

From: [House Finance](#)
To: [Helen Phillips](#)
Subject: FW: Letter of support for HB275
Date: Tuesday, February 06, 2018 12:04:52 PM

From: Caitlyn Ellis
Sent: Sunday, February 04, 2018 8:34 PM
To: Jane Pierson <Jane.Pierson@akleg.gov>
Cc: Crystal Koeneman <Crystal.Koeneman@akleg.gov>
Subject: FW: Letter of support for HB275

Jane,

We received an additional letter of support for HB 275. Thanks!

From: Joanie Waller [<mailto:somajoanie@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 1, 2018 3:12 PM
To: Rep. Sam Kito <Rep.Sam.Kito@akleg.gov>; Rep. Mike Chenault <Rep.Mike.Chenault@akleg.gov>
Subject: Letter of support for HB275

Please include in packet in House Finance.

I support HB 275 to keep the massage therapy licensing board on for another 4 years. Short statement: I believe we need the board for 4 more years to continue developing the statute and regulations in massage licensing in Alaska and to address the issues that have come up, those that are currently being discussed, and issues that will arise in this development.

The most vocal opposition I know of to extending the board's existence is a SI (Structural Integration/Rolfing) practitioner's dislike of how the board has responded to their particular dilemma. As a healing modality, SI is normally covered under insurance, but in the state of AK, in developing the statute, structural integrators had originally chosen to be exempt. They are now stuck because their employers are only hiring AK state massage licensees. This issue has come to the surface because of the way the statute is written. This indicates change is needed. The opposition suggests that licensing can be administered by the commissioner's office and that the board is not needed and excessive. I do not believe the massage licensing statute has matured enough to let it go to the administrative level. I believe we still have bugs to work out, as with the SI practitioners dilemma, and I would prefer to have professionals in the field working on it. Perhaps 4 years from now we will decide a board is not necessary.

In the last few years, during the formation of the licensing statutes and regulations, I have found the board to be open to suggestion. The license fees were dropped from what they were originally set at and they have listened to our requests to extend the time between fingerprinting on renewal. (I'm not sure where they are on that at this point.) When they came up with an absurd requirement, in my opinion, for exempt practitioners to prove they are not doing massage, they were forced to drop it.

AK state massage licensure is still in development and the details are still being worked out. If we sunset the board while licensure is in its infancy, there will not be a board of peers to work through exactly this type of debate. The problem the SI practitioners are facing with working legally in Alaska is one of the items that needs to be addressed, and, if statute needs to be changed, then it is through the board not the division that this will be done. I vote to keep the board and encourage them to embark on the discussion

of broadening accepted user modalities, even and especially if it means changing original statute language. And then, perhaps the SI community could offer a member to volunteer his/her time to be on the board so they can accommodate diversity and address massage, SI, and all manual touch therapists' concerns.

The long version :-)

In my opinion, the issues with the opposition is akin to fisheries legislation in Alaska, where there are battles for resource management between gillnetters, trollers, seiners & sportfishermen, etc. I once worked as a legislative aide to Representative Alan Austerman who was chair of the fisheries committee. He said he would simply not listen to arguments between user groups. They all work with fish - just as bodyworkers all manually touch bodies. The polarization of purely massage and purely structural integration has come to the surface because of medical insurance coverage and the exemption of SI practitioners (see exceptions Sec 08.61.080(10). Let's change it.

Back story: When AMTA (American Massage Therapy Association) members first approached the legislature for licensure, as a bodyworker with training in several massage and bodywork modalities (including a method of Structural Integration (eg Rolfing) called Soma Neuromuscular Integration), in the initial discussions, I argued for a "touch therapy" license, SO THAT ALL ACCREDITED MANUAL THERAPISTS CAN WORK IN ALASKA.

Rolfers (Structural Integrators) have long wanted to differentiate themselves from massage. And rightly so, as the modality, in its simplest description, works specifically with fascial manipulation to affect body alignment. They have their own certification and testing process and, in my opinion, are as unique to bodywork as chiropractic is to the medical field. Chiropractic now has its own distinction and acceptance in the medical field, and its own international and state licensing boards, including AK.. (Structural Integration is ahead of its time. FYI Fascial research has only recently been brought to public knowledge. The first International Symposium on Fascial Research was held as recently as 2002.) It's time will come, but not fast enough for those currently working in the field.

As a member of IASI (International Association of Structural Integrators), I purchase my professional insurance coverage through ABMP (Associated Bodyworkers & Massage Professionals), which supports both Massage and Structural Integration.

When Rolfing/SI was listed as an exempt modality on the Alaskan State Licensing application, (which, again, was originally requested by the SI community), I had to make a choice. After much discussion with peers, and because I own a business in which I offer a variety of options to clients, (the Northern Oasis Wellness Spa in Juneau), I chose to apply for massage licensure. I take continuing education courses wherever I can get them and am continually expanding the tools in my "bodywork toolbox". I would like to be able to use whichever works best to bring a client relief. Isn't that what we are all doing?

Joanie Waller 315 Third St. Juneau AK

Sec. 08.61.100. Definitions.

In this chapter,

(5)"practice of massage therapy" means the provision, for compensation, of a service involving the systematic manipulation and treatment of the soft tissues, including the muscular and connective tissues of the human body, to enhance the functions of those tissues and promote relaxation and well-being; in this paragraph, "manipulation and treatment"
(A)includes manual techniques applied with the intent to physically affect local soft

tissues, such as pressure, friction, stroking, percussion, kneading, vibration, muscular assessment by palpation, range of motion for purposes of demonstrating muscle exertion for muscle flexibility, nonspecific stretching, and application of superficial heat, cold, water, lubricants, or salts; 10) person engaged only in the practice of structural integration for restoring postural balance and functional ease by integrating the body in gravity using a system of fascial manipulation and awareness who has graduated from a program or is a current member of an organization recognized by the International Association of Structural Integrators, including the Rolf Institute of Structural Integration;