

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 319: *“An act relating to criminal background checks for marijuana establishment registrations and renewals; and providing for an effective date.”*

Under current statute, for marijuana establishments to renew their registration, they must resubmit fingerprints for the purposes of conducting a national background check on an annual basis. Fingerprinting and thoroughly vetting registrations for the industry of a controlled substance is vital for our public safety. However, this process becomes adverse to public interests when it is done in excess, placing an unnecessary burden on Alaskan business owners and entrepreneurs.

Turning in fingerprints annually is not standard protocol for regulated industries, and it does not improve public safety. Only one other industry requires that fingerprints be turned in again after the initial printing; massage therapists must turn in fingerprints every two years. Legislation has been introduced to address the massage therapy requirements to six years as well for similar reasons. Fingerprints don't change, and the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development has technology in place that monitors licensees and alerts the department of any changes in their criminal record.

In changing the requirement from every year to every six years, we retain the additional stop-gap protection in turning in new fingerprints, while relieving pressure on a new and developing industry in our state. The department and the industry both support this simple legislative solution.

I urge you to support this legislation. If you have any questions, please call my staff Megan Holland at 465-4939.