

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

April 11, 2011

1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bettye Davis, Chair
Senator Dennis Egan
Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Fred Dyson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Johnny Ellis

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 119

"An Act relating to the licensing and regulation of athletic trainers."

- MOVED CSSB 119(HSS) OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 119

SHORT TITLE: ATHLETIC TRAINER LICENSING

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MEYER

04/01/11	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/01/11	(S)	HSS, L&C
04/11/11	(S)	HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR KEVIN MEYER
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 119.

CHRISTINE MARASIGAN, Staff to Senator Kevin Meyer
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding SB 119.

CHRISTOPHER DEEM

Alaska Athletic Trainers Association
Fairbanks, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

BRENDA SHELTON, President
Alaska Athletic Trainers Association

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 119.

DON HABEGGER, Director
Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing
Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development
Juneau, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions regarding SB 119.

ACTION NARRATIVE

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CHAIR BETTYE DAVIS called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Egan, Dyson, Meyer, and Chair Davis.

SB 119-ATHLETIC TRAINER LICENSING

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CHAIR DAVIS announced the first order of business would be SB 119.

SENATOR KEVIN MEYER, sponsor, introduced SB 119 and gave a brief overview. This would require a license to practice athletic training in Alaska. Athletic trainers are certified health care professionals who practice in the field of sports medicine. The American Medical Association (AMA) has recognized that this profession plays a significant role in the management, prevention, recognition, and rehabilitation of injured athletes.

As people become increasingly active, athletic trainers are a vital resource for administering immediate emergency care. The bill has several letters of support from the Alaska Athletic Trainers Association. Alaska is one of only three states who currently do not license athletic trainers.

CHAIR DAVIS noted there was a CS.

SENATOR EGAN moved to adopt the proposed committee substitute (CS) for SB 119, labeled 27-LS0732\B, as the working document.

CHAIR DAVIS objected for discussion purposes.

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CHRISTINE MARASIGAN, staff to Senator Kevin Meyer said she would explain the changes in the CS. On page 2, line 11 has been deleted, as well as parts of line 14 and lines 19 through 26. All of the changes address the concept that there is only one national certifying organization for athletic trainers. Forty-seven other states use this national certifying organization.

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CHAIR DAVIS opened public testimony.

CHRISTOPHER DEEM, Alaska Athletic Trainers Association, thanked Senator Meyer for bringing the bill forward. He said it is needed to protect the student athletes in Alaska. To become an athletic trainer requires a bachelor's degree in science, a lengthy internship, and a test. As a national and state association they are working to bring Alaska into line with national certification standards. Currently there is nothing in Alaska to prevent someone from calling himself an athletic trainer. This bill would assure Alaska has a minimum standard of care and a common set of requirements.

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BRENDA SHELTON, President, Alaska Athletic Trainers Association said she was here on behalf of all members. According to the US Department of Labor (DOL) and the American Medical Association (AMA), athletic trainers have an unparalleled job description. They make a lot of autonomous, important decisions. The Board of Certification (BOC) has been responsible for certifying athletic trainers since 1982. It ensures that entry level athletic trainers meet all credential requirements.

In addition to holding a bachelor's degree from an athletic training program and completing an internship, trainers must pass a certification exam. The BOC then makes trainers reapply for certification every three years. Continuing education requirements are 75 hours every three years. She said the BOC expects anyone using the title to uphold the highest ethical and medical standards. SB 119 enhances the profession of athletic training.

CHAIR DAVIS asked for testimony from the Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development (DCCED). She noted the bill had picked up a fiscal note.

DON HABEGER, Director, Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing, Department of Community, Commerce, and Economic Development (DCCED), said he was available for questions.

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SENATOR MEYER said the fiscal note did not require any general fund money. It was receipt supported services. He asked if the CS would lower the fee.

MR. HABEGER said he thought it did. Looking at the regulatory process, it seemed that the division had to make a number of substantial decisions, for which it would need outside help. The CS allows them to use a national standard, for which an organization already exists. The licensing fee for similar certifications is \$50 - \$100.

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MR. HABEGER noted the committee could help by looking at other certifying bodies and forwarding the information to DCED.

SENATOR MEYER said the original fiscal note required a fee of \$725 per year; this was too high. Athletic trainers said the most they could afford was \$100. It behooves us to have them licensed.

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SENATOR EGAN said the letters from the association mention a \$100 annual fee. He was previously told it would be a \$50 annual fee. Why so high?

MR. HABEGER said they sat down with the lobbyist and interested parties. The original work draft was very different from what now exists. One issue is that any new program has to work with their database, which is ancient and needs to be upgraded. If this program has to be incorporated into that database, it would be expensive. If licensees can wait for a new database, which is at least a year away, the cost could be reduced.

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CHAIR DAVIS noted the bill had a referral to Labor and Commerce. Given the fiscal note it will now receive a Finance referral as well. This will give an opportunity to revise the fiscal note to make it consistent with the new database.

CHAIR DAVIS asked if the group was willing for the bill to go forward.

CHAIR DAVIS closed public testimony.

SENATOR EGAN moved to report CS for SB 119, version B, from committee with individual recommendations and accompanying fiscal note(s). Without objection, CSSB 119(STA) moved from the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

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At-ease.

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SENATOR DYSON noted he had discussed the bill with some of its advocates who are professionals in the area. His concern was about the volunteer coaches. Proponents had good answers. There is a concerted effort to get people trained to do some analysis of injuries, and to know when they should defer to medical professionals.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Davis adjourned the meeting at 1:53 p.m.