

Re: HB6243 - Oppose

Honorable Chairperson, Representatives, Assistants, Aides, ladies and gentlemen

My name is Rick Haesche. I am a licensed massage therapist (#001013). I make my living and support my family as a sole proprietor practicing and teaching Thai Bodywork.

I am here to voice my opposition to HB6243.

In the 18 years that I have been practicing Thai Yoga, I have taken classes with many different instructors teaching different styles of Thai bodywork, and have done exchanges, or trades with practitioners from all over the world and all over the spectrum of this eastern style of bodywork called Thai Massage, Thai Yoga, Nuad Bo Rarn, among others.

There are many different styles and views to Thai Yoga, but the one thing that is common to just about every session that I have ever experienced is an invisible but palpable field of lovingkindness and goodwill that surrounds the practitioner and receiver during a session. This is what makes the work the magic.

Thai Yoga is powerful energy work where negative thinking and emotion can be transmitted to the receiver as fluidly as Lovingkindness and Compassion. The unique aspect of Thai Yoga is that the practitioner cultivates a meditative state to focus the mind in the present moment, to assure they don't miss responses in the receiver's body, and to keep the mind from slipping into negative or unproductive thoughts while being in close proximity to the receiver.

This spiritual side of Thai Yoga is beautiful and very healing for people at this time. In my heart I believe the world needs more people coming in contact with this kind of work. By its nature, I cannot see how this healing can be bound by law or regulation, or how this energetic aspect of the work could possibly be defined by legislators or committees.

But this is not the problem.

It is the physical aspect of Thai Yoga that we don't agree on.

Thai Yoga is a form of massage. It fits the original Massage Therapy Statutes definition of Massage Therapy. Thai Yoga is similar to other eastern bodywork modalities where the receiver remains clothed and generally no oils or lotions are used.

The receiver is passive and relaxed. The practitioner moves the body into different postures in the supine, prone, sidelying, and seated position. The practitioner uses their thumbs, hands, palms, elbows, knees, and feet to press, stretch, and twist the body with the intent

of clearing and tonifying the Sen lines, which is the energy system of Thai Yoga Massage. This work can be deep, or it can be very light, depending on what the receiver needs. In any case, this mindset of Lovingkindness and Compassion is the foundation of any session.

This is my view of Thai Yoga.

There are many practitioners that hold the view that Thai Yoga is not Massage, and that they can practice without a massage license as long as they call it something else. This is the piece that I have a hard time with.

Since the law was enacted, some Thai Yoga practitioners have been issued Cease and Desist orders from the Department of Public Health. Their complaint to their Legislator has resulted in an apparent willingness to compromise the Massage Therapy Statutes for the benefit of the few people that were practicing illegally in the first place.

Personally I think this is wrong. But this is just my view.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. I am eager to see how this discussion evolves and I have faith that whatever happens, everything is going to work out as it should.

Rick Haesche, LMT
116 North Bedlam Road
Chaplin, CT 06235
860.913.7500
rick@bodymindthai.com