Bill No.: SB-1058  
Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE LICENSURE OF TATTOO TECHNICIANS.  
Vote Date: 3/29/2019  
Vote Action: Joint Favorable  
PH Date: 3/25/2019  
File No.:  

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SPONSORS OF BILL:  
Public Health Committee  

REASONS FOR BILL:  
This legislation alters the licensure requirements for tattoo artists. The bill:  
1. Mandates applicants to sign a form, confirming that they are following the infection control guidelines set forth by the Department of Public Health  
2. Requires student technicians to hold a first-aid certification and to complete a class on the prevention of disease-transmission  
3. Restricts supervision to two students per technician and mandates that the technician maintain student records for three years  
4. Removes the existing standard that a licensure applicant must complete either 2,000 hours of supervised training or have practiced in Connecticut for at least five years prior to 2015  

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:  
Commissioner Raul Pino, Department of Public Health (DPH): DPH supports this legislation. Licensure of tattoo artists was established in accordance with Public Act 13-234. This act codified the qualifications for licensure, as well as defined a “student tattoo technician” as someone who studies under the supervision of a tattoo technician. Furthermore, this act enabled health directors to conduct inspections of tattoo shops to ensure proper sanitation standards were met. DPH felt that this statute was “vague and difficult to enforce.” The Department met with members of the Connecticut Association of Professional Tattooers (CAPT) to discuss clarifications in the statutes, to minimize confusion. Through their collaboration, the following suggestions were raised:  
1. Defining the qualifications of a tattoo technician who can supervise a student technician
2. Outlining the minimum infection control regulations required to tattoo
3. Codifying the minimum education requirements for a student technician
4. Noting that the supervising technician can supervise a maximum of two students

This legislation will provide clarity within the tattoo industry, as well as those involved in promoting public health.

**NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Brian Falkner, Chair of Body Arts Committee, Connecticut Environmental Health Association (CEHA):** CEHA supports this legislation with a number of suggestions. When CGS Section 20-266 was implemented, a number of aspects were disregarded. The current program addresses clinical hours and protocol for health and safety training. This bill expands and promotes other standards, such as determining the number of apprentices per technician. However, there are some specific changes that should be noted. In lines 47 to 51, the language concerning sterilization is vague and concerning from a public health perspective.

**Keith Wheeler, Owner, Exodus Tattoo and Pierce:** Mr. Wheeler supports this bill with several recommendations. He noted that the association of professional tattooers should be included in the discussion, as they understand the process and safety of tattoo application. Professionals can offer insight regarding how certain bills may hurt business. Professional tattoo technicians work with the Department of Public Health to establish the best methods of tattooing. In regard to continuing the trade, apprenticeship has been the common practice and according to Mr. Wheeler, and is preferable to large scale “schools.”

**Kelly Green, Chair of the Board, Connecticut Association of Professional Tattooers (CAPT):** CAPT was established two years ago and currently has 88 members. The organization has been excluded from a number of decisions, including the license regulations proposed in 2014. CAPT supports this bill with some exceptions. The association collaborated with the Department of Public Health (DPH) to formulate the appropriate language for this bill. The language in the raised bill is not what was proposed and is representative of the first draft submitted, not the final and most recent. Excluded in the current version is the acceptable ratio of apprentices. It is important to explicitly note that limit, as without regulation, apprentices will not be given an adequate amount of time or attention. In addition, there should be statewide guidelines determining proper public health and safety standards. This can be accomplished in collaboration with DPH. The tattoo technicians are the ones actually practicing their trade. They have been accountable for technological advancements and updating public safety regulations, which is seen as a “self-regulated industry.” Given the gaps in the mandated licensure requirements, there is a risk to the public’s health and safety.

**James Talmadge, Vice Chairman, Connecticut Association of Professional Tattooers (CAPT):** CAPT has advocated for establishing regulations that reflect current practice and promote education of tattoo safety standards. Tattoo artists are often portrayed in a negative light by the media; however, they are caring, passionate professionals who work and live in the state and who care about the health and safety of their clients. A number of individuals get tattoos, all representing a broad range of professions. It was understood that licensure was inevitable; however, the regulations of licensure must be enforced to ensure that public
safety standards are met. At the beginning of session, a bill was proposed that mandated communication between the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the board of Professional Tattooers. That bill has since evolved, and now excludes the participation of tattoo technicians and their professional insights all together. CAPT should be involved in the discussion ensuring businesses currently implementing safe practices do not suffer. This legislation does not require additional funding and CAPT operates solely on membership fees and volunteering. Education has always been on the forefront of CAPT’s mission and promoting public health and safety is critical. Infectious diseases not only threaten clients, but tattoo artists as well. Imposing additional standards and regulations can be burdensome to institutions already following safety regulations closely. Currently, the laws are vague, ambiguous, and require attention. There needs to be discussion between CAPT and DPH to ensure that goals are aligned between the two organizations. It is also important that regulations are implemented to monitor less experienced artists.

16 other individuals submitted testimony in support of this bill, though many reiterated the concern that the Connecticut Association of Professional Tattooers should be consulted.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None submitted.

Reported by: Meagan Schantz Date: 4/8/19