April 8, 2019

Dear Senator Fonfara, Representative Rojas, and distinguished members of the Finance, Budget and Planning Committee,

I have been a CT licensed massage therapist for 21 years. For the last 11 years I have had the honor of working as part of the oncology team at Norwalk Hospital. My work is managed through the Integrative Medicine Department at the hospital. I work directly with patients, bringing the benefits of massage therapy to hospitalized patients in hospital beds and to outpatients while they receive chemotherapy. I receive an hourly wage that does not depend on the amount of time I spend with each patient or the number of patients I see or the massage techniques I select. I am expected to use my clinical judgment. I cannot imagine how the work I provide could be considered subject to a sales tax. Nor can I imagine how the patients would be charged.

The massage therapy I provide to my private clients follows the medical, clinical model. Charging a sales tax seems a de-valuation of the therapy work.

I pay for my CT license. I pay for my malpractice insurance. I pay for my continuing education classes. I reach out to clients who seek massage therapy not as a luxury but as important part of their health.

I do want to support STEM education. I especially value scientific practice and research, both of which are vital in my field. I do want and am proud to pay taxes to support STEM education. I do not consider it fair, though, to charge clients or patients a sales tax for massage therapy. It is not clear to me how such a tax could be fairly charged across the field of massage therapy services. Something is really wrong with such taxation.

Please vote No to HB7410 and any budget proposals that require massage therapy clients or patients to pay sales tax on their services.

Sincerely,

Dee Hiatt, LMT

CT License #001762