

Hello Gail, I apologize not including you in my initial email, which I've forwarded, please see below.

Thank you for taking the time to read and review my position.

Best, LJ Stewart, LMT

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **LJ Stewart** <samuraihini@gmail.com>

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 5:58 PM

Subject: Licensed Massage Therapist opposing S270

To: <jwhite@leg.state.vt.us>, <apollina@leg.state.vt.us>, <cbray@leg.state.vt.us>, <AClarkson@leg.state.vt.us>, <bcollamore@leg.state.vt.us>

Dear Senate Opps Committee Members Reviewing S270 - as means of introduction, I am a Licensed Massage Therapist, #003438-1NY practicing full-time for over 40 years and an AMTA Member for nearly as long. I own a small interdisciplinary wellness center, where several practitioners provide wellness services to the community.

It has been my experience that Licensing does nothing to protect the public nor create any sort of safety for practitioners and rather simply creates the false illusion that someone licensed is an expert and can do no harm. In addition, licensing drives up the cost of doing business and increases the expense to the consumer.

It has also been my observation that the AMTA has been attempting to monopolize the profession and title of "Massage Therapy/Therapist" and in fact uses scare tactics to coerce its membership. *Note the Subject of 2 consecutive emails we received yesterday and today reading "911" and "Urgent". The AMTA's own membership is deeply divided about regulating massage therapists and the association certainly doesn't speak for me, nor the other Massage Therapists at my establishment, who are Licensed in Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Licensure does not prevent wrong doing under the guise of massage.

I support a rostering and/or voluntary tiered system ie: talk counselors, MSW's and Psychologists/Psychiatrists, etc or whatever the least intrusive regulation you can fashion, might be. I simply cannot back the falsehood that licensing my profession would be of any benefit. I see it as a burden to the taxpayers and those who would be mandated to police such unnecessary licensing.

Thank you for taking the time to review this important matter and read my letter.

Respectfully submitted, Laurajeane "LJ" Stewart,
Owner & Licensed Massage Practitioner
Barnet Tradeport Wellness Center

PO Box 129
Barnet, VT 05821
(802)633-2700



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XOXO, LJ
LJ Stewart
PO Box 129
Barnet, VT 05821
(802)633-2700

To:
Senate Government Operations Committees

From:
The Vermont Reiki Association
P.O. Box 554
St. Albans, VT 05478

Re: S.270 Sunrise Review Addendum

February 25, 2020

Dear Chairwoman White and Committee Members,

We are reaching out on behalf of the Vermont Reiki Association (VRA). The Vermont Reiki Association is a professional nonprofit organization supporting the development, practice, and access to Reiki throughout Vermont and the northeast. We currently represent over 200 Reiki practitioner members who have been trained by qualified teachers, and who abide by a code of ethics. We have never received any reports of misconduct within our members.

Although we take no position on the licensure of massage therapists, we are deeply concerned about the Sunrise addendum to Bill S.270, which if passed would have significant negative impact on our livelihood as Vermont business owners as well as, the well being of our clients and communities. Specifically, we object to this section:

*If the General Assembly decides to create a registration requirement for massage therapists, OPR encourages the General Assembly to **define massage therapy broadly** so as to encompass varying forms of massage, body-, and energy work in which a client may be placed in a vulnerable position relative to a practitioner. There are many*

different types of massage, body-, and energy-work professionals working in Vermont. These professionals offer services from Swedish massage to cupping to Reiki.

Reiki is not a form of massage. Reiki is a gentle and effective healing and meditation practice that decreases physical, emotional and mental distress and promotes overall well being. It is practiced worldwide and is offered in hospitals and many other settings to reduce the effect of stress. There are no known contraindications. It is offered as a treatment with clients fully clothed using hands lightly on or off the body. Because it is such a gentle and safe practice, it is often the modality of choice by those who have been physically or mentally abused, or are experiencing pain.

Reiki has long been accepted in hospitals across Vermont, including Gifford Medical Center, Mount Ascutney Hospital & Health Center, Rutland Regional, and University of Vermont Medical Center. Hospice programs statewide include Reiki as a way to bring peace, comfort and relaxation to patients and families. The demand for Reiki services in medical and hospice settings have been steadily increasing, and we are working hard to keep up with demand. This bill will put an end to our, much needed services in the community.

It has been our pleasure over the 17 years as an organization to volunteer at annual community events such as the VNA Camp Knock Knock's bereavement camp, the Stowe Weekend of Hope, Women's Health and Breast Cancer Conference, American Heart Association, Go Red for Women, Vermont Alzheimer's Association, National Organic Farmers Association and Strolling of the Heifers. VRA member practitioners also host clinics in their communities across Vermont donating the proceeds to community causes.

Many holistic modalities such as Reiki have been recognized by the National Institute of Health as complementary and integrative medicine and utilized by more than 1000 hospitals nationwide. They should not be identified as massage or included in a massage bill and should be exempt.

Thank you for considering.

Sincerely,

Lonnie Poland
President, VT Reiki Association

Barrie Montross
Vice President

Kelly McDermott-Burns
Treasurer and Ethics Officer



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Senate Government Operations Committees

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Lonnie Poland
President, VT Reiki Association

Barrie Montross
Vice President

Kelly McDermott-Burns
Treasurer and Ethics Officer

Subject: Re: Vermont S.270 bill and committee meeting Feb. 25

Additional talking points may include:

Licensing massage therapists has not stopped sexual misconduct. There have been numerous prosecutions in MA, FL and throughout the country of licensed massage therapists for sexual misconduct.

Many holistic modalities such as Reiki and QiGong have been recognized by the National Institute of Health as complementary and integrative medicine. They are not bodywork.

There are more than 200 holistic modalities the proposed law would affect.

Many holistic modalities do not have professional education programs accredited by national accreditation agencies. In addition, they do not have national standards

MA tried to pass similar legislation, which failed because of the complexity of the more than 200 holistic modalities it would affect and the thousands of people it would put out of work

Rita Glassman, Executive Director

MA Coalition of Holistic Practitioners
617-633-3654

--
Libby Eason
Certified Advanced Rolfer
Faculty, Dr. Ida Rolf Institute

Harm to other professionals who get lumped into the massage therapy label when we are distinct professions with our own certifying bodies, etc.

We could support a registry if it is called touch professionals as opposed to massage therapy.

[External]

Dear Legislators,

I need to express my serious concerns with bill S270 and the major impact it can have on our well-established community of alternative health-care providers. Many practitioner's ability to help others, earn a living and support their families could be greatly endangered.

With its broad definition of massage therapy, Bill S270 does not take into consideration many types of therapies that should not be affected by licensure. The bill does not exempt or protect the ability of many practitioners to practice without a massage license as they do in other states such as: Feldenkrais Method; Reflexology; The Trager Approach; Ayurvedic Therapies, Rolf Structural Integration, Polarity or Polarity Therapy; Polarity Therapy Bodywork; Asian Bodywork Therapy; Acupressure; Jin Shin Do; Qi Gong; Tui Na; Shiatsu; Somatic Therapy; Body-Mind Centering and Reiki.

As a practitioner of Ayurveda, I provide hands-on therapies that are widely different from massage therapy and should be considered as such. Like our neighbors in Massachusetts, I believe it is important that Ayurvedic Therapies be listed as an exemption to Bill S270.

My personal position is that this bill has no relevance in Vermont as there has been only one case of reported harm done to a client over the course of decades.

However, if legislators decide to move forward with the licensure of massage therapy, I request that a list of exemption be included.

Please hear what your community has to say about Bill S270 and make the appropriate changes to support our local economy and all the good we are doing for each other through these healing therapies.

Respectfully,

Joanie Begin-Morin

~ ~ ~

blossom āyurveda

7 Main St. Suite 304

Montpelier, VT

blossomayurveda.com

(802) 552-0554

Hello,

I would like to give a quick opinion about the Massage Therapy bill.

I am a therapist with no licensure practicing for 4 years in Vermont and have a flourishing private practice. I am fully trained by an accredited school. I have over 100 hours of accredited training and a B.S. in Wellness and Alternative Medicine. I already struggle to make a living due to the high tax of being an independent contractor. It is a difficult profession and running my practice takes substantial time and energy. If this bill is passed, it would mean nothing more than having to spend more money and energy jumping through beaurocratic hoops in order to continue what I'm doing. I don't see the validity in arguing that this would keep creepy people from doing unethical things within the profession. That risk is inherant with in the bounds of such an intimate practice, and liscensure won't act as an invisible boundary to the occasional inappropriate occurance.

Thanks for your ear,

Kiersten Olivetti

I also believe that the S. 270 bill should be amended to require a minimum number of hours of education and that all VT massage schools should be accredited.

On Mon, Feb 24, 2020 at 11:57 AM Gaby G Massage & Yoga <gabygoldberg@gmail.com> wrote:
Hello Senators & Representatives,

I'm a professional massage therapist that lives in Colchester and practices massage in downtown Burlington, VT. I'm writing to let you know that I strongly support [bill S.270](#), considering the requirement of licensure for massage therapists in the state of Vermont. It's time to join the rest of the country and license the profession to ensure high ethical industry standards are met for the benefit of all recipients of massage therapy. Licensure can protect clients from substandard service, potential injury or violation, like in the [case of Roger Schmidt](#) of Middlebury, VT.

Professional licensing of massage therapists would provide the following protective assurances to the public:

- Means of filing a complaint/grievance
- Empowered state regulatory body to enforce sanctions
- Means of differentiating licensed/unlicensed providers
- Protection against massage practitioners moving to different towns or jobs if they injure someone or behave unprofessionally
- Clear scope of practice, educational requirements, and training
- Accountability to clients/patients.

Other benefits of licensure:

- Decrease the potential of the exploitation of sex workers
- Potential to bill medical insurance with licensure - Increases access for lower-income Vermonters, increases income for massage therapy professionals (increasing spending in local economy and ability to settle in Vermont long-term), increases individual and overall well-being in local Vermont communities.
- Increases access to pain reduction treatments that are opioid free.

Thank you for considering my feedback and request to approve bill S.270 requiring massage therapy to be a licensed profession in the state of Vermont. Feel free to contact me with questions and enjoy your day!

Sincerely,

--

Gaby Goldberg

p.860-268-4585

[Book Massage & Bodywork/Testimonials/Refer a client & save \\$10](#)

[Classes & Workshops](#)

[Transformation through Travel!](#)

Dear Senator Carrigan,

I'm writing to let you know about my strong support for the bill being considered to license massage therapists in the state of Vermont. We need to join the rest of the country and license the profession. It will protect clients from substandard service and potential injury. It will decrease the potential for exploitation of sex workers. **Most importantly, licensure will increase access to massage therapy for lower-income Vermonters. Folks in pain should be able to access this treatment option using their medical insurance!** I should add that especially in the midst of the nation's opioid crisis we NEED to increase access to alternative pain reduction treatments. Please do what you can to bring this message to your colleagues.

Thanks,

Kirsten DeLuca

Kirsten DeLuca, NCMT

2 Church Street, #4C, Burlington, VT

802-318-2431

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Dear G. Carrigan:

I am writing you today with my concerns about Massage Therapy Licensing.

I have been a Massage Therapist (MT) for 28 years and I thoroughly love the work I do, but as far as Massage Licensing goes, I am NOT in favor of this. Mandatory Licensing will not solve any Human trafficking (H T) issues or fully protect the public from some perverted individual. Remember the Licensed Orthopedic Surgeon in Burlington who was doing pelvic exams on women? These procedures had nothing to do with Orthopedics. Or, the Licensed Gymnastic coaches who assaulted all those girls? Licensing did NOT protect any of these individuals. Also other states with MT Licensing are still experiencing HT and filed complaints about inappropriate behaviors from Licenced MT's.

I am also opposed to back ground checks and finger printing as what has become the norm in other states. This will also NOT curtail H T.

As far as insurance goes, workman's compensation already WILL pay for massage therapy, if the massage therapist is willing to fill out the necessary forms and wait for their money. Any other medical insurance company could choose NOT to pay for massage therapy if they put this in their policy coverage. Most of this big push for licensing is from the lobby massage group AMTA which, by the way, does not represent the majority of Massage Therapists in Vermont and I don't care much for this organization. They really do nothing for the massage therapy profession except charge lots of money to be a member and the benefits are pretty much, nothing.

I am in favor of a mandatory registration of all forms of body work and energy work. The OPR could then put this registration list on their website so anyone could go to that page and see if that person was registered, view their credentials and see if there are any charges of misconduct against that person, even from another state. This is so much simpler and could accomplish the same as a license without all the costs and more bureaucracy.

Also, I have to say that I am completely opposed to posters about Human trafficking becoming mandatory in all massage therapy businesses. This gives the absolute "WRONG" and stressful impression to anyone receiving bodywork anywhere.

Again, MT licensing is not the answer to curtail H T or acts of perversion. I strongly think that a Mandatory Registry is the best solution for anyone who wishes to practice body and energy work modalities.

Please share my thoughts with the committee.

Thank you,

Sonja Ennis
Wolcott, Vermont

Dear Ms. Carrigan:

It is my hope that you will share my input with the other members of the Government Operations Committee.

I am a Nationally Certified massage therapist and a long-time member of the AMTA. I have been working professionally for over 19 years, over half of which has been in Vermont. In addition to my own private practice, I have worked for 10 years providing massage to cancer patients and their family members at the Norris Cotton Cancer in St. Johnsbury. My training and experience also includes massage for the elderly, as well as survivors of serious burn injuries, HIV/AIDS patients and those in hospice care.

I am writing you today to urge you to support the implementation of a State Registry for massage therapists and to resist the AMTA's well-funded lobbying efforts to promote their agenda of instituting mandatory licensing for massage therapists.

I urge you to familiarize yourselves with the recent findings and recommendations of the Office Of Professional Regulation that came about in reaction to one practitioner's deplorable misconduct. The OPR conducted a very even-handed, fair and thorough exploration of the many issues at stake and deserves our respect for the integrity of their work. They succeeded in finding a solution that keeps to the regulatory standard of "the least restrictive" avenue that would meet the needs of the citizens of Vermont.

This process required a sober look and sober decisions. It also required a degree of sitting in the seat of good judgement in spite of the steady, full-throttle pressure of this national association. Indeed, yesterday morning I was upset to see the scare tactics being used in the form of a "**911 Alert**" prompting AMTA members to take action as if we were in the midst of a dire emergency.

No, we are not in a state of emergency.

We are massage therapists serving the health and well being of the State of Vermont in a free, un-regulated manner for many years in this beautiful green mountain state. We are a compassionate, caring, skillful and respectful population interested in little more than continuing the good and much needed work that we do. Most of my fellow massage

therapists are not even aware of all the legal hoopla going on in these committees and hearings. They are busy trying to earn a living and giving healing touch for our fellow beings.

Please do not succumb to the temptation of taking a reactive stance. Let's let sanity prevail.

Perhaps you too could use a massage ?

Thank you for taking a moment to hear my concerns.

May wisdom and kind hearts lead the way.

Sincerely,

David Hammond MT
West Burke, Vermont