

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
April 29, 2024
1:32 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Olson called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senator Donny Olson, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Jesse Kiehl
Senator Kelly Merrick
Senator David Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Rachael Gunn, Staff, Representative Stanley Wright; Ken Alper, Staff, Senator Donny Olson; Jane Conway, Staff, Senator Cathy Giessel

SUMMARY

HB 126 ASSOCIATE AND PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

HB 126 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#hb126

HOUSE BILL NO. 126

"An Act relating to the Board of Professional Counselors; and relating to licensing of associate counselors."

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RACHAEL GUNN, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE STANLEY WRIGHT, introduced the legislation. She stated that the bill established an associate counselor designation, within the counseling profession. She explained that it provided early career pathways while under supervision while working toward full licensure. The change allowed increased access to mental health services by providing associate counselors to bill some insurance companies.

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Senator Wilson MOVED to ADOPT the committee substitute for HB 126, Work Draft 33-LS0405\R (Klein/Gunther, 4/25/24).

Co-Chair Olson OBJECTED for discussion.

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KEN ALPER, STAFF, SENATOR DONNY OLSON, addressed the Summary of Changes (copy on file):

Change 1: Adds language in several other statutes that list different health care providers, their definitions, and their responsibilities, to include a reference to "associate counselors." This is found in Sections 2, 13, 16, 17, 18, and 19 of the committee substitute.

Change 2: Changes the requirements for the Board of Marital and Family Therapy to issue a license by removing the requirement for a specific number of courses. It retains the requirement for the number of semester or quarter hours of course work. Clarifies that the required clinical practice can be in this state or another jurisdiction. Adds a requirement that the 100 required hours of individual supervision must be approved by the board. Adds the board's discretion to extend a license for supervised practice beyond four years because of extenuating circumstances. This is found in Sections 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the committee substitute.

Change 3: Extends current law that protects health care providers from civil damages to include services provided through telehealth, so long as the provider

was located at a medical facility as already described in law, or a private office, and was acting within the Senate Finance Committee 3 04/29/24 1:32 P.M. scope of the provider's responsibilities at the relevant location. This is found in Sections 14 and 15 of the committee substitute.

Change 4: The above changes all include changes to the bill's title. Should this bill go to the Senate Floor, it will be accompanied by a title change resolution.

Senator Bishop noted that Senator Giessel had worked on the companion bill.

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JANE CONWAY, STAFF, SENATOR CATHY GIESSEL, spoke in support of the committee substitute.

Co-Chair Olson REMOVED his objection. There being NO further OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

HB 126 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

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ADJOURNMENT

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The meeting was adjourned at 1:39a p.m.