

Honorable Assemblymember Lou Correa  
State Capitol  
Room 6025,  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assemblymember Correa,

As a massage practitioner in California, I urge you, as chair of the Assembly Committee on Business and Professions, to oppose AB 1388, a bill introduced by Assemblymember Christine Kehoe to regulate therapeutic massage.

Massage is a safe practice of health and personal care. Two recent articles in peer-reviewed journals have reviewed the safety of massage<sup>1,2</sup>. They both concluded that injury from massage is an extreme rarity and not related to techniques of entry level massage that would be affected by licensing. Licensing is not needed to protect clients from harm.

While a small number of local agencies have adopted ordinances that are burdensome to massage practitioners, these are the exception rather than the norm. Since they are imposed at the local level, they are also likely to be representative of local problems and attitudes. A recent informal random survey of 25 online city ordinances indicated that 19 of the 25 required 200 hours or less of training with other requirements being equally reasonable. Moreover, with recent studies showing the effectiveness of massage to alleviate stress and low back pain, maladies with high costs in productivity and quality of life, rising demand for massage services can only act to normalize local laws.

Last year, the legislator and governor enacted SB 577, defining the concept of unlicensed health care practitioners within the Business and Professions Code. Massage fits well in this paradigm, both because of its safety and because of its inclusion in much of the literature on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). It is premature to enact further regulation without waiting to see the effects on local regulation of defining massage as unlicensed health care at the state level.

As written, AB 1388 is neither of benefit to students or consumers. A provision counting education only in increments of 100 hours or more could force many massage schools into reapproval to change the length of existing certificate programs to exactly match 250 hours. In writing the bill, the concept of loose change was ignored. AB 1388 defines a second tier that adds nothing to the exemption of massage from local regulation and has no benefit to the consumer. It lacks a guarantee that a higher tier practitioner has even one day of experience in practice and would eliminate requirements for client information existing under SB 577.

Please oppose AB 1388. It would create a law that we don't need.

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Name

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Signed

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Date

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<sup>1</sup> Ernst E, 2003: *The safety of massage therapy*. *Rheumatology*, 42 (9), 1101-1106.

<sup>2</sup> Grant KE, 2003, *Massage Safety: Injuries Reported in Medline Relating to the Practice of Therapeutic Massage – 1965-2003*. *Journal of Bodywork and Movement Therapies*, 7(4), 207-212.