

TO: Members of The Public Health Committee

SUBJECT MATTER: Public Health Related Bills

RE: H.B. No. 6794 (Raised) AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING MASSAGE THERAPIST QUALIFICATIONS

Good Morning Ladies and Gentleman of the Public Health Committee. My name is Scott Raymond. I am a licensed massage therapist, 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.

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, and for the hundreds of current and future graduating students from the massage therapy programs around the state.

H.B. 6794 is mainly a technical change. Since 1994, the State of Connecticut has used the National Certification Exam for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCETMB) as the standard for massage licensure in the state. In October of 2014, the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork (NCBTMB) decided to stop offering the NCETMB to obtain state licensure nationwide, and will focus solely on continuing education and Board Certification. The NCBTMB made an agreement with the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB) to have them administer the state licensure exam known as the MBLEx exam nationwide beginning in February of 2015. The State of Connecticut was granted a grace period due to our general statutes, and the State of Connecticut now has until March 31, 2015 to allow the NCETMB exam to be administered. Beginning April 1, 2015, the ONLY exam offered and accepted nationwide, including in CT, will be the Massage and Bodywork Licensure Exam (MBLEx).

I respectfully request the Public Health Committee pass HB 6794 as quickly so it can go through the House and be signed by Governor Malloy as soon as possible.

Graduating students in all of the massage programs in the region have been forced to wait until the General Statutes change so they can become licensed by the state and begin to practice. The more generic language drafted by the Department of Public Health is supported by the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA), the NCBTMB, the FSMTB, and all of the massage therapy program administrators across the state.

Everyone involved in the massage profession has reviewed the language and we are all in agreement that the changes made by HB 6794 will continue to keep the public safe, keep educational standards high, keep the health care profession of massage clean, and allow graduates from accredited schools obtain licensure in the state of Connecticut.

I would like to thank The Public Health Committee for their time in considering HB 6794. Passing it will seamlessly allow recent and future graduates from accredited massage school programs to obtain licensure in the state, will empower the Department of Public Health to continue to hold the highest standards in massage therapy licensure, and will allow the DPH to openly communicate about issues that may arise with other State Massage Therapy Boards through the FSMTB.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time. I have worked closely with the CT DPH, the NCBTMB, the FSMTB, along with all of the accredited massage schools across the state regarding this issue, and I fully understand the situation at hand.

Respectfully submitted,

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