

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

May 6, 2021

1:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator David Wilson, Chair
Senator Shelley Hughes, Vice Chair
Senator Mia Costello
Senator Lora Reinbold
Senator Tom Begich

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 38

"An Act relating to the practice of naturopathy; establishing the Naturopathy Advisory Board; relating to the licensure of naturopaths; relating to disciplinary sanctions for naturopaths; relating to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; and providing for an effective date."

- MOVED CSSB 38(HSS) OUT OF COMMITTEE

SENATE BILL NO. 124

"An Act relating to admission to and detention at a subacute mental health facility; establishing a definition for 'subacute mental health facility'; establishing a definition for 'crisis residential center'; relating to the definitions for 'crisis stabilization center'; relating to the administration of psychotropic medication in a crisis situation; relating to licensed facilities; and providing for an effective date."

- BILL HEARING CANCELED

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 38

SHORT TITLE: NATUROPATHS: LICENSING; PRACTICE

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) KAWASAKI

01/25/21 (S) PREFILE RELEASED 1/8/21

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|----------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 01/25/21 | (S) | READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS |
| 01/25/21 | (S) | HSS, L&C, FIN |
| 04/07/21 | (S) | L&C AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg) |
| 04/07/21 | (S) | Scheduled but Not Heard |
| 04/08/21 | (S) | HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205 |
| 04/08/21 | (S) | Heard & Held |
| 04/08/21 | (S) | MINUTE(HSS) |
| 04/15/21 | (S) | HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205 |
| 04/15/21 | (S) | Heard & Held |
| 04/15/21 | (S) | MINUTE(HSS) |
| 05/04/21 | (S) | HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205 |
| 05/04/21 | (S) | <Bill Hearing Canceled> |
| 05/06/21 | (S) | HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205 |

WITNESS REGISTER

JOE HAYES, Staff
 Senator Scott Kawasaki
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on behalf of the sponsor.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:34:36 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVID WILSON called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Reinbold, Costello, Begich, Hughes, and Chair Wilson.

SB 38-NATUROPATHS: LICENSING; PRACTICE

[1:35:01 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 38 "An Act relating to the practice of naturopathy; establishing the Naturopathy Advisory Board; relating to the licensure of naturopaths; relating to disciplinary sanctions for naturopaths; relating to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; and providing for an effective date."

CHAIR WILSON said that the committee heard SB 38, took invited testimony on April 8 and heard it again on April 15. He noted the presence of Senator Kawasaki's staff, Joe Hayes, and Director Sara Chambers with the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), who was available for questions.

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CHAIR WILSON requested a motion to adopt the work draft committee substitute.

[1:35:56 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES moved the work draft committee substitute (CS) for SB 38, work order 32-LS0318\B, as the working document.

[1:36:06 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON objected for purposes of discussion and reviewed changes to SB 38. He said members had focused on the ability of naturopaths to use the word physician in their title and the expansion of their scope of practice. The concern was that a naturopath's training and education should be on par with that of a medical doctor to use the title physician.

Several requirements added to the CS make naturopaths' use of the word physician in their title acceptable. In Section 9, these requirements were the completion of a two-year externship and passing an approved pharmaceutical examination. A continuing education requirement was added in a new section. Should members agree to these changes a future amendment to the CS will be proposed allowing naturopaths to use the title physician

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CHAIR WILSON removed his objection; finding no further objection, version B was adopted as the working document.

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SENATOR HUGHES thanked Senator Kawasaki and staff member Mr. Hayes for working with members on SB 38. Naturopaths are an important part of Alaska's healthcare system. More work will be done on SB 38 as it moves to the Labor and Commerce Committee. A two-year internship, continuing education, and appropriate pharmaceutical training were added to the working copy of SB 38. These additions were to allow naturopaths to use the term physician in their title but that was inadvertently omitted from the CS. An amendment will be offered to correct the oversight. She opined that if naturopaths are going to step up and align their training closer to that of a medical or osteopathic doctor, then the use of the word physician would be in keeping with public expectation.

[1:38:59 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON moved Amendment 1, [work order 32-LS0318\B.1].

AMENDMENT 1

OFFERED IN THE SENATE BY SENATOR WILSON
TO: CSSB 38(HSS), Draft Version "B"

Page 7, lines 9 - 10:

Delete all material and insert:

"(2) engage in surgery, **except as authorized by AS 08.45.045(a)(3)** [;

(3) USE THE WORD "PHYSICIAN" IN THE PERSON'S TITLE]."

[1:39:06 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES objected for purposes of discussion.

CHAIR WILSON explained that Amendment 1, along with language adopted in the CS and other additional requirements, will allow Naturopaths to use the title physician.

SENATOR COSTELLO responded that she is not interested in holding up SB 38 but is concerned about the word physician being used in a naturopath's title. It could be confusing to the public.

SENATOR BEGICH asked what the sponsor thought of the amendment.

JOE HAYES, Staff, Senator Scott Kawasaki, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, stated on behalf of the sponsor that naturopaths are not wedded to the word physician, and it would not be an issue if it failed.

SENATOR BEGICH clarified that the amendment if passed, eliminates language so the word physician can be used.

CHAIR WILSON responded correct.

[1:41:01 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES opined that the use of the title physician should be a topic of discussion for a future committee. She suggested naturopaths use the title naturopathic physician to avoid confusion with the traditional meaning of the word physician.

[1:41:23 PM](#)

At ease

[1:41:27 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON reconvened the meeting.

He stated that members are neutral on Amendment 1, and it is better suited for the Labor and Commerce Committee, which deals with titles, duties, and roles.

CHAIR WILSON withdrew Amendment 1 and asked if there were any closing comments.

MR. HAYES said he looks forward to SB 38 moving through the process.

SENATOR REINBOLD commented that diverse views need to be heard. She respects naturopaths and will support SB 38.

[1:43:29 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES commented that she looks forward to continued work in the next committee. She mentioned that naturopaths should remedy their use of the word physician as a title until a decision is reached.

CHAIR WILSON suggested the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED) assist naturopaths with remediation since they do not have a board.

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CHAIR WILSON solicited a motion to move SB 38 from committee.

[1:44:30 PM](#)

SENATOR HUGHES moved to report the work draft committee substitute (CS) for SB 38, work order 32-LS0318\B, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

CHAIR WILSON found no objection and CSSB 38(HSS) was reported from the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee.

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At ease

[1:47:34 PM](#)

CHAIR WILSON reconvened the meeting and asked for member comments.

[1:47:49 PM](#)

SENATOR REINBOLD opined that this was one of the most important committees this session. She is thrilled that the informed consent amendment passed, and SB 124 failed.

SENATOR BEGICH thanked Chair Wilson for running the committee efficiently.

SENATOR HUGHES stated she used to work in healthcare and had avoided the committee, but she has enjoyed it. She thanked the committee members for being a good team.

CHAIR WILSON said it was a pleasure and honor to serve with the members and their dedicated staff. He thanked members for being a productive committee.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Wilson adjourned the Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting at 1:49 p.m.