

Alaska State Legislature



Representative Peggy Wilson District 2

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Therapist Board Laws Extended, Modified **Rep. Wilson's HB 245 Provides Parity to Family Counselors**

(JUNEAU) – The House today passed [House Bill 245](#), which updates state laws regarding licensed marriage and family therapists and brings them into agreement with state laws relating to other licensed professional therapists.

Rep. Peggy Wilson (R-Wrangell) introduced the bill after a task force of representatives from the state boards of psychology, social work, and marriage and family therapists identified several areas of state law in need of modification, she said.

“The community of licensed family therapists had long wanted to see changes that would bring laws governing their practice into line with those of other professionals in Alaska and around the country, and this bill implements these desires,” Wilson said.

HB 245 has several elements. As passed by the House, the bill would:

- Grant the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy the authority to order physical or mental examinations of licensed therapists to verify the professional fitness;
- Require therapists to report to police or potential victims a client's threat of violence to any person;
- Allow the board to discipline therapists for sexual misconduct;
- Allow therapists to count individual client contact hours toward the 1,500 hours of therapy the state requires for licensing and;
- Allow the state occupational licensing division to contract with the Board of Marriage and Family Therapy to provide substance abuse treatment to licensed therapists.

“This bill not only brings parity to the mental health professions in the state, it also adds additional consumer protection for Alaskans seeking professional counsel, and I'm pleased to see the House give its unanimous approval,” Wilson said.

HB 245 moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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Broadcasters note: Comments are available on the Majority Actuality Line 1-800-478-6540, or on the Majority webpage at www.akrepublicans.org