



Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Web: www.akrepublicans.org

Sponsor: LABOR & COMMERCE

Current Version: CS SB 175 (FIN)

Contact: Jane Alberts, 465-4843

Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 175

Short Title: DISPENSING OPTICIANS

Summary:

- Sunsets the Board of Dispensing Opticians (BDO) and transfers authority for regulating opticians to the Division of Occupational Licensing in the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.
- Continues licensing for dispensing opticians.
- Increases from 2 to 4 the number of apprentices that can work under one licensed optician, optometrist, or medical doctor.
- Simplifies the process for opticians from other states to be licensed in Alaska.
- Transfers administration of the optician's apprenticeship program from the state to the Department of Labor. USDOL administers a number of apprenticeship programs.

Benefits:

- Keeping the licensure component for opticians protects the consumer purchasing eyeglasses and contacts by ensuring a level of expertise and education within the industry.
- Assists the opticians in a smooth transition from board oversight to the Department of Occupational Licensing.
- Allows more people to enter the profession by increasing the number of allowable apprentices from 2 to 4.

Background:

- The legislature created the Board of Dispensing Opticians in 1973 to regulate the practice of opticianry and administer the optician licensing practical examination. In 2002 the legislature repealed the requirement for a practical examination, and legislative auditors then determined that the remaining functions of the board could be more efficiently handled by the Division of Occupational Licensing. This bill implements that recommendation and creates a smooth transition of oversight from the board to the department.