

HB

603



Official Business

Alaska State Legislature

Senate

Committee on Labor & Commerce

Pouch V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

CSHB 603(L&C) Sectional Analysis

Section 1) Extends the Board of Dispensing Opticians until 6/30/89.

Section 2) Expands the qualifications required of applicants for examinations as follows:

Adds 4 years of attendance, or the equivalent, at a high school;

Provides that graduation with an associate degree, from a recognized school of opticianry, may be substituted for 4,000 of the 6,000 hours of experience in the profession.

Section 3) Prior to license renewal, licensee shall submit evidence to the board of 30 hours of continued competence in the profession, as prescribed by board regs.

Section 4) Immediate effective date

BILL SHEFFIELD
GOVERNOR



STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
JUNEAU

February 14, 1986

The Honorable Ben Grussendorf
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Grussendorf:

Under the authority of art. III, sec. 18, of the Alaska Constitution, I am transmitting a bill to extend the Board of Dispensing Opticians until June 30, 1988 and to make minor changes in two sections of AS 08.71, concerning opticians' eligibility for examination for licensure and renewal of licensure.

Although the June 30, 1985 termination date for the Board of Dispensing Opticians has passed, the board continues in existence until June 30, 1986 under the wind-down provisions of AS 08.03.020.

Last spring, I vetoed CSSB 167(L&C) which would have continued the board until 1989 and made the same change as does sec. 3 of this bill regarding optician license renewal, along with several other changes to AS 08.71, concerning licensing of opticians. After that veto, I appointed a working group identical to that which would have been required by the vetoed bill. That working group recommended, by unanimous vote, all of the provisions of the attached bill.

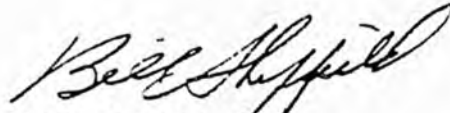
I believe that the best way to solve the inefficiencies, controversies, and sometimes bitter contention, that pervades the sometimes overlapping and deeply interrelated professions of optometry and opticianry is to pursue combining the two separate boards and statutes now regulating each. I agree with the working group that this somewhat radical change from the status quo can be most productively pursued as part of simultaneous sunset review of both

boards. That is why this bill extends the Board of Dispensing Opticians until the June 30, 1988 sunset date for the Board of Examiners in Optometry.

Meanwhile, the working group, also by unanimous vote, recommended other changes to AS 08.71, the dispensing optician statutes, which are also part of the bill. I agree with these changes, including the doubling of the number of continuing education hours in sec. 3 of the bill. In 1980 the license renewal date was changed from every two years to every four years, but a corresponding doubling of the continuing education hour requirement was overlooked. Now that all the 66 dispensing optician licenses were renewed last summer, for four years, the licensees will have ample notice and time to comply with the doubled requirement. The changes made by sec. 2 of the bill affect the qualifications that must be met by an applicant for examination.

I urge your prompt action to pass this bill so that we can continue to work with the opticians and the optometrists to pursue a better, more efficient way to regulate these two interrelated professions in truly the best interests of the consuming public.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill Sheffield". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Bill Sheffield
Governor

CHAIRMAN'S INFORMATION: CSHB 603 (L&C)

- 1) BILL TITLE: "An act relating to dispensing opticians; and providing for an effective date."
 - a) Introduced: Governor
 - b) Co-sponsors:

- 2) INTENT: This measure extends the termination date of the dispensing opticians until 6/30/89, and expands the qualifications an applicant must meet prior to examination and licensure.

FISCAL NOTE: 0

- 3) ADDITIONAL REFERRALS: HESS and Rules
- 4) PUBLIC HEARINGS:
 - a) Sponsor:
 - b) Public Witnesses:
- 5) BILL ACTION:
 - a) Hold in committee?
 - b) Assign to sub committee for further review?
 - c) Move from committee?
 - d) Close public hearings?
- 6) COMMITTEE ACTION?
 - a) amendments?
 - b) CS adoption?

A PERFORMANCE REPORT
ON THE BOARD OF
DISPENSING OPTICIANS

July 1, 1981 -- June 30, 1984

Audit Control Number

08-1168-84-R

Commissioner, Department of
Commerce and Economic
Development

Richard A. Lyon

Deputy Commissioners, Department
of Commerce and Economic
Development

Vincent O'Reilley
Terry Elder

Members of the
Board of Dispensing Opticians

Chairman
Secretary
Member
Member
Member

J. Robin Isbell
Leslie E. Brockelsby
Larry E. Harper
George Tresnak
Vacant

STATE OF ALASKA

AUDIT DIVISION
POUCH W
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811

THE LEGISLATURE

BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

June 30, 1984

Members of the Legislative Budget
and Audit Committee:

In accordance with the provisions of Titles 24 and 44 of the
Alaska Statutes (sunset legislation), the attached report is
submitted for your review.

A PERFORMANCE REPORT
ON THE BOARD OF
DISPENSING OPTICIANS

July 1, 1981 -- June 30, 1984

Audit Control Number

08-1168-84-R



Gerald L. Wilkerson, CPA
Legislative Auditor
Division of Legislative Audit

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Purpose and Scope of the Report.	1
Organization and Function.	3
Report Conclusion.	5
Findings and Recommendations	9
Analysis of Public Need.	15
Appendix:	
A. Board of Dispensing Opticians Revenues Compared with Expenditures.	19
Agency Response:	
Department of Commerce & Economic Development.	21

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE REPORT

Purpose

In accordance with the intent of Titles 24 and 44 of the Alaska Statutes (sunset legislation), we have reviewed the activities of the Board of Dispensing Opticians for the past three fiscal years to determine if the Board has been operating in an efficient and effective manner.

Legislative intent requires consideration of this report during legislative oversight hearings to determine whether the Board of Dispensing Opticians should be reestablished. The law now specifies that the Board will terminate June 30, 1985, and have one year from that date to conclude its affairs.

Scope

The major areas of our examination were the licensing, examination, administration, complaint, and affirmative action functions of the Board. We reviewed and evaluated the following:

1. Applicable statutes and regulations.
2. Tests of files and documents of licensees.
3. Interviews with the license examiners.
4. Complaints filed with the Division of Occupational Licensing, Human Rights Commission, Equal Employment Opportunity Office, Attorney General's Office, and the Ombudsman's Office.
5. Discussions with Board members.
6. Minutes of Board meetings and Division correspondence files.
7. Attorney General's Opinions applicable to professional boards.

(Intentionally left blank)

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTION

The Board of Dispensing Opticians was established by the 1973 Session Laws of Alaska. This regulatory board consists of five persons; four dispensing opticians and one public member, appointed by the Governor. Board members serve staggered terms of four years.

The Board is organized under the Department of Commerce and Economic Development, Division of Occupational Licensing (OL). OL provides the Board with licensing and investigative support. The licensing section processes applications, maintains license files, answers inquiries, and provides other administrative help to the Board.

The Board sets the minimum standards to practice in Alaska by:

1. Examining and issuing licenses to qualified applicants.
2. Establishing, amending, or eliminating regulations necessary and desirable to enforce statutes.
3. Revoking, annulling, or suspending licenses in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act when a person has violated dispensing optician statutes or regulations.

(Intentionally left blank)

REPORT CONCLUSION

Policy Issues

This report contains policy issues raised as a result of our evaluation of Board practices. The final policy decisions affecting these practices are not within the scope of this report but require legislative consideration. In debating these issues, the oversight committee should take into consideration the Findings and Recommendations presented in this report so the potential impact of policy changes can be evaluated.

Report Conclusion

The primary purpose of a regulatory board with a licensing function is to protect the public. The questions that have to be evaluated to determine if licensing is needed are:

1. Does the unlicensed practice pose a serious risk to the consumers' life, health, safety, or economic well-being?
2. Can the potential users be expected to possess the knowledge needed to properly evaluate the qualifications of those offering services?
3. Do the benefits to the public clearly outweigh any potential harmful effects, such as a decrease in the availability of practitioners, higher costs of services, and restriction on optimum utilization of personnel?

During our review to determine if the Board's licensing function is required and meets the previously mentioned criteria, we examined existing statutes, complaints, and various Board functions. As a result of our examination we found:

1. The Board performs only minimal functions. The majority of their duties, as outlined by AS 08.71.070, are handled by the Division of Occupational Licensing. Those duties that are executed by the Board include conducting meetings, reviewing applications for licensure, reviewing results of investigations and hearings and determining proper disciplinary actions, and preparing and grading the State examination. These duties are not substantial enough to continue the Board. Conducting meetings is only necessary to the extent that it is easier to take care of business at a meeting as opposed to by mail.

The bulk of the work on reviewing applications for licensure is done by the license examiner. He/she gathers the proper documentation and makes sure it is complete. The applications are then presented to the Board, who then votes whether to approve or disapprove licensure. This review tends to be cursory as the majority of it has already been done by the license examiner.

Reviewing results of investigations and hearings and determining proper disciplinary actions also tends to be cursory. This is due to the up-front work that is done by the investigations unit in Occupational Licensing and the hearing officers. The Board is kept informed of the status of complaints but are not involved in the investigations. The determination of proper disciplinary actions has usually been done by the hearing officer. It is then a formality for the Board to approve them.

The only duty requiring the expertise of the Board is the preparation and grading of the State examination. A license examiner does not have the background to formulate those exams. However, it is not necessary to give an exam because the potential physical harm caused by unlicensed dispensing opticians is minimal to nonexistent, and the administering of an exam is not essential.

Consequently, there are not enough duties for the Board to justify its existence. The expenses to maintain a Board of 5 members to regulate approximately 60 dispensing opticians is not economical.

2. An optician cannot cause great physical harm to an individual. Spectacles can cause double vision, distorted vision, and trouble with perception. Yet with these types of troubles, most patients will return to their optometrist or ophthalmologist for verification of the prescription. Improper fitting of contact lenses can result in physical harm. However, AS 08.71.200 requires a licensed physician (ophthalmologist) or optometrist to supervise the fitting of contact lenses and requires the patient to return to the prescribing physician or optometrist. In addition, AS 08.72.275 is adequate to protect the public from harm due to improperly hardened lenses because it requires each lens to be impact resistant under specified test conditions.
3. Approximately 12 complaints were received by the Division of Occupational Licensing and 2 complaints were received by Consumer Protection over the last few years.

Most of the complaints were instigated by licensed practitioners, not consumers, and related to unlicensed individuals dispensing. Of these, none resulted in physical harm. In one case, the Attorney General's Office refused to prosecute a violation because there was no evidence of physical harm.

4. In addition, several cases were noted where individuals were licensed without adequate documentation of statutory and regulatory requirements. These individuals were potentially "unqualified," yet no evidence of physical harm has resulted from their practices.
5. Contact lenses cost approximately \$500 and spectacles cost much less. Therefore, if for some reason the consumer received poor quality or useless contacts or spectacles, the loss to the consumer would not be severe. Also, if a consumer is dissatisfied, he/she has recourses available whether a business or individual is licensed or not. The Consumer Protection Unit as well as the court system are there to provide remedies for injured parties.

Thus, we found the Board's existence to be superfluous, especially in light of the scope of the dispensing optician's work. The dispensing optician prepares and dispenses original or duplicate lenses, eyeglasses, contact lenses, and appurtenances to them on written prescription from a licensed physician or optometrist. They also interpret, measure, adapt, and fit the above mentioned. This restricts their scope to a small sphere of duties and limits that amount of harm that could result if they were not licensed.

Therefore, we recommend the Board of Dispensing Opticians be allowed to terminate on June 30, 1985.

(Intentionally left blank)

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation No. 1

The Board of Dispensing Opticians should be allowed to terminate on June 30, 1985.

The primary purpose of a regulatory board with a licensing function is to protect the public. The questions that have to be evaluated to determine if licensing is needed are:

1. Does the unlicensed practice pose a serious risk to the consumers' life, health, safety, or economic well-being?
2. Can the potential users be expected to possess the knowledge needed to properly evaluate the qualifications of those offering services?
3. Do the benefits to the public clearly outweigh the potential harmful effects, such as a decrease in the availability of practitioners, higher costs of services, and restriction on optimum utilization of personnel?

During our review to determine if the Board's licensing function is required and meets the previously mentioned criteria, we examined existing statutes, complaints, and various Board functions. As a result of our examination we found:

- A. The Board performs only minimal functions. The majority of their duties as outlined by AS 08.71.070 are handled by the Division of Occupational Licensing. Those duties that are executed by the Board include conducting meetings, reviewing applications for licensure, reviewing results of investigations and hearings, and determining proper disciplinary actions, and preparing and grading the State examination. These duties are not substantial enough to continue the Board. Conducting meetings is only necessary to the extent that it is easier to take care of business at a meeting as opposed to by mail. The bulk of the work on reviewing applications for licensure is done by the license examiner. He/she gathers the proper documentation and makes sure it is complete. The applications are then presented to the Board, who then votes whether to approve or disapprove licensure. This review tends to be cursory as the majority of it has already been done by the license examiner.

Reviewing results of investigations and hearings and determining proper disciplinary actions also tends to be cursory. This is due to the up-front work that is done by the investigations unit in Occupational Licensing and the hearing officers. The Board is kept informed of the status of complaints but are not involved in the investigations. The determination of proper disciplinary actions has usually been done by the hearing officer. It is then a formality for the Board to approve them.

The only duty requiring the expertise of the Board is the preparation and grading of the State examination. A license examiner does not have the background to formulate those exams. However, it is not necessary to give an exam because the potential physical harm caused by unlicensed dispensing opticians is minimal to non-existent, and the administering of an exam is not essential.

Consequently, there are not enough duties for the Board to justify its existence. The expenses to maintain a Board of 5 members to regulate approximately 60 dispensing opticians is not economical.

- B. An optician cannot cause great physical harm to an individual. Spectacles can cause double vision, distorted vision, and trouble with perception. Yet with these types of troubles, most patients will return to their optometrist or ophthalmologist for verification of the prescription. Improper fitting of contact lenses can result in physical harm. However, AS 08.71.200 requires a licensed physician (ophthalmologist) or optometrist to supervise the fitting of contact lenses and requires the patient to return to the prescribing physician or optometrist. In addition, AS 08.72.275 is adequate to protect the public from harm due to improperly hardened lenses because it requires each lens to be impact resistant under specified test conditions.
- C. Approximately 12 complaints were received by the Division of Occupational Licensing and 2 complaints were received by Consumer Protection over the last few years. Most of the complaints were instigated by licensed practitioners, not consumers, and related to unlicensed individuals dispensing. Of these, none resulted in physical harm. In one case, the Attorney General's Office refused to prosecute a violation because there was no evidence of physical harm.

- D. Several cases were noted where individuals were licensed without adequate documentation of statutory and regulatory requirements (See Recommendation No. 4). These individuals were potentially "unqualified," yet no evidence of physical harm has resulted from their practices.
- E. Only 20 out of the 49 other states deem it necessary to license dispensing opticians. The rest recognize that potential users can evaluate a dispensing optician's qualifications. Free enterprise will take care of those unlicensed practitioners who are not able to provide quality services and competitive prices. Consumers will not continue to patronize a business or individual if they are not satisfied.
- F. Contact lenses cost approximately \$500 and spectacles cost much less. Therefore, if for some reason the consumer received poor quality or useless contacts or spectacles, the loss to the consumer would not be severe. Also, if a consumer is dissatisfied, he/she has recourses available whether a business or individual is licensed or not. The Consumer Protection Unit as well as the court system are there to provide remedies for injured parties.

If the Board is not terminated and some control over the occupation is desired, the dispensing opticians should be combined with the Board of Optometry. The optometrists can and do dispense spectacles and contact lenses like the dispensing opticians as well as refracting eyes and diagnosing eye diseases. Thus, the Board of Optometry has experience in the same areas and is an appropriate Board with which to combine the Board of Dispensing Opticians.

However, in the event that the Board is reestablished, we recommend the following changes be made in their operations.

Recommendation No. 2

The Board of Dispensing Opticians and the Office of the Governor should work together to ensure that vacant Board positions are filled.

The Board is responsible for making recommendations to the Office of the Governor, Special Staff Assistant, Boards and Commissions for vacant Board positions. The Office of the Governor is then responsible for following up on those recommendations as well as those from any other interested parties.

There are conflicting stories from the staff of the Office of the Governor and the Board members regarding the lack of recommendations and follow up. There is some dispute as to whether any recommendations have been made in the past several years as there has been no acknowledgement of receipt by the Office of the Governor, except within the last month. Regardless of who has been at fault, there are still vacant Board positions to be filled.

This is particularly crucial since two of the five positions have members who are serving past the expiration dates of their terms. One member has served two years beyond his original term because no one has been appointed to fill his slot. This extension of terms defeats the purpose in setting a specified term length. In addition, the public member slot has been vacant since June 1982. The public member brings a different perspective. They help keep the purpose in mind which is to protect the public, not the economic interest of an occupational group. Therefore, it is crucial that the Board and the Office of the Governor work together to fill these three slots.

Recommendation No. 3

The Board should review existing statutes and regulations and seek appropriate revision where necessary.

During our examination, we reviewed the Board's statutes and regulations to determine if any were obsolete, vague, or unduly restrictive. Examples of what we found are as follows:

- A. AS 08.71.130(d) and 12 AAC 30.050 set out continuing competency requirements. These requirements were based on biennial licensing. Since then, the profession has changed to quadrennial licensing without a compensating change in the continuing competency requirements.
- B. AS 08.71.150 allows the State to license by reciprocity. However, none of the 20 other states will grant Alaska these rights. And since licensure by credentials accomplishes the same purpose, this Statute is not necessary.
- C. AS 08.71.200 sets out dispensing opticians' constraints for issuing contact lenses. The language used is not specific enough and needs to be further defined as to what is meant by "contact lenses shall be fitted in conjunction with and under the supervision of a licensed physician or an optometrist." The optometrists and dispensing opticians are currently debating changes to this Statute, and a caution should be noted. The Attorney General's Office has found a potential

antitrust issue with regards to where contact lens prescriptions can be filled. Any changes to this Statute should not be to make it more restrictive (i.e., requiring the prescriptions be filled at specified places instead of where the consumer chooses).

- D. The Board still has not received statutory authority to issue temporary permits. These temporary permits would allow a greater influx of qualified individuals to practice while awaiting formal Board approval.

AS 08.71.055 provides that the Board shall exercise general control over dispensing opticians. This cannot be done effectively without clear and concise statutes and regulations. And although the Board has had various obsolete or vague statutory and regulatory requirements repealed or amended, the Board should continue to review them for obsolescence, vagueness, and restrictiveness, and propose appropriate changes where necessary.

Recommendation No. 4

The Board should ensure that requirements are being met and adequately documented prior to licensure.

Statutory and regulatory requirements have been set up to ensure that competent individuals are being licensed. Documentation of these requirements is necessary to show that they have indeed been met.

During our examination, we reviewed several licensing files to determine if statutory and regulatory requirements were being met. Examples of what we found are as follows:

- A. Out of 12 tested, 4 did not have adequate documentation of training hours. Either the hours listed were not signed by the instructor on the application or there weren't enough hours (AS 08.71.110 and 12 AAC 30.070).
- B. For those 2 tested that were licensed by credentials, apprentice hours were not listed at all or those listed were not enough. Also there was no evidence that the applicants had ever taken the national exam either in Alaska or in another state (AS 08.71.145 and 12 AAC 30.100).
- C. One licensee's file did not have any indication of the Board's approval (AS 08.71.055).
- D. Much of the documentation consisted of photocopies and not originals. Photocopies are acceptable but they should be notarized or certified copies and not copies of notarized or certified originals since copies of notarized or certified originals are easy to falsify.

The Board has some flexibility in assuring the requirements are met. They can waive them in order to let a candidate take the exam. However, there should be no exceptions when licensing. All requirements must be met including those that may have been initially waived for the exam. The follow up on those items lacking is the Board's responsibility, and the Board should ensure requirements are being met and adequately documented prior to licensure.

ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC NEED

Limited Analysis

The following analyses indicate both positive and negative factors as they relate to the public need as defined in the "sunset" law. These analyses are not intended to be comprehensive, but to address those areas we were able to cover during our examination.

- I. The extent to which the board, commission, or program has operated in the public interest.
 - A. The Board has held meetings and exams at least two times a year.
 - B. The Board has passed regulations regarding apprentices, continuing competency, and licensure by credentials.
 - C. The Board has not had a public member since June 1982 (see Recommendation No. 2).
- II. The extent to which the operation of the board, commission, or agency program has been impeded or enhanced by existing statutes, procedures, and practices which it has adopted, and any other matter, including budgetary, resource, and personnel matters.
 - A. The Board has had two vacant Board positions for two years (see Recommendation No. 2).
- III. The extent to which the board, commission, or agency has recommended statutory changes which are generally of benefit to the public interest.
 - A. The Board succeeded in having various obsolete or vague statutory requirements repealed or amended.
 - B. No statutory changes have been made since 1980.
- IV. The extent to which the board, commission, or agency has encouraged interested persons to report to it concerning the effect of its regulations and decisions on the effectiveness of service, economy of service, and availability of service which it has provided.
 - A. The Board has published public notices of all examinations, meetings, and regulation changes. The Board has not actively solicited comments on its effectiveness.

- V. The extent to which the board, commission, or agency has encouraged public participation in the making of its regulations and decisions.
- A. The Board has published notices of its meetings in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau. However, no public participation appears to have resulted.
- VI. The efficiency with which public inquiries or complaints regarding the activities of the board, commission, or agency filed with it, with the department to which a board or commission is administratively assigned, or with the Office of the Ombudsman have been processed and resolved.
- A. According to the Division of Occupational Licensing's files, there have been approximately twelve investigation cases in the past four years. Two complaints have been filed with the Consumer Protection Unit and none with the Office of the Ombudsman.
- VII. The extent to which a board or commission which regulates entry into an occupation or profession has presented qualified applicants to serve the public.
- A. In the last six years, the number of currently licensed dispensing opticians has increased from 45 to 63.
- B. The Board has not established reciprocal agreements with other states or established statutory authority to issue temporary permits. They have established licensure by credentials which tries to address the same situation.
- VIII. The extent to which State personnel practices, including affirmative action requirements, have been complied with by the board, commission, or agency to its own activities and the area of activity or interest.
- A. Applications for licensure require information and photographs which the Division of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) believes may not be necessary to determine the qualifications of the applicant.
- IX. The extent to which statutory, regulatory, budgeting, or other changes are necessary to enable the agency, board, or commission to better serve the interests of the public and to comply with the factors enumerated in this subsection.

Please refer to the previous section, Findings and Recommendations.

APPENDIX

(Intentionally left blank)

APPENDIX A

BOARD OF DISPENSING OPTICIANS
REVENUES COMPARED WITH EXPENDITURES
For the Fiscal Year Ended 1983
(UNAUDITED)
(Note 1)

Average Revenues (Note 2)	\$ 3,853
Expenditures (Note 3)	<u>4,258</u>
Excess of Expenditures over Revenues	<u>\$ (405)</u>

Schedule 1
Types of Revenues

<u>Revenues</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Collection Time</u>
Examination Fee	\$ 50	With application
Reexamination Fee	\$ 50	With application
Initial License Fee	\$ 50	Before licensure
Renewal Fee	\$ 200	Every four years
Late Renewal Fee	\$ 10	If over 60 days after renewal date

Note 1

This revenue/expenditure comparison was prepared from available records and discussions with Occupational Licensing personnel. The records were not audited by us and, accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the Board's Revenues Compared with Expenditures.

Note 2

The majority of the revenues collected are composed of license renewal fees. These fees are collected by most boards once every two or four years and causes revenues in one year to be much greater than the revenues collected in the next year. Therefore, we calculated and reported an average for the revenues collected from 1981 to the present in order to obtain a more accurate representation of collected revenues.

Note 3

Expenditures include those made by board members, such as travel, per diem, and direct administrative expenses of the Division of Occupational Licensing. They do not include indirect administrative expenses of the Division or expenditures for efforts of other departments such as the Department of Law, assisting the boards and the Division.

STATE OF ALASKA

BILL SHEFFIELD, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

POUCH D
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
PHONE: 465-2500

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

October 4, 1984

OCT 05 1984

**LEGISLATIVE
AUDIT**

Mr. Gerald L. Wilkerson, CPA
Legislative Auditor
Division of Legislative Audit
Pouch W
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Mr. Wilkerson:

We have reviewed your preliminary audit report on the Board of Dispensing Opticians, covering the period July 1, 1981 to June 30, 1984.

The position we expressed in response to your interim letter has not changed. We, at that time, concluded the assessment of allowing the board to terminate was accurate and would not subject the public to harm. We concurred in part to your recommendations.

Having now reviewed your preliminary audit report, we continue to maintain our position. We do not know of any reason to change.

For clarification, we will respond to each of your recommendations.

Recommendation 1

The Board of Dispensing Opticians should be allowed to terminate on June 30, 1985.

We concur with your report and endorse allowing the board to terminate on June 30, 1985. Since establishment (Chapter 45 SLA 1973), the board has licensed 60 practitioners.

We would also suggest the licensing functions by the Division of Occupational Licensing should also terminate. Citizens have other means of redress for harm, and the practitioners would still be required to have a State business license from the Department of Revenue.

Recommendation 2

The Board of Dispensing Opticians and the Office of the Governor should work together to ensure that vacant board positions are filled. Currently, the Office of the Governor is making efforts to increase communication with the boards. The staff has solicited from boards, professional associations and the general public, candidates for board appointments. Vacancy lists are published in the Administrative Journal.

We would not endorse appointing a person to a board when we are suggesting termination of the function. Although the board has not had its full membership, licenses have been issued.

Recommendation 3

The board should review existing statutes and regulations and seek appropriate revisions where necessary.

We concur with your assessment in part. The board has made efforts to change regulations and, in doing so, has developed a better working relationship with the Board of Optometry in subjects of mutual consideration.

We disagree that the board is responsible for statutes that are unnecessary. Their input is necessary, however, they have no control over forcing repeal.

Our position on temporary permits remains unchanged. We disagree that a temporary permit allows for a greater influx of qualified practitioners. Applying for licensure should be a scheduled pursuit, not when an applicant wants immediate licensure by a different set of standards. To protect the public, verification of all documentation should be made. This does take time.

Recommendation 4

The Board should ensure that requirements are being met and adequately documented prior to licensure.

We concur in this recommendation and, if the board is continued, will work with them to ensure your suggestions and the laws are followed. Our position, expressed in response to your interim letter, is still accurate.

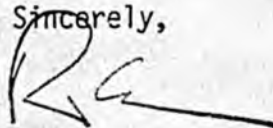
Mr. Gerald L. Wilkerson

-3-

October 4, 1984

Be assured your recommendations will be endorsed to the board pending the determination of the legislative committee. We appreciate your evaluation and thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RA', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Richard A. Lyon
Commissioner

RAL/1t0668t
100484b

Offered: 3/7/86
Referred: Health, Education &
Social Services

Original sponsor: Rules/Governor

BY THE LABOR AND
COMMERCE COMMITTEE

1 IN THE HOUSE

2

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 603 (L&C)

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

FOURTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5

A BILL

6

For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to dispensing opticians; and provid-
ing for an effective date."

7

8

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9

* Section 1. AS 08.03.010(c)(5) is amended to read:

10

¹⁹⁸⁸⁽⁵⁾ Board of Dispensing Opticians (AS 08.71.010) -- June
30 1989 [1985].

11

12

* Sec. 2. AS 08.71.110 is amended to read:

13

Sec. 08.71.110. QUALIFICATIONS OF APPLICANTS FOR EXAMINATION.

14

(a) A person is entitled to take the examination who

15

(1) has had education equivalent to four years attendance

16

at a high school;

17

(2) [(1)] has either

18

(A) completed at least 6,000 hours of training as an
apprentice, or

19

20

(B) been engaged for at least 6,000 hours as a prac-

21

ticing optician in good standing in a state, territory, district
or possession of the United States; and

22

23

(3) [(2)] has paid the required examination fee.

24

(b) Graduation from an associate degree program in a recognized
school or college of opticianry may be substituted for 4,000 of the
6,000 hours of experience required by (a)(2) of this section.

25

26

27

* Sec. 3. AS 08.71.130(d) is amended to read:

28

(d) Before a license may be renewed the licensee shall submit to

29

the board evidence of 30 [15] hours of continuing competence in

1 optical dispensing as prescribed by regulations of the board.
2 * Sec. 4. This Act takes effect immediately in accordance with AS 01.-
3 10.070(c).

STATE OF ALASKA 1986 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

Revision Date: _____

REQUEST

Bill/Resolution No. CS HB 603 (L&C)
 Title: An Act relating to dispensing opticians; and providing for an effective date
 Sponsor: _____
 Requester: _____
 Date of Request: _____

FISCAL DETAIL

Agency Affected: Commerce & Econ. Dev.
 BRU: Occupational Licensing

 Components: _____

EXPENDITURES / REVENUES : (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 86	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91
PERSONAL SERVICES		-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TRAVEL		-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CONTRACTUAL		-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
SUPPLIES		-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
EQUIPMENT		-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING		-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE		1.0	1.0	-0-	-0-	-0-
---------	--	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

FUNDING: (Thousands of dollars)

GENERAL FUND		-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL		-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME		0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS: Attach a separate page if necessary. This bill extends the Board of Dispensing Opticians to June 30, 1988, expands the requirements for licensure, and increases the number of continuing education hours required to satisfy the quadrennial renewal period. This bill is not expected to generate new costs or revenues. Funding for the board is already included in the department's FY 87 operating budget. Revenues indicated are based on the assumption that 10 new licenses will be issued each fiscal year.

Prepared by: Jennifer Strickler, Management Analyst
 Division: Occupational Licensing

Phone: 465-2144
 Date: 3/5/86

Approved by Commissioner: _____
 Agency: Commerce and Economic Development

Date: _____

Distribution (by Agency preparing fiscal note):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget