

# Sponsor Statement for HB 362

## Extend Board Of Governors Of Ak Bar Associations

*An Act extending the termination date of the Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association.*

**Updated:** February 12, 2002  
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The Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association was established in 1955 to ensure that only qualified members of the legal profession of good moral character are allowed to practice law in the state. The Bar Association's primary functions are to screen applicants for admission to ensure that all successful applicants are fit to practice law, and to provide discipline by investigating grievances against members of the Bar. The Bar Association also performs a wide variety of miscellaneous functions including classes for continuing legal education, lawyer referral services, and fee arbitration.

The board consists of twelve members, nine attorneys elected by the active membership of the Alaska Bar Association, and three non-attorney public members appointed by the governor and confirmed by a joint session of the legislature. The Bar Association currently regulates 2,719 licensed attorneys.

The Division of Legislative Audit, in its 2001 report, found that the Bar Association meets the public need in an effective and economical manner. It not only ensures that persons licensed to practice law are qualified, but provides for investigations of complaints and has established a disciplinary process designed to ensure that licensed individuals act in a competent and professional manner.

The Board of Governors of the Alaska Bar Association is scheduled to terminate June 30, 2002, and will have one year to conclude its administrative operations unless the legislature acts this session. House Bill 362 reflects the recommendation of the Division of Legislative Audit and extends the termination date for the Bar Association for another four years.