

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
March 29, 2010
9:08 a.m.

[9:08:51 AM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Stoltze called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mike Hawker, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair
Representative Bill Thomas Jr., Vice-Chair
Representative Anna Fairclough
Representative Neal Foster
Representative Les Gara
Representative Reggie Joule
Representative Mike Kelly

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Allan Austerman
Representative Mike Doogan
Representative Woodie Salmon

ALSO PRESENT

Liz Clement, Staff, Representative Bob Herron; Pat Davidson, Legislative Auditor, Legislative Audit Division, Legislative Affairs Agency; Jennifer Strickler, Operations Manager, Division of Corporations, Businesses, and Professional Licensing, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

SUMMARY

HB 376 EXTEND BD OF PSYCHOLOGIST & PSYCH. ASSOC.

HB 376 was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with the attached fiscal note by the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

#hb376

HOUSE BILL NO. 376

"An Act extending the termination date of the Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners; and providing for an effective date."

[9:09:22 AM](#)

LIZ CLEMENT, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE BOB HERRON, explained that the bill sponsored by the House Health and Social Services Committee would extend the Board of Psychologist and Psychological Associate Examiners from its current expiration date of June 30, 2010 to a new sunset on June 30, 2018. She detailed that the board is composed of five volunteer members from around the state who are supported by staff in the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED). The board licenses and regulates both psychologists and psychological associates in Alaska, ensuring that practitioners meet appropriate educational and practice standards and provide safe, professional psychological services to clients.

Ms. Clement pointed out that the 2009 Division of Legislative Audit Committee report (December 4, 2009, copy on file) found no substantive problems with the board or its performance, affirmed the value of the role it feels, and recommends an eight-year extension.

Ms. Clement added that the DCCED fiscal note estimates an annual budget of \$78,500, which is covered fully by licensing fees collected from applicants. She emphasized the importance of passing the measure during the current legislative session.

Co-Chair Stoltze asked for further information regarding filling boards with qualified applicants.

[9:13:04 AM](#)

PAT DAVIDSON, LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR, LEGISLATIVE AUDIT DIVISION, LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY, informed the committee that the board audit had identified three concerns. The first related to insufficient support from the licensing examiner of the DCCED Division of Boards, Commissions, and Professional Licensing. The second concern related to timely filling of board vacancies by the Office

of the Governor. The third issue, which is unique to the board, was inadequate follow-up and monitoring by the licensing examiner for courtesy licenses issued between FY 05 and FY 09. Courtesy licenses require practitioners to file monthly reports identifying activities in Alaska; reports by three of the eleven audited were not complete and not filed in a timely manner.

Co-Chair Stoltze asked whether Legislative Audit recommended the eight-year extension in spite of the concerns. Ms. Davidson replied that the division recommended the extension because it found the concerns related to administrative support for the board and did not represent deficiencies in the operation of the board.

JENNIFER STRICKLER, OPERATIONS MANAGER, DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESSES, AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, informed the committee that the board had no vacancy; the term of the chair of eight years had expired March 1, 2010, and the governor's office had appointed a replacement on time. She acknowledged that the division fell short in monitoring courtesy licenses. She explained that courtesy licenses are for practitioners from outside the state who come to Alaska to do business, such as appear before a court or conduct short-term practice. State regulations require that individuals can only obtain one courtesy license and can practice in Alaska for a maximum of only 30 days. In addition, the licensee must submit a report to the division of how many days they were in the state each month. She noted that there had only been 11 such licenses between 2005 and 2009; there were none in the past two years.

Ms. Strickler reported that in response to the audit, the chair of the board stated that he would make the review of courtesy licenses a regular agenda item at board meetings.

[9:17:24 AM](#)

Co-Chair Hawker stated concerns about the need for administrative support by the department.

Co-Chair Stoltze opined that the extension audits have been sunset reviews on the administration as much as on the individual boards. He expected improvement.

Co-Chair Stoltze asked for details regarding the fiscal note. Ms. Strickler responded that the fiscal note is based on the average biennial costs of the board; licenses are issued for two-year periods. The \$78,500 operating costs are paid for through collection of licensing fees. She noted that the board is required by statute to meet three times each year, necessitating the \$15,300 for travel; the \$28,200 for contractual costs covered hearing costs and attorney's fees.

Co-Chair Hawker MOVED to report HB 376 out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note.

HB 376 was REPORTED out of Committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with the attached fiscal note by the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 AM.