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471



SENATOR FRED F. ZHAROFF
ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

P. O. BOX 405, KODIAK, ALASKA 99615 (907) 486-5259
DURING SESSION:
P. O. BOX V, JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811 • (907) 465-3473 • 465-3474

DISTRICT N

ALASKA PENINSULA • ALEUTIAN CHAIN • BRISTOL BAY • KODIAK ISLAND • LAKE CLARK/LAKE ILIAMNA • PRIBILOF ISLANDS • SHUMAGIN ISLANDS

March 13, 1990

TO: SENATOR PAUL FISCHER

FROM: SENATOR FRED F. ZHAROFF

RE: SCHEDULING SENATE BILL 471

MAR 13 1990

Again, I would like to request a committee hearing of Senate Bill 471, an act amending the definition of vocational training or retraining course, at your earliest convenience.

The intent of this legislation is to allow the Department of Labor to consider substance abuse counseling training as vocational training for all purposes including unemployment insurance. Attached is a summary of the bill.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact myself or my staff person, Penelope Goforth, at 465-3473.

Thank you for your prompt attention and action.

3/26

Fiscal
Note
Attached
Requested
3 times



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March 12, 1990

SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 471

It has come to my attention that some people are experiencing unnecessary difficulties maintaining their eligibility for Unemployment Insurance while involved in a training program to become certificated Substance Abuse Counselors. In particular, one case has gone through the Department of Labor appeal process and subsequently to the Superior Court of the State of Alaska.

The department determined that this person was ineligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits for two main reasons; the first was that he could not obtain a vocational training waiver because the school offering the training course was not approved by the Department and the second, that substance abuse counseling is not considered a trade skill or craft under the Unemployment Insurance policy. This bill seeks to remedy both issues.

Inserting the phrase "or as a substance abuse counselor" into statute will have the effect of mandating the Department of Labor to include this specific type of employment in Unemployment Insurance policy. This will also open the door for training entities to meet the requirements established for an approved vocational training institute.

Substance abuse counseling is a skill that is highly in demand in our state. There is a great need to encourage our residents, especially in the rural areas, who have a commitment to their communities to receive this training. We cannot on the one hand continue to spend millions of dollars to combat the substance abuse rampant in our towns and villages while on the other propagate obstacles to individuals who wish to assist in this effort.

Both private for-profit as well as state funded programs throughout Alaska employ over 1000 trained counselors. And the need for more counselors is growing. Employment opportunities will continue to be readily available to those who are trained in this field.



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February 13, 1990

TO: SENATOR PAUL FISCHER

FROM: SENATOR FRED F. ZHAROFF 

RE: SCHEDULING SENATE BILL 471

I would like to request a committee hearing of Senate Bill 471, an act amending the definition of vocational training or retraining course, at your earliest convenience.

The intent of this legislation is to allow the Department of Labor to consider substance abuse counseling training as vocational training for all purposes including unemployment insurance.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact myself or my staff person, Penelope Goforth, at 465-3473.

Thank you for your prompt attention and action.

POSITION PAPER
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 471

An Act amending the definition of vocational training or retraining course; and providing for an effective date."


ANALYSIS

Individuals who are receiving unemployment compensation may, under certain circumstances, be allowed to participate in a "vocational training or retraining course" without it effecting their eligibility or receipt of unemployment compensation. The current interpretation of AS 23.20.520(23) has excluded recipients of state funded training in the field of alcohol and drug counseling from this opportunity. SB 471 broadens the range of vocational training or retraining opportunities allowed by the Department of Labor to include substance abuse counselor training.

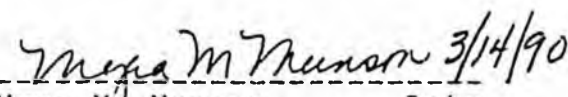
There is a growing need for trained alcohol and drug counselors in Alaska. Employment opportunities continue to be readily available because of the large number of positions in this field (as of December 1987, there were 956 staff in state funded programs). However, there remains a lack of trained Alaskans to fill vacancies in this growing field. In addition to state funded programs, eleven private-for-profit programs also operate treatment programs employing trained counselors. These private programs include all the major hospitals in the state. Individuals receiving training in this field may also find jobs in related health and social services positions as well.

POSITION

The Department of Health and Social Services is fully supportive of the intent contained in SB 471. Its passage will facilitate the process of developing a cadre of trained personnel to work in programs that are responsible for carrying out the provisions of AS 47.37, the Uniform Intoxication and Treatment Act.



Matthew C. Felix Date
State Coordinator



Myra M. Munson Date
Commissioner

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____ Agency Affected: Health & Social Services
 Title: "An Act amending the definition of
vocational training or retraining course." BRU: Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services
 Sponsor: Zharoff Components: Grants
 Requestor: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

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

POSITIONS:

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

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

SB 471 will not have an FY90 fiscal impact.

Prepared by: Matthew C. Felix *Matthew Felix* Phone: 586-6201
 Division: Alcoholism & Drug Abuse *2/8/90* Date: _____
 Approved by Commissioner: Myra M. Munson *Myra M. Munson* Date: 3/15/90
 Agency: Health & Social Services

Distribution (by preparer):
 Legislative Finance
 Legislative Sponsor
 Requestor
 Office of Management and Budget
 Impacted Agency(ies)