

TO: Members of the Public Health Committee

FROM: Scott Raymond LMT
American Massage Therapy Association
Connecticut Chapter
100 Market Square, Suite 2
Newington CT 06111

RE: Bill No. 6243 AN ACT MAKING A TECHNICAL CHANGE TO THE STATUTE CONCERNING ADVERTISING BY MASSAGE THERAPISTS.

Good Morning Ladies and Gentleman of the Public Health Committee. My name is Scott Raymond. I am the Immediate Past President and the Government Relations Chair of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association, and the owner of Market Square Wellness Center in Newington. I am a licensed massage therapist, a Thai Yoga practitioner, and I have completed a 200 hour yoga teacher training with embodyyoga®.

It is my honor to write this on behalf of over 2000 Licensed Massage Therapists in Connecticut that are members of the American Massage Therapy Association. We CANNOT support Bill No. 6243, an act making a technical change to the statute concerning advertising by massage therapists, the way it is written today.

“Thai Yoga” is another name for Thai Massage. This is NOT a technical change.

With the passing of Public Act 12-64 the words, "Shiatsu, Acupressure, Thai Yoga, Thai massage, and Thai Yoga massage" were added to the massage therapy statutes. The legislative intent was to close the loopholes that were used to operate "sexually oriented businesses" with titles that normally refer to eastern styles of therapeutic massage.

All forms of eastern bodywork should hold the same standard of education as western bodywork currently does to keep the public safe.

Many Thai Yoga practitioners are yoga instructors that have taken some Thai Yoga training to expand and compliment their practice. They believe that "Thai Yoga" is classified as a style of yoga, that it is not an eastern style of massage that should require a license, and they would like to see the term "Thai Yoga" removed from the statutes. The term "Thai Yoga" is used to describe "Thai massage" like the word "masseur", "masseur," "massagist," or "massage practitioner" is used to describe "massage therapist." They are all interchangeable terms. Thai Yoga is Thai massage.

The clearest difference between "Thai Yoga" and "Yoga" is passive versus active movement from the participant.

- Thai Yoga is done on a mat with the recipient passive and the practitioner performing systematic and scientific manipulation and treatment of the soft tissues of the body, by use of pressure, friction, stroking, percussion, kneading, vibration, range of motion and nonspecific stretching. It is done one on one, just like any other style of massage therapy (western or eastern styles).
- Yoga, no matter which style, is done actively by the participant or participants with guidance from the instructor over an entire classroom or privately. Yoga requires an instructor, but Thai Yoga requires a practitioner. What these instructors are doing is "assisted yoga" and it should be stated as such. It must not be called Thai Yoga. "Thai Yoga" is another name for Thai Massage.

Last month representatives from both sides met with Representative Grogins to get clarity around this request and come to an agreement. After this meeting today, I am looking forward to continuing to work closely with Representative Grogins to be able to keep the term "Thai Yoga" in the statutes, keep the public safe, and keep the massage profession clean.

Respectfully Submitted,

Scott Raymond LMT
CT License number 1882
Government Relations Chair and Immediate Past President
American Massage Therapy Association, CT Chapter