

February 19, 2026

Submitted via email

Representative Zack Fields
Co-Chair, House Labor & Commerce Committee
The Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 24
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Representative Carolyn Hall
Co-Chair, House Labor & Commerce Committee
The Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 434
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Call to Reject HB 147

Dear Co-Chairs Fields and Hall:

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) writes to urge the House Labor & Commerce Committee to vote against HB 147. **This bill would unwisely permit the practice of naturopathy, a discredited form of pseudoscience, in the state of Alaska.**

CFI is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing science, reason, and secularism in American law and policy. We have numerous supporters in Alaska.

Problematic Elements of the Bill

HB 147 allows licensed naturopaths to practice in Alaska provided that they pass the elective pharmacology examination portion of the Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Examination and meet other applicable requirements set by the state.

The bill further provides that a licensed naturopath “may prescribe and administer prescription drugs for preventive and therapeutic purposes” as long as they work under the auspices of a “supervising physician” who meets certain conditions. After a one-year supervision arrangement, a licensed naturopath is eligible to receive the state’s full endorsement to prescribe and administer prescription drugs without a supervising physician.

Under HB 147, naturopaths are restricted from giving, prescribing, or recommending “a controlled substance,” “a poison,” “a cancer chemotherapeutic drug,” or “an antipsychotic drug.” They are also prohibited from engaging in surgery or administering “therapeutic ionizing radiation or radioactive substances.”



CFI's Analysis

CFI opposes this legislation because naturopathy is a pure pseudoscience—and permitting naturopaths to practice in Alaska would be a disservice to patients and consumers in the state. **Naturopathy fails to meet the rigors of science-based medicine and is rejected by nearly every medical expert.**

CFI has long advocated against allowing the practice of naturopathy, a field permeated with pseudoscientific theories.¹ We have spent years lobbying and educating lawmakers, at both state and federal levels, about the dangers of naturopathy. We have documented that the field of naturopathy is based on misinformation that prevents patients from being able to make informed decisions regarding treatment.

For example, many naturopaths deny the safety and efficacy of vaccines, recommending instead that patients pursue pseudoscientific “nosodes” as an alternative method of immunization.² In the current climate, this type of vaccine-related misinformation is particularly dangerous and could cost numerous lives. A 2010 study of children age one to seventeen in Washington State, which reviewed data for 213,884 individuals, found an increased likelihood of a history of vaccine-preventable disease—most often chickenpox—among those who had ever consulted with a naturopath.³

Additionally, naturopaths lack the medical education and training that real medical doctors receive. Real physicians must obtain MD degrees from accredited medical schools, meet rigorous clinical requirements, and (after years of schooling and training) go through intensive residency programs. Major naturopathic colleges in the United States, meanwhile, require students to study discredited practices such as homeopathy and energy healing. Naturopaths are not a substitute for medically trained physicians, plain and simple.

The specific danger of allowing naturopaths to prescribe medicine can manifest itself in many ways. For example, a naturopath may not understand how various medicines interact with each other, potentially creating a risk for the well-being of the patient.

In Alaska, statements by the proponents of HB 147 make clear that they fundamentally misunderstand (or, worse, ignore) these realities. Representative Mike Prax, who introduced HB 147, provides in his Sponsor Statement that a goal is for naturopaths to be able to “provide effective care for thousands of Alaskans with chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, and hypertension” and that HB 147 will “enable Alaskans to choose their preferred healthcare style.”⁴ Representative Prax adds that “[n]aturopathic education emphasizes holistic disease prevention rather than simply treating symptoms.”⁵

¹ <https://centerforinquiry.org/advocacy/opposing-naturopathy>

² <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4443832>

³ <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2924961>

⁴ https://www.akleg.gov/basis/get_documents.asp?session=34&docid=8524

⁵ *Id.*



Similarly, Representative Andrew Gray, who cosponsored the bill, argues that HB 147 “meets people where they are” by giving options to Alaskans “who choose not to be seen by traditional medical providers.”⁶

These rationales miss the mark entirely. **No matter how “holistic” naturopaths claim their practice to be, they are not remotely qualified to treat diseases such as diabetes, obesity, and hypertension. To pretend otherwise is dangerous, and it risks the health and well-being of countless patients in Alaska.** Likewise, it is the job of Alaska’s policymakers to protect consumers from harm, not to needlessly subject them to danger by following the red herring of “preferred healthcare style.”

Britt Hermes, a former naturopath who now regularly speaks out against the practice, demonstrates the danger of naturopathy. Hermes has documented the fact that, at the School of Naturopathic Medicine at Bastyr, she never learned about the medical standard of care for most illnesses and had minimal experience working directly with sick patients.⁷ She also writes about discovering, two years into her naturopathy practice, that her supervisor had been importing a non-FDA approved drug from Austria to treat cancer patients. Hermes states that when she confronted her supervisor about this, her supervisor acknowledged he was “walking the ethical and legal line” but claimed that most naturopaths do the same thing.⁸

Reliance on naturopathic practitioners means that patients not only forego effective treatment based on medical science, they are expending time and money to do so. In many cases, this unnecessarily extends patients’ pain and suffering and allows diseases to progress and worsen. In short, there is both an opportunity cost and a financial cost to patients.

Conclusion

For the reasons provided in this testimony, CFI urges the House Labor & Commerce Committee to vote against HB 147. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Azhar Majeed
Director of Government Affairs and Policy

cc:

⁶ <https://mustreadalaska.com/bill-to-license-naturopaths-moves-forward-in-legislative-process>

⁷ <https://www.statnews.com/2016/10/20/naturopath-critic-britt-hermes>

⁸ *Id.*



Members, House Labor & Commerce Committee