SHALL BE CONDUCTED BY A QUALIFIED  
 18 PERSON APPROVED BY THE BOARD;]

19                   (3) **is of good moral character;**

20                   (4) is in good professional standing and is fit to practice social work  
 21 as determined by the board;

22                   (5) [(4)] has provided three professional references **that are acceptable**  
 23 to the board, **including one reference from a person who was the licensee's**  
 24 **employer while the licensee practiced social work if the licensee was previously**  
 25 **employed to practice social work, and one reference from a resident of this state**  
 26 **if the applicant resided in this state for the three months immediately preceding**  
 27 **application for the license;**

28                   (6) [(5)] has satisfactorily completed the examination given by the  
 29 board **for clinical social worker licensing;** and

30                   (7) [(6)] has paid required fees.

31       \* **Sec. 13.** AS 08.95.110 is amended by adding new subsections to read:

1 (b) The board shall issue a license authorizing use of the title "master social  
2 worker" to a person who

3 (1) satisfies the requirements of (a)(1), (3) - (5), and (7) of this section;  
4 and

5 (2) has satisfactorily completed the examination given by the board for  
6 master social worker licensing.

7 (c) The board shall issue a license authorizing use of the title "baccalaureate  
8 social worker" to a person who

9 (1) satisfies the requirements of (a)(3) - (5) and (7) of this section;

10 (2) has received a bachelor's degree in social work from a college or  
11 university approved by the board; and

12 (3) has satisfactorily completed the examination given by the board for  
13 baccalaureate social worker licensing.

14 \* **Sec. 14.** AS 08.95.120 is amended to read:

15 **Sec. 08.95.120. Licensing by credentials.** The board shall issue a license to  
16 practice clinical social work [WITHOUT EXAMINATION] if the applicant

17 (1) holds a current license to practice clinical social work in another  
18 jurisdiction that, at the time of original issuance of the license, had requirements for  
19 licensure equal to or more stringent than those of this state;

20 (2) is not the subject of an unresolved complaint or disciplinary action  
21 before a regulatory authority or a professional social work association;

22 (3) has satisfactorily completed [NOT FAILED] the examination for  
23 a license to practice clinical social work in this state;

24 (4) has provided three professional references that are acceptable  
25 to the board, including one reference from a person who was the licensee's  
26 employer while the licensee practiced social work if the licensee was previously  
27 employed to practice social work, and one reference from a resident of this state  
28 if the applicant resided in this state for the three months immediately preceding  
29 application for the license;

30 (5) has not had a license to practice clinical social work revoked, [OR]  
31 suspended, or surrendered in lieu of disciplinary action in this state or another

1 jurisdiction;

2 (6) [(5)] has submitted proof of continued competency satisfactory to  
3 the board; and

4 (7) [(6)] has paid required fees.

5 \* **Sec. 15.** AS 08.95.120 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

6 (b) The board shall issue a license to use the title "master social worker" or  
7 "baccalaureate social worker," as applicable, to an applicant who

8 (1) holds a current similar license from another jurisdiction that, at the  
9 time of original issuance of the license, had requirements for the license that were  
10 equal to or more stringent than those of this state;

11 (2) is not the subject of an unresolved complaint or disciplinary action  
12 before a regulatory authority or a professional social work association;

13 (3) has satisfactorily completed the examination given by the board for  
14 master or baccalaureate social workers, as applicable;

15 (4) has provided three professional references that are acceptable to the  
16 board, including one reference from a person who was the licensee's employer while  
17 the licensee practiced social work if the licensee was previously employed to practice  
18 social work, and one reference from a resident of this state if the applicant resided in  
19 this state for the three months immediately preceding application for the license;

20 (5) has not had a license to practice social work or to use the title  
21 "social worker" revoked, suspended, or surrendered in lieu of disciplinary action in this  
22 state or another jurisdiction;

23 (6) has submitted proof of continued competency satisfactory to the  
24 board; and

25 (7) has paid required fees.

26 \* **Sec. 16.** AS 08.95.900 is amended to read:

27 **Sec. 08.95.900. Confidentiality of communication.** (a) A licensed  
28 [CLINICAL] social worker, **and the social workers' employees or other persons**  
29 **who have access to the social worker's records,** may not reveal to another person  
30 a communication made to the licensee by a client about a matter concerning which the  
31 client has employed the licensee in a professional capacity. This section does not

1 apply to

2 (1) a case conference with other licensed [CLINICAL] social workers  
3 or with other licensed practitioners of the healing arts [PSYCHOLOGISTS,  
4 PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES, PHYSICIANS, OR SURGEONS];

5 (2) the release of information which the client in writing authorized the  
6 licensee to reveal; [OR]

7 (3) information released to the board as part of a disciplinary or  
8 other proceeding by the board;

9 (4) information revealed as part of the discovery of evidence related to  
10 a court proceeding or introduced in evidence in a court proceeding;

11 (5) communications relevant to the physical, mental, or emotional  
12 condition of the client in a proceeding in which the condition of the client is an  
13 element of the claim or defense of the client, of a party claiming through or under  
14 the client, or of a person raising the client's condition as an element of the  
15 person's own case, or of a person claiming as a beneficiary of the client through  
16 a contract to which the client is or was a party; or, after the client's death, in a  
17 proceeding in which a party puts the condition of the client in issue;

18 (6) a communication to a potential victim or to law enforcement  
19 officers where a threat of imminent serious physical harm to an identified victim  
20 has been made by a client; or

21 (7) a communication that indicates that another licensed  
22 practitioner of the healing arts has committed an act of unprofessional or  
23 unlawful conduct in the provision of health or mental health services if the  
24 communication is disclosed by the social worker only to the licensing board with  
25 jurisdiction over the type of person who allegedly committed the unprofessional  
26 or unlawful conduct and the disclosure is made in good faith.

27 (b) Notwithstanding (a) of this section, a licensed [CLINICAL] social worker  
28 shall report incidents of child abuse or neglect as required by AS 47.17.020 and  
29 incidents of harm to vulnerable adults as required by AS 47.24.010.

30 \* **Sec. 17.** AS 08.95.900 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

31 (c) Information obtained by the board under (a)(3) and (7) of this section is

1 confidential and is not a public record for the purposes of AS 09.25.110 - 09.25.140.

2 \* **Sec. 18.** AS 08.95 is amended by adding a new section to read:

3 **Sec. 08.95.905. Immunity relating to certain reports.** A person licensed  
4 under this chapter who, in good faith and without malice, discloses to the appropriate  
5 licensing board that another licensed practitioner of the healing arts has allegedly  
6 committed an act of unprofessional or unlawful conduct in the provision of health or  
7 mental health services is immune from civil liability arising out of the disclosure.

8 \* **Sec. 19.** AS 08.95 is amended by adding new sections to read:

9 **Sec. 08.95.911. Exemption.** (a) Notwithstanding AS 08.95.100(b)(1), a  
10 person who, on June 30, 2000, was employed or providing services under the title  
11 "social worker" may, without obtaining a license under this chapter, continue to use  
12 the title "social worker" while the person is employed by the same employer or, if self-  
13 employed, while providing the same scope of services, as on June 30, 2000.

14 (b) The exemption under (a) of this section does not authorize use of the title  
15 "social worker" outside the context of the person's employment or self-employment,  
16 as applicable.

17 (c) For purposes of this section, a person who is employed by

18 (1) the federal government is not considered to have changed employers  
19 if the person begins employment with a different agency of the federal government;

20 (2) the state is not considered to have changed employers if the person  
21 begins employment with a different agency of the state;

22 (3) a municipality is not considered to have changed employers if the  
23 person begins employment with a different agency of the municipality.

24 **Sec. 08.95.920. Unified occupation.** For purposes of AS 08.01.065, all  
25 persons licensed under this chapter are considered to be engaged in the same  
26 occupation.

27 \* **Sec. 20.** AS 08.95.990(1) is amended to read:

28 (1) "board" means the Board of [CLINICAL] Social Work Examiners;

29 \* **Sec. 21.** AS 08.95.990(2) is amended to read:

30 (2) "[CLINICAL] social work" means a service in which a special  
31 knowledge of social resources, human capabilities, and the part that unconscious

1 motivation plays in determining behavior is directed, through the application of social  
 2 work principles and methods, at helping individuals to achieve more adequate,  
 3 satisfying, and productive social adjustments;

4 \* **Sec. 22.** AS 08.95.990(5) is amended to read:

5 (5) "social work principles and methods" include counseling [AND  
 6 USING TECHNIQUES OF APPLIED PSYCHOTHERAPY] of a nonmedical nature  
 7 to assist in the [DIAGNOSIS AND] treatment of mental and emotional conditions of  
 8 individuals, families, and groups; providing information and referral services; providing  
 9 or arranging for the provision of social services; explaining and interpreting the  
 10 psychosocial aspects in the situations of individuals, families, or groups; helping  
 11 communities to organize, provide, or improve social and health services; and doing  
 12 research related to social work.

13 \* **Sec. 23.** AS 08.95.990 is amended by adding new paragraphs to read:

14 (6) "clinical social work" means the diagnosis of psychiatric disorders  
 15 and the use of techniques of applied psychotherapy of a nonmedical nature while  
 16 practicing social work;

17 (7) "practitioner of the healing arts" has the meaning given in  
 18 AS 47.17.290.

19 \* **Sec. 24.** AS 47.17.020(a) is amended to read:

20 (a) The following persons who, in the performance of their occupational duties,  
 21 have reasonable cause to suspect that a child has suffered harm as a result of child  
 22 abuse or neglect shall immediately report the harm to the nearest office of the  
 23 department:

24 (1) practitioners of the healing arts;

25 (2) school teachers and school administrative staff members of public  
 26 and private schools;

27 (3) [SOCIAL WORKERS;

28 (4)] peace officers [,] and officers of the Department of Corrections;

29 (4) [(5)] administrative officers of institutions;

30 (5) [(6)] child care providers;

31 (6) [(7)] paid employees of domestic violence and sexual assault

1 programs, and crisis intervention and prevention programs as defined in AS 18.66.990;  
 2 (7) [(8)] paid employees of an organization that provides counseling or  
 3 treatment to individuals seeking to control their use of drugs or alcohol.

4 \* **Sec. 25.** AS 47.17.290(13) is amended to read:

5 (13) "practitioner of the healing arts" includes chiropractors, mental  
 6 health counselors, social workers, dental hygienists, dentists, health aides, nurses,  
 7 nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, occupational therapy assistants,  
 8 optometrists, osteopaths, naturopaths, physical therapists, physical therapy assistants,  
 9 physicians, physician's assistants, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychological associates,  
 10 audiologists licensed under AS 08.11, hearing aid dealers licensed under AS 08.55,  
 11 marital and family therapists licensed under AS 08.63, religious healing practitioners,  
 12 acupuncturists, and surgeons;

13 \* **Sec. 26.** AS 08.95.100(c) is repealed July 1, 2000.

14 \* **Sec. 27.** AS 08.95.910 is repealed September 1, 1999.

15 \* **Sec. 28.** TRANSITIONAL LICENSING. (a) The Board of Social Work Examiners shall  
 16 issue a license authorizing use of the title "baccalaureate social worker" to a person who, by  
 17 July 1, 2000,

18 (1) applies for the license;

19 (2) satisfies the requirements of AS 08.95.110(c)(1) and (3), as enacted by  
 20 sec. 13 of this Act; and

21 (3) submits evidence satisfactory to the board of having used the title "social  
 22 worker" during the performance of employment duties or the provision of services for  
 23 compensation before applying for the license under this section.

24 (b) A person licensed under this section is considered to be licensed under AS 08.95.

25 \* **Sec. 29.** TRANSITIONAL BOARD MEMBERSHIP PROVISIONS. Notwithstanding  
 26 AS 08.95.010(a), as amended by sec. 5 of this Act, a person who is a member of the Board  
 27 of Clinical Social Work Examiners on January 1, 1999, may continue to serve the remainder  
 28 of the person's term on the board unless removed under other law. The governor shall  
 29 implement AS 08.95.010(a), as amended by sec. 5 of this Act, as seats on the board become  
 30 vacant.

31 \* **Sec. 30.** REGULATIONS. The Board of Social Work Examiners shall begin the process

1 of developing regulations to implement this Act. The regulations take effect under AS 44.62  
2 but not before the effective date of the laws that are implemented by the regulations.

3 \* **Sec. 31.** Section 30 of this Act takes effect immediately.

4 \* **Sec. 32.** AS 08.95.100(a) and (b)(2) - (4), as amended by secs. 10 and 11 of this Act,  
5 take effect September 1, 1999.

6 \* **Sec. 33.** AS 08.95.100(b)(1), enacted by sec. 11 of this Act, and AS 08.95.911, enacted  
7 by sec. 19 of this Act take effect July 1, 2000.

8 \* **Sec. 34.** Except as provided in secs. 31 - 33 of this Act, this Act takes effect January 1,  
9 1999.