

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of HB5455.

I also want to express gratitude to all the AMTA representatives that worked together on this proposal.

My name is Rick Haesche. I am a licensed massage therapist. I grew up in Colchester and currently live in Chaplin with my wife, Tina Latraverse Haesche who is also a massage therapist, and our two daughters. I have 17 years of experience in the field of massage therapy, 7 of which were as Director of Operations at the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy. I am a practitioner, instructor and student of Traditional Thai Massage and I am the director of the bodymind center for thai massage in Newington CT. My wife and I have made a life from bodywork.

I graduated from a 600 hour Massage Therapy program and have put in another 400 hours in Continuing Education in Thai Massage. Thai Massage is an eastern bodywork modality that has been gaining in popularity in the west since the 1980's. It is an advanced form of massage that is performed fully clothed on a mat on the floor that is comprised of a set of complex sequential movements and techniques.

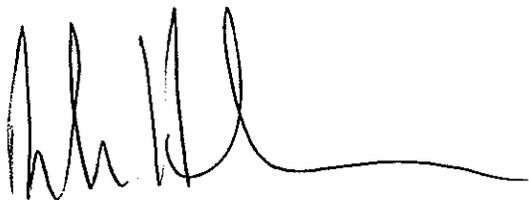
I have been around for a long time and I have seen how Thai Massage is frequently misrepresented as a kind of Therapeutic Yoga where one can take a couple of workshops and then offer private, paid sessions to the public with out further education or license. They call it Thai Yoga or Thai Yoga Massage. I know that there are scores of unlicensed people performing Thai Massage, and I understand that there are recent complaints on file with the Department regarding Thai Yoga training classes in Fairfield County.

My concern is that there are techniques and postures used in Thai Massage/Thai Yoga that could cause serious injury to the receiver if the practitioner's alignment, technique, and body mechanics are not properly applied. Further, the practitioner should have knowledge of contraindications and pathologies, as well as an understanding of the dynamics of working closely with another human being.

I was therefore relieved to see that that HB 5455 amends language to include "Shiatsu", "Acupressure", and "Thai Massage". This is a great step in further defining the field of massage and bodywork.

I support this bill as it is written but would request the addition of the terms: "**THAI YOGA**" and "**THAI YOGA MASSAGE**" because I believe that this would clarify the difference between what one can offer the public after a commitment to years of practice and education, and what one presents to the public after a couple of weekends.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rick Haesche', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rick Haesche, Bodymind Center for Thai Massage
95 Kitts Lane, Newington, CT 06111
860.913.7500 rick@bodymindthai.com