

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

1500 W Benson Boulevard  
Anchorage AK 99503  
907-269-0181



State Capitol  
Juneau AK 99801-1182  
907-465-4843  
800-892-4843

North to the Future

## Senator Cathy Giessel

Senate District N

### Sponsor Statement

#### Senate Bill 49 Physical/Occupational Board Therapy/Practice

Senate Bill 49 amends the governing statutes for physical therapists and occupational therapists practicing in Alaska. Its amendments are technical in nature and are designed to bring Alaska statutes in line with national standards and terminology.

In an effort to place public interest first and foremost, the Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapists support more balanced representation on its Board and proposes to replace the seat for a physician with an occupational therapist or occupational therapist assistant.

When the membership of the board's guiding statute was first enacted, physical and occupational therapists were supervised by physicians. That supervision is no longer required and these are both now independent professions with many of its professionals possessing doctorates as well. This new board seat designation would bring balance to the board.

Senate Bill 49 also removes from statute, specific names of organizations who historically exercised certification oversight of the PT/OT professions. The new language ensures that there will be latitude for the board to conform to changing educational certifiers should they become obsolete or irrelevant to Alaska's OT/PT profession.

The Board also recognized there were some statutes that needed clarification in regard to foreign - educated applicants and Senate Bill 49 makes necessary changes to accomplish that.

Included in the bill are several housekeeping amendments to clean up terminology to achieve alignment with national trends and standards.

Please join me in support of Senate Bill 49.

Chair Senate Resources Committee  
[Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov)