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Testimony of State Representative Auden Grogins in support of
HB 6243 AN ACT MAKING A TECHNICAL CHANGE TO THE STATUTE
CONCERNING ADVERTISING BY MASSAGE THERAPISTS

Public Health Committee Public Hearing

Friday, March 15, 2013

Representative Johnson, Senator Gerratana and members of the Public Health Committee, for the record my name is State Representative Auden Grogins and I represent Bridgeport's 129th District. I am here to testify in support of H.B. 6243, AAC MAKING A TECHNICAL CHANGE TO THE STATUTE CONCERNING ADVERTISING BY MASSAGE THERAPISTS

Thank you for holding a public hearing, on this important bill, and giving me the opportunity to testify on this legislation here today.

This legislation makes a technical change to last year's Massage Parlor Bill, cracking down on illegal massage parlors, which became law pursuant to PA 12-64. The technical change in this bill, that Representative Fawcett and I are now seeking, is to delete the word "Thai Yoga" under the listing of services requiring a massage therapy license.

After this bill passed, I was contacted by several Thai Yoga instructors, who informed me that they were not practicing massage therapy, but instead, were teaching Thai Yoga. They further informed me that this statute made their instruction illegal. Unfortunately, this information was brought to my attention after this bill became law.

The goal of the original legislation, was not to target yoga instructors but, to crack down on prostitution and human trafficking by shutting down illegal massage parlors. These illegitimate businesses operate under the guise of spas, offering massage, and have been a major problem in Bridgeport and other big cities in Connecticut.

As you can see, using the words "Thai Yoga", in the original bill, unfortunately targeted an unintended profession of yoga instructors. Some members of the American Massage Therapy

Association and its President, take the position that all Thai Yoga practices are a form of massage therapy.

I am currently in the process of working with the President of the AMA to establish amended language for this bill, which would allow Thai Yoga Instructors, who have specific qualifications, to continue their instruction.

I have met with professionals in both the areas of massage therapy and Thai Yoga to receive input to develop compromise language, in an attempt to satisfy both sides of this issue. I hope to come to a compromise on amended language with both parties.

In any event, I do support making this technical change, to reflect the original intent of this legislation, which was to crack down on illegal massage parlors that promote prostitution and human trafficking.

In closing, I thank you for your indulgence and your consideration of this legislation and with that I would be glad to answer any questions committee members may have.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address this committee.

State Representative Auden Grogins, 129th District