



CAMEL — California Massage Education League

<http://www.ramblemuse.com/camel/>

24 April 2004

Dear City Councilmember or County Supervisor:

Please grant me a brief opportunity to inform you about the *California Massage Education League (CAMEL)*. *CAMEL* is a business league with the focus of promoting a positive business environment for the massage profession. On the *CAMEL* website, we have answered questions frequently asked about massage by California city council members and county supervisors. We encourage you to review our information and to reevaluate your ordinances affecting massage. *CAMEL* also works with other massage organizations to promote the continued business success of the over 200 state-approved massage schools and estimated 25,000 individual practitioners. A good business environment is good for us all.

A lot has changed since 1978 when Sections 51030-51034 were added to the California Government Code, stipulating local regulation of massage. In 1978, for example, Proposition 13 was newly passed and the extent to which it would detrimentally affect local agencies by effectively removing corporate property from the tax rolls was still in the future. Much has also changed in the massage profession; changes of which, we believe, cities and counties in California should be aware to avoid problematic regulation.

A research review in the *Psychological Bulletin* recently called the massage profession one of the fastest growing segments of complementary and alternative medicine among both consumers and researchers. In 1997, it was estimated that consumers were spending between \$4 and \$6 billion annually for massage care. This however, is in a social context in which stress is estimated to cost U.S. business \$300 billion per year and in which low back pain is second only to the common cold in lost work days. Given that research is indicating massage to be effective both for stress relief and for relieving low back pain, the economic consequences of mis-regulating massage on productivity and quality of life are considerable.

Recent laws at both the state and federal levels have implications for the manner in which the massage profession is regulated at the local level. In 2002, SB 577 passed, defining the concept of unlicensed health care practices within the state Business & Professions code. Give the extent to which massage is accepted to be part of the growth of complementary and alternative medicine, SB 577 may well have created a preemptive definition of massage as health care. In 2003, the federal Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) went into effect, instituting requirements for the protection and privacy of personal information. Local agencies need to be aware of and respond to both changes.

State regulation of massage schools has also evolved, being moved from the Department of Education to the Bureau for Private Postsecondary & Vocational Education, under the Department of Consumer Affairs. To focus and help the more than 200 state-approved massage schools interface with regulation, the *California Alliance of Massage & Bodywork Schools (CAMBS)* formed. As they are an excellent resource for information about state-approved massage schools, our website links to the CAMBS website.

Again, we encourage you to make use of the information we provide and to reevaluate your ordinances affecting massage in light of the current consumer and professional contexts.

Thank you for your time and attention.

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