

Dear Ms. Hussey and Committee Members :

I am a Nationally Certified professional massage therapist with 20 years of experience the bulk of which has been here in the beautiful, minimally regulated state of Vermont. My work has included roughly 10 years providing massage for patients and their family members at the Norris Cotton Cancer Center in St. Johnsbury. My training includes specialized focus on pregnancy and geriatric massage as well as in hospice care and therapeutic work with survivors of serious burn injuries.

I am also a long standing member of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA).

Though I appreciate and respect much of what the AMTA contributes to our profession, I do not support its nationally funded agenda of making all states adhere to their goal of universal licensure. Every couple of years the organization rolls up its sleeves to promote this agenda in the Vermont legislature. Often these efforts include making it seem that the "need" to force licensing is of critical importance -- often trying to depict a scenario where-in the public's safety and well-being are in danger -- and too often misrepresenting the support they have from the many massage therapists in the state.

Each time, after lengthy and thorough reviews, the Office of Professional Regulation concluded that they did NOT think instituting mandatory licensing was called for. This most recent round of efforts to regulate our profession came about in reaction to a very regrettable case of voyeuristic misconduct. After a great deal of testimony and deliberation, the end result of this process was the OPR's recommendation for a state registry of all massage therapists and other bodywork professionals. This was deemed a sufficient and appropriate means of meeting the needs of the public at the same time implementing the least restrictive measures necessary to protect the public.

I support this measure.

I urge your committee to resist the efforts of national organizations to paint a picture of crisis and misconduct run amok in an attempt to achieve their goals. There is no

crisis. Our profession is rich with very competent, respectful practitioners with very high ethical standards. Care and compassion are the very roots of the service we provide.

At the same time, in our current world, the need for calming, nurturing healing touch is greater than ever. Massage therapists are an asset to the greater community of this Green Mountain State. We do not need to be encumbered by further bureaucratic regulation.

Please vote in favor of a State Registry -- not of state run licensing. Please pass the OPR's recommendation.

May clear heads prevail.

There are many challenges we are facing. This is NOT one of them. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of service in your decision making process.

Be well and may peace be with you,

David Hammond, Nationally Certified Massage Therapist

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