

Sponsor Statement for SB 244

Optometrists: Sunset And Miscellaneous

An Act extending the termination date of the Board of Examiners in Optometry; and relating to optometrists.

Released: January 23, 2001

Contact: Senator Gene Therriault's office at (907) 465-6590

Alaska Statute 08.72.010 established the State Board of Examiners in Optometry in 1949 to regulate and control the practice of optometry in Alaska. The Board is charged with protecting and promoting the public's health, welfare, and safety by ensuring the professionals it licenses have met and adhered to the requirements of licensure. The Board currently oversees 110 licensed optometrists.

The Board consists of five members appointed by the governor and are subject to legislative confirmation. Four board members shall be licensed, practicing optometrists who have been residents for at least three years. Statute requires one board member to be a member of the general public.

The Board regulates the practice of optometry in the state by setting education, training, and work experience standards necessary for an individual to be licensed. Such standards provide reasonable assurance that persons licensed as optometrists are qualified.

Under AS 08.03.010, Termination of State Boards and Commissions, the State Board of Examiners in Optometry is set to expire June 30, 2002. If the Legislature does not act to extend the Board, it will have one year, until June 30, 2003, to administratively conclude its affairs. Senate Bill 244 will extend the Board for another four years and make changes to its licensure requirements.