

TO: Members of the Planning and Development Committee

FROM: Scott Raymond LMT  
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Connecticut Chapter  
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RE: **HB 5455** AN ACT CONCERNING PENALTIES FOR AND THE INVESTIGATION OF THE OPERATION OF ILLEGAL MASSAGE ESTABLISHMENTS.

Good Morning Ladies and Gentleman of the Planning and Development Committee, my name is Scott Raymond, I am a licensed massage therapist and a Thai Massage practitioner. I am the President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association, the owner of the Market Square Wellness Center in Newington, a continuing education instructor, and an educator with the Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy in Newington.

It is my honor to write this on behalf of over 2200 Licensed Massage Therapists in Connecticut that are members of the American Massage Therapy Association. We speak in support of Bill No. 5455 ~ AN ACT CONCERNING PENALTIES FOR AND THE INVESTIGATION OF THE OPERATION OF ILLEGAL MASSAGE ESTABLISHMENTS.

The purpose of this bill is to add "shiatsu", "acupressure" and "Thai massage" to the list of services that may not be advertised without a license to engage in massage therapy in the state of CT; to provide that employers who employ unlicensed persons, or illegally licensed persons as massage therapists are guilty of a class C misdemeanor; and to require the Commissioner of Public Health and local health departments to investigate complaints that persons are engaging in the practice of massage therapy without a license, or an illegally obtained license within thirty days of receiving such complaint.

After attending meetings and hearings in Connecticut towns, it seems as if there is confusion in regards in how to approach the prosecution of individuals and businesses that violate Public Act 07-35. This is the bill that will help clarify that and empower the Department of Public Health on a state and local level to investigate offenders of Public Act 07-35. I have been informed of issues around public health, public safety, practitioner safety, and even worse, human trafficking. I have met with the Department of Public health, the Attorney General's office, and with many legislators.

- Some individuals are using the Healthcare Profession of Therapeutic Massage to hide sexually orientated businesses.
- Now, individuals have possibly learned how to illegally obtain licenses from the State of CT. When you research CT licensed massage therapists with

addresses in New York, there are exactly 500 with a only few from most towns listed, but when you look at the town of Flushing, and surrounding towns, there are well over 200....nearly half from one town alone. On the East Coast, the ethnic enclaves within the New York City borough of Queens such as Flushing and Jackson Heights have become major recruiting centers for traffickers, according to law enforcement officials and advocates.

- By adding the business owners to the penalty aspect of the Statutes, they would be charged with a class C misdemeanor for advertising massage illegally, and for merely employing uneducated, unethical, and illegal individuals that are endangering the general public. No need to "catch anyone in the act of massage" anymore.
- Shiatsu, acupressure, and Thai massage are Eastern Modalities of bodywork just as Swedish, deep tissue, and sports massage are Western Modalities of bodywork. Extensive training is required for all styles of massage either Eastern or Western. All styles of bodywork require communication, education, and most importantly physical and ethical safety.
- Quoted from the General Statutes, "Massage therapy" means the systematic and scientific manipulation and treatment of the soft tissues of the body, by use of pressure, friction, stroking, percussion, kneading, vibration by manual or mechanical means, range of motion and nonspecific stretching. Massage therapy may include the use of oil, ice, hot and cold packs, tub, shower, steam, dry heat, or cabinet baths, for the purpose of, but not limited to, maintaining good health and establishing and maintaining good physical and mental condition. Shiatsu, acupressure, and Thai massage MUST be added to the statute to keep the general public SAFE and the health care profession CLEAR that both eastern and western modalities of massage apply to the law in CT.
- The State of CT accepts only the National Certification Exam for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCETMB) which INCLUDES eastern modalities. National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) is phasing out the National Exam for State Licensure to close the opportunity for uneducated individuals to take the exam. I have requested that the NCBTMB send the photo of the individual that has taken the NCETMB to the State of CT along with the applicants' scores to make it simple for the DPH to clarify that the individual applying for a license is the same person that took the exam. The DPH has also added language to the statute to make the schools more responsible, and not allow questionable school transcripts to be used for licensure.

If Bill 5455 is passed, it will protect public safety both physically and ethically. It will empower the Department of Public Health to put a stop to illegal individuals obtaining licenses and from unlicensed individuals from practicing in CT. It will clarify that both eastern and western styles of massage are considered "massage therapy" in the state of CT. It will allow the NCBTMB, the CT DPH, and the schools to work together and keep the highest standard of ethics and safety.

On behalf of the members of the American Massage Therapy Association I encourage you to support this bill.