

Navarro HB 6243

I am unable to attend Friday's public hearing on HB6243, but would like to submit this testimony.

The historically loose definition of massage therapy has enabled the operation of sexually-oriented businesses under the guise of massage. It directly contributes to and perpetuates misunderstandings in the general public about massage therapy and the legitimacy of our field. We made forward progress with passage of HB5455 in October 2012 that closed loopholes being used by unscrupulous others. We cannot stand down now!

Licensed massage therapists undertake 500 or more hours of study, and are subject to continuing education requirements to maintain professional certification. **Anyone who is manipulating muscle, fascia, other soft tissue, relieving pain, promoting relaxation, and improving range of motion in a passive manner with a client IS A MASSAGE THERAPIST, and must be held to the same high standards of practitioners under other names (e.g., Ashiatsu, etc.).**

On my first visit for Thai Yoga, within minutes of the start of the session, all I could think is, THIS IS A MASSAGE! This is what I do at sporting events with athletes. Some of the work is what I routinely do with clients who I see for targeted-muscle work. The only difference was the absence of a table on which a therapist typically works. But certainly most of what is done during Thai Yoga, on a mat, translates easily to table work.

The legislature has an important duty to protect the credibility of massage therapy and licensed massage therapists by keeping loopholes closed. Removing 'Thai Yoga' from the legal definition reopens a loophole and excuses certain massage therapy specialists to practice with much less education than others. Furthermore, holding all body-workers to the same standards of education and licensing can only serve to improve the credibility of the massage therapy field.

Please, please, please - do not take a step backward. Kill HB6243.

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It isn't our abilities
that show who we truly are,
it is our choices.