

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE LABOR AND COMMERCE STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 31, 2024

2:34 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair  
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson  
Senator Kelly Merrick  
Senator Forrest Dunbar

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Click Bishop, Vice Chair

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

EO 127 ELIMINATING THE BOARD OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS

- HEARD

EO 129 ELIMINATING THE BOARD OF BARBERS AND HAIRDRESSERS

- HEARD

EO 130 ELIMINATING THE BOARD OF CERTIFIED DIRECT ENTRY MIDWIVES

- HEARD

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

No previous action to record

**WITNESS REGISTER**

SARA CHAMBERS, Boards and Regulations Advisor  
Department of Commerce, Community and  
Economic Development (DCCED)  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided an overview for EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130.

PARKER PATTERSON, Assistant Attorney General  
Civil Division  
Department of Law

Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Answered questions on executive order procedures.

KRIS CURTIS, Legislative Auditor  
Alaska Division of Legislative Audit  
Legislative Affairs Agency  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130.

ANNETTA ATWELL, Chair  
Board of Massage Therapists  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on EO 127.

MICHELLE MCMULLIN, Chair  
Board of Barbers and Hairdressers  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on EO 129.

BETHEL BELISLE, Chair  
Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives  
Anchorage, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on EO 130.

ONICA SPROKKREEF, President  
Midwives Association of Alaska  
Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified by invitation on EO 130.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[2:34:51 PM](#)

**CHAIR JESSE BJORKMAN** called the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting to order at 2:34 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Gray-Jackson, Dunbar, Merrick, and Chair Bjorkman.

#### **EO 127 ELIMINATING THE BOARD OF MASSAGE THERAPISTS**

[2:35:36 PM](#)

#### **EO 129 ELIMINATING THE BOARD OF BARBERS AND HAIRDRESSERS**

[2:35:36 PM](#)

#### **EO 130 ELIMINATING THE BOARD OF CERTIFIED DIRECT ENTRY MIDWIVES**

[2:35:36 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN announced the consideration of Executive Order (EO) 127 Eliminating the Board of Massage Therapists, EO 129 Eliminating the Board of Barbers and Hairdressers, and EO 130 Eliminating the Board of Certified Direct Entry Midwives.

[2:36:25 PM](#)

SARA CHAMBERS, Boards and Regulations Advisor, Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development (DCCED), Juneau, Alaska, provided an overview for EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130. She paraphrased the following statement:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**The three executive orders being heard today propose to shift regulatory decision-making from an appointed board to management within the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development.** As you know, the governor has an ongoing interest in improving the efficiency of state programs, and these executive orders present the potential to further that goal. Today, I'd like to address what the three executive orders would accomplish and what they would *not* change, as well as alleviate a few concerns we have heard from the public since their introduction.

**What the Executive Orders Will Do**

First and foremost, these proposals will eliminate each quasi-judicial board overseeing their respective programs—the Board of Barbers and Hairdressers, the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives, and the Board of Massage Therapists—and move their decision-making authority to the department. Under the current delegation of the commissioner, that authority would then rest with the Director of the Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing.

This proposed change reflects how 24 professional licensing programs within the division are currently managed, including many health care programs.

With efficiency as the governor's motive, this change would reduce time frames for license application review, ensure swift action when challenges to public safety arise, and reduce wait times in adopting needed regulations.

[2:38:06 PM](#)

MS. CHAMBERS continued her overview of EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The executive orders are not condemnations of the good work our board members perform; they reflect concerns about how well the existing *structures* are serving the state and opportunities for improvement.

The structure of the board as the decisionmaker invites inherent delays. It's difficult to convene a group of busy volunteers, including managing last-minute schedule changes that could derail a meeting and accommodating additional built-in delays to meet public notice requirements. Board business may get pushed weeks into the future if a quorum of the board is unable to meet, unnecessarily drawing out the wait to complete board business. We understand how difficult it is for board members to cancel client appointments or request time off as working professionals; however, these conflicts impact a board's ability to function, which cascades down to impact people attempting to become licensed, existing licensees awaiting board answers to questions, as well as negative effects on public consumers.

Currently, the wait time for reviewing and adopting regulations is more than doubled when a board is the driver rather than the department. Looking at recent history, a simple regulations change by the division takes about four months, versus a year when a board has requested a similar change. This impacts the ability of qualified practitioners to enter the market and suspends policy updates impacting licensed practice.

Similarly, license applications may wait for several weeks for members to review, only to be tabled for consideration at a meeting that could be scheduled several weeks into the future. This does not happen with department-managed licensing programs. Additionally, a staffing restructure initiated in 2022 and affirmed in the FY25 budget adopted by the state legislature provides deeper programmatic support to all licensing programs—something that did not exist

before and which previously contributed to turnover in examiner positions.

2:40:20 PM

MS. CHAMBERS continued her overview of EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The same is true for disciplinary matters: Investigations requiring a board member review can often take months, culminating in another protracted process of discussion and final decision-making by the board. Shifting this responsibility to the department will allow investigators to seek input on practice matters from a qualified practitioner only when scope of practice is in question. Potential violations of statutes or regulations that do not involve practice matters can be managed by a staff investigator who is familiar with the program, with a recommendation to the director for final action. Investigative timelines mandated by division leadership in recent years have continued to reduce internal case management turnaround times.

Regulation without a quasi-judicial board is a common model across the United States: More than half of Alaska's professional licensing programs are currently successfully managed this way. When you look across the US and its territories, there is no one dominant model of regulation for these professions. Only about half of the professions under the Board of Barbers and Hairdressers are managed by a board in other states or territories. About two-thirds of massage therapy programs are regulated by boards. And only 9 of 34 states that regulate direct-entry midwifery have industry-led boards.

Shifting away from a quasi-judicial board opens opportunities for the department to hear regular feedback directly from licensees, the public, and other stakeholders. The department is committed to enhancing input from stakeholders, such as establishing advisory committees, opening pathways for electronic communication on proposals for change, and holding forums and town hall meetings to seek ideas and feedback on the regulation of these professions.

And, state law will still require the department to seek and consider public input on regulations the same way a board is required to do. The department strongly believes in the need for a solid and transparent bridge between licensees and staff if the executive orders become effective, ensuring that people who have been used to a board structure continue to have an open line of communication on all matters affecting their licenses and their practice.

[2:42:46 PM](#)

MS. CHAMBERS continued her overview of EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Speaking of which, there have been many concerns raised by stakeholders since the executive orders were announced, so I'd like to assuage apprehensions about what these orders will not do.

The changes made in the executive orders do not alter the licensure or certification standards or practice of any of the affected professions. The Administration supports the practice of these professions and reinforces that the proposal of these orders is in no way a first step toward deregulation. Any change to state law affecting any of these professions would require action by the legislature, as it does now. Any regulations change would require the department to seek and consider public input, as the law mandates and as the board does now.

If a situation arose and it did not have the practice expertise required to make an educated decision about an applicant, investigation, or regulation, the department would continue to rely upon the advice and wisdom of seasoned practitioners—as it does now with all programs. We have also confirmed with the Department of Health that licensees who are currently qualified for reimbursement by insurance and Medicaid would continue to be covered, as they are now.

The time currently spent by staff to support management of a board will be reinvested in improving licensing turnaround times and increasing expertise about the profession if there are any gaps as a result

of the reorganization. Division staff currently receive training and education on matters that are important to the program, and that will only be enhanced going forward. A great example of this is the training our staff currently receives on identifying potential human trafficking red flags in license applications and enforcement issues. Board members currently share in this review, but they are not the only trained eyes on these issues when they arise, which is infrequent. The training that division staff receive on human trafficking would only be enhanced when the executive orders go into effect.

[2:45:02 PM](#)

MS. CHAMBERS continued her overview of EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The previous points apply to all three of the boards proposed to be eliminated in the executive orders. There are a few specific concerns, however, that are relevant to two of the affected boards.

First, the Board of Barbers and Hairdressers has, multiple times, over more than a decade, identified needed changes in statute or regulation that would either improve policies relating to the professions they govern or clarify persistent questions that are creating confusion in the industry. With limited exception, they have failed to act on these major policymaking needs from industry. The board has frequently needed to reschedule or cancel its publicly noticed meetings due to a lack of quorum. On multiple occasions, more than a dozen members of the public have gathered to engage with the board, and the board has not shown up. Without the requirement of a board, the department could have moved forward in reviewing these matters and taken appropriate steps to address industry concerns. The board has, over several years, and across multiple rotations of members, failed to perform the work delegated to it by the legislature. Not only is this persistently not responsive or responsible to the needs of industry and the public, but it is a drain of staff time and resources that could be spent more productively, particularly on getting people to work in Alaska.

2:46:35 PM

MS. CHAMBERS continued her overview of EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Moving quasi-judicial decision-making to the department will also protect the integrity of the process. Within the last year, the Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives has not been able to address certain application and investigation issues because a majority of board members had a legal conflict of interest with the subject--either because the board member was their employer or had internal information about the case. The board was required to remand a matter to an Administrative Law Judge to settle the matter for them, resulting in the case taking nearly a year and costing more than \$7,000--which will be paid by licensees. This situation is no fault of the individual board members; it is the result of the structure of a board of market participants that oversees a very small number of their peers. By governing a pool of only 54 licensees and permit holders, it is inherently difficult not to run into conflicts of interest in application and disciplinary matters. Conflicts requiring the board to shift its responsibilities to the Office of Administrative Hearings will only create more expenses for a program that costs licensees approximately \$3,000 to enter the profession as a fully certified midwife--a fee that must be paid again upon renewal of certification every other year.

2:48:00 PM

MS. CHAMBERS continued her overview of EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Also specific to this board is the inability of the Administration to fill the physician seat, which has been vacant for more than two years. A lack of qualified applicants has made this extremely difficult. This and other concerns have been brought to the legislature multiple times in the last decade; one of the last four recent legislative audits

recommended the legislature look at alternative methods of regulating this profession.

Again, this is not a critique of the individual board members or of the profession of direct-entry midwifery, which the Administration supports. It is a flaw in the statutory structure of this particular board. The Administration wishes to express our respect for the professional expertise and willingness to serve offered by all board members and our desire to gain that benefit going forward through more efficient and appropriate means.

To close, the purpose and expected outcome of the executive orders are to improve the regulatory efficiency of the affected professions without sacrificing public engagement or safety.

[2:49:26 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR noted that this is the first time executive orders (EO) have been heard in the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee and inquired about the process of disapproving an EO.

[2:50:10 PM](#)

MS. CHAMBERS replied that an Assistant Attorney General is online to answer this question.

[2:50:26 PM](#)

PARKER PATTERSON, Assistant Attorney General, Civil Division, Department of Law, Juneau, Alaska, answered questions on executive order procedures. He asked for clarification that Senator Dunbar was referring to the procedure for disapproving an EO.

[2:50:59 PM](#)

SENATOR DUNBAR replied yes. He acknowledged that the legislature has the power to disapprove EOs and requested details on the disapproval process.

[2:51:35 PM](#)

MR. PATTERSON answered that with regard to committee actions, he would defer to Legislative Legal Services. He explained that in order to disapprove an EO, the legislature needs to introduce a special concurrent resolution within 60 days of the regular session. This must be approved by a majority of the Legislature

during a joint session. He added that the EO becomes law unless action is taken by the legislature.

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SENATOR DUNBAR pointed out that EOs are before the committee without a corresponding special concurrent resolution; therefore, no action can be taken. He asked if the intention is to move the EOs out of committee without recommendations.

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CHAIR BJORKMAN explained that when hearings are complete, the committee will produce a report with recommendations. Following this, any legislator can draft a special concurrent resolution to veto the EO.

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SENATOR DUNBAR asked if members of impacted industries were questioned regarding the elimination of the boards in question.

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MS. CHAMBERS answered no. She explained that the EOs are a launching point for these discussions.

[2:54:51 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked Ms. Chambers to elaborate on her experience with DCCED and her work with the various boards.

[2:55:11 PM](#)

MS. CHAMBERS answered that she joined in 2011. Over 11 years, she served as Deputy and later Division Director for the Division of Corporations, Business, and Professional Licensing. She explained her current position was created in 2023; in this position, she works with close to 40 Boards to help them work more effectively.

[2:55:44 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN inquired about the complaint investigation process and asked if the members of the boards in question help handle these complaints.

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MS. CHAMBERS replied that the investigative process is directed by the Division. She explained that the Division hires investigators who are certified through a rigorous process. Once the investigator has gathered information and worked with parties to present a case, one or more board members review the

case and make a recommendation to their peers on the board. The final disciplinary decision is made by the board.

[2:56:57 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN asked if costs or other liabilities are incurred when board members are not available to assist with this process.

[2:57:12 PM](#)

MS. CHAMBERS answered board members who have the necessary specialized expertise are typically available; however, when a board member with the necessary expertise is not available, the Division contracts with expert witnesses. She said that currently, board members are involved in every investigation; however, she opined that there is no need for board members to review investigations that are not practice related. She explained that the EO reduces the need for board members by allowing non-practice related investigations to be reviewed by staff. She stated that costs are expected to remain the same.

[2:59:12 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN said that all three boards have expressed concern that, should these boards be eliminated, industry members will no longer be involved in crafting industry-specific regulations, expectations, and standards. He asked if CVPL has experts in these fields who can help craft regulations and standards.

[2:59:49 PM](#)

MS. CHAMBERS replied that currently, the ideas come from the boards and the regulations are crafted by division staff. She reiterated that the Department is committed to seeking out - and listening to - industry input. She explained that when industries without boards have outdated regulations, the department hears this from the industry and is able to move forward with the necessary changes in a more streamlined way.

[3:01:01 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON expressed concern about the cost and asked if the department would need to hire more employees to take on the workload once the boards are dissolved.

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MS. CHAMBERS replied that the department does not anticipate a significant change in costs; however, she acknowledged that this may change depending on legislative changes and industry shifts. She explained that in 2022, division staffing underwent a significant restructuring that allowed staff to better

understand industry concerns and trends - and to synthesize what they hear from board members and licensees. She stated that this restructuring provides greater confidence in the division staff's ability to successfully move forward with the changes that will result from the dissolution of the boards. She reiterated that there is no intention of cutting out industry input and emphasized the value of listening to industry concerns. She stated that fiscal notes are not a part of the EO process.

[3:03:13 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON asked what the budget is for each of the boards.

[3:03:31 PM](#)

MS. CHAMBERS replied that the boards do not have individual budgets as the division sets its own budget at the division component level. She stated that she would get back to the committee with the historical costs for the boards.

[3:04:23 PM](#)

KRIS CURTIS, Legislative Auditor, Alaska Division of Legislative Audit, Legislative Affairs Agency, Juneau, Alaska, testified by invitation on EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130. She paraphrased from the following statement:

[Original punctuation provided.]

The executive orders you are considering today eliminate three occupational boards which are subject to legislative oversight through the sunset process outlined in statute. The sunset process includes an audit prior to reauthorization. I have been with Legislative Audit over 30 years and been directly involved with the sunset audits of the boards you are considering today.

As I understand it, you are considering whether to object to the governors executive orders that eliminate three occupational boards and move the board responsibilities to DCBPL staff. Before discussing the specific Executive Orders, I want to make sure you all know that occupational boards are not funded with general funds. Oc boards are funded via license fees. Statutes require fees be set at a level that covers the cost of regulating the profession. Therefore,

eliminating the boards will not results in savings to the state's general fund.

And the other important point I want to make clear is that any increase in regulatory costs that result from these executive orders will be born by licensees.

When considering eliminating the three boards, I encourage you to consider the impact on the quality of the regulatory process, the impact on public safety, and the impact on license fees.

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MS. CURTIS continued her testimony on EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Timeliness and quality of regulatory projects**

First, the impact on the regulatory process. As you all know, occupational boards are staffed with volunteers. Licensees that serve as board members provide technical expertise that is needed to craft regulations - and that expert assistance comes free of charge. Moving the responsibility for creating and amending regulations to DCBPL staff will make it less likely that regulations will be changed as needed because DCBPL is experiencing significant challenges with turnover and retention. Further, moving the regulatory responsibility to DCBPL makes it more likely that technical expertise will need to be procured which is a cost that would be borne by licensees through increased fees.

[3:07:17 PM](#)

MS. CURTIS continued her testimony on EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130:

[Original punctuation provided.]

**Slowing down the investigative process and increasing investigative costs**

Next, is the impact on the investigative process. As needed, board members are asked to help evaluate complaints/evidence and provide guidance to

investigators. Again, these services are provided at no cost. Without the assistance of board members, expert assistance would need to be procured by DCBPL which is a cost that will be borne by licensees. In addition to increasing costs and, in turn license fees, I expect the investigative process to be significantly slower without the availability and assistance of board members which increases the risk to public safety.

[3:08:25 PM](#)

MS. CURTIS stated that the audit found a concerning lack of performance at DCBPL, specifically related to the investigatory process. She noted that the details of these are not typically disclosed in an audit report, as the investigations are often ongoing. However, with the boards in question, the oversight process has been very important to public safety over the last several years. She continued to paraphrase from the following statement:

[Original punctuation provided.]

DCBPL, like the rest of state government, struggles with recruitment and retention. I caution against shifting the boards' responsibilities to an agency that, as audits have shown, should not take on more responsibilities. Our sunset audits have highlighted poor DCBPL performance including untimely investigations, lack of appropriate response to investigations, not completing continuing education audits, and not processing licenses in accordance with state law.

My final comment for your consideration is that the legislative sunset process provides and opportunity for legislators to consider the degree to which a specific board is serving the public's interest, including DCBPL's support to a board. These executive orders remove that oversight process.

[3:09:55 PM](#)

MS. CURTIS stated that the Board of Direct-Entry Midwives is subject to sunset audit this year and pointed out that the previous extension was limited to two years because of investigation concerns. She highlighted that the Governor's office of Boards and Commissions is responsible for appointing board members. She noted that, in some cases, board positions

have not been filled in a timely manner, leaving members in positions long after they should have been replaced. She questioned why boards and commissions was not taking action to replace board members who consistently missed meetings.

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MS. CURTIS commented that the legislative sunset audit process provides an opportunity for legislators to consider whether a board is serving the public's interest. She pointed out that this includes whether DCBPL is offering appropriate support to the board. She stated that the audits have been critical of DCBPL's performance over the past 7 years and added that the EOs take away this legislative oversight process.

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SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON commented that Ms. Curtis's report answered her questions and thanked her for her presentation.

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At ease

[3:13:05 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN reconvened the meeting.

[3:14:02 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN announced invited testimony on EO 127, EO 129, and EO 130.

[3:14:35 PM](#)

ANNETTA ATWELL, Chair, Board of Massage Therapists, Fairbanks, Alaska, testified by invitation on EO 127. She stated that the current Board of Massage Therapists has unanimously agreed to seek the legislature's assistance in overturning EO 127. She asserted that the intentions behind EO 127 appear to be respectable; however, she believes that eliminating the board will fail to meet the stated objectives. In addition, eliminating the board would potentially expand human trafficking and prostitution in the profession and undermine the professionalism that licensed massage therapists have worked diligently to maintain.

[3:16:50 PM](#)

MS. ATWELL detailed what the board has done to shorten the application process. This was done without prompting from the department. She stated that if the board were eliminated, the licensing process would become less efficient and licensing costs would increase.

[3:18:17 PM](#)

MS. ATWELL stated that professional, vetted massage therapists are able to recognize the signs of human and sex trafficking when they show up during the application process and expressed concern that division staff would miss these signs. In addition, she expressed concern that the division of professional licensing is understaffed and unable to keep up with board associated responsibilities and cited multiple instances of related web site inaccuracies or lack of updates, which were not remedied, even after the issues were pointed out. She questioned how they would manage the added duties, should the board be eliminated. She expressed concern that the division would not ensure that staff are educated on issues related to the profession. She stated that, because board members are also massage therapists, they are passionate about issues facing the profession and reiterated their fervent desire that this EO be stopped.

[3:22:10 PM](#)

MICHELLE MCMULLIN, Chair, Board of Barbers and Hairdressers, Anchorage, Alaska, testified by invitation on EO 129. She said she has been on the board for 7 years and has been chair of the board for 4 years. She shared several issues that the board has dealt with in recent years. She detailed the difficulties the board has had when attempting to work with the division, including issues with retaining a health inspector. She expressed frustration with the lack of communication from the Division and pointed out that the board relies on the Division to communicate with other state departments, which often does not happen.

[3:26:02 PM](#)

MS. MCMULLIN detailed several concerns about the current process of appointing members to the board. She expressed frustration that the Boards and Commissions has appointed people who do not show up to meetings and give no advance notice. She stated that several individuals have expressed interest in serving on the board; however, they have not heard back regarding their applications. She emphasized the importance of a health and safety inspector to ensure that licensees are operating safely. She stated that the board is not given the transparency and communication that is needed for the board to do its job.

[3:29:07 PM](#)

BETHEL BELISLE, Chair, Board of Certified Direct-Entry Midwives, Anchorage, Alaska, testified by invitation on EO 130. She said

she has been a direct-entry midwife since 1989 and has been on the board since March 2020. She shared her belief that the board is needed and stated that the Board of Direct-Entry Midwives is opposed to EO 130. She shared the board's position that to eliminate the board would not be in the best interest of the state, the economy, or public safety. With respect to meeting quorum requirements, she said the board has met these requirements at all but one meeting. She stated that, financially, the board is "in the black" and licensees currently pay \$2800 every two years to be licensed. She added that, while they are willing to continue paying this, there is concern about increased costs if the board is eliminated. She emphasized that if midwives cannot afford to pay for the license, there will be fewer midwives in the state. She pointed out that midwives have saved the state approximately \$5 million. She expressed concern that fewer midwives would mean less access to quality care. She stated that she has been told on several occasions that the division is unable to complete certain tasks due to a lack of staffing.

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MS. BELISLE shared information regarding an application that was initially lost by the Division and later cost the board \$7 thousand. She acknowledged that the board has been giving serious attention to the audit recommendations, which has increased application processing times. However, she emphasized that this particular application delay was due to miscommunication at the department level, not at the board level. She expressed concern that the rampant mismanagement and lack of staffing will continue. With respect to efficiency, she said that the board has been working on legislation that would match the regulations to statutes - HB 175 (Board of Licensed Midwives). She explained that this would streamline the application and relicensing processes. She emphasized that the board brought this issue to the department - the department did not bring this issue to the board. She stated the importance of a board of midwives who have the necessary expertise and asserted that the board is doing a good job meeting the needs of the state.

[3:34:45 PM](#)

ONICA SPROKKREEF, President, Midwives Association of Alaska, Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada, testified by invitation on EO 130. She stated that the Midwives Association of Alaska opposes EO 130. She said she has been a practicing midwife in Alaska for over 12 years and department staffing issues have been a continual concern during that time. She stated that department

staff do not understand the midwifery profession and added that a great deal of time and money has been spent educating department staff. She shared her understanding that the Board of Direct-Entry Midwives does not currently have a licensing examiner who is capable of helping the board. She shared her belief in the importance of midwifery and stated that EO 130 would restrict the ability of Alaskan families to access midwifery.

[3:37:44 PM](#)

CHAIR BJORKMAN solicited questions from the committee. Seeing none, and there being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Bjorkman adjourned the Senate Labor and Commerce Standing Committee meeting at 3:37 p.m.