

Chrystal Randolph

From: Rep. Lynn Gattis
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 3:40 PM
To: Chrystal Randolph
Subject: FW: Vote YES on HB 305!

From: Amanda Montavon [mailto:amontavon@alaskapacific.edu]
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 3:33 PM
To: Rep. Lynn Gattis <Rep.Lynn.Gattis@akleg.gov>
Subject: RE: Vote YES on HB 305!

Awesome, Thank you!

I do have a few more points to share if you are interested in my perspective:

1. I am a teacher of a Yoga Teacher Training (YTT) program credentialed by the Yoga Alliance (non-profit who is globally recognized for creating the industry standard for YTT programs). All of my programs have already been approved by ACPE and I have a good working relationship with ACPE, but I do feel that the YTT programs are not vocational schools, are being unfairly targeted by the ACPE and putting unrealistic financial strains on other small local yoga businesses/studios that would also like to offer YTT programs.

a. Despite the name, Yoga Teacher Training, the Yoga Alliance only requires that 25 out of the 200 hours are on teaching methodology. One hundred hours are required to be spent just doing Yoga focusing on techniques used in the Yoga practice. The other 75 hours are on Yoga philosophy, Yoga lifestyle and anatomy. By far the majority of participants in these programs are taking the program for personal development and some may end up teaching 1-4 hours a week. Upon completion, I encourage all of my YTT participants to teach at least one class a week, because I believe sharing knowledge and supporting others on their Yoga path will help them advance in their own practice.

From my personal observation, conversation with other Yoga teachers and following up with participants from my YTT programs I would say that about 30-50% of participants who complete YTT programs may never teach yoga in a professional capacity and they just take the class for personal development, 40-60% of participants may teach a Yoga class once or twice a week (1-3 hours a week) and see it more as a service to their community and as a way to further their own progression on the Yoga path. There are very few (1-10%) Yoga teachers who work full time as instructors, view teaching as a future career or as their primary source of income. Teachers who do end up making a career out of teaching do so based upon their years and years of experience not because they took a 200 hour YTT.

b. There is only a 'certification of completion' given to participants in a YTT program; participants do not become a certified yoga teacher, they are recognized by the Yoga Alliance by completing their standards for Yoga teachers and are able to become a Registered Yoga Teacher in the Yoga Alliance registry.

Other similar programs are offered in the state and are not governed by ACPE such as gyms partnering with the American Council on Exercise Program to offer a prep course for the Personal Training Exam or for the Aquatic Exercise Association offering weekend courses to become a Certified Water Aerobics Instructor, Zumba certifying Zumba Instructors, YogaFit classes being offered in gyms and actually giving a 'certified yoga instructor' certificate, Reiki masters completing weekend trainings and certifying other Reiki practitioners... these programs are not being targeted by ACPE and these programs offer more of a vocational type of training where the larger component to YTTs is the spiritual philosophy and yoga lifestyle, which is much more personal and far less professional.

c. Unlike Acupuncturists and Massage Therapists, Yoga teachers are not licensed by the state, and until they are it is my opinion that these programs should not be governed by ACPE. If you stay up to date on Yoga trends... it is looking like Yoga Therapists are working towards receiving licensure from states in which they practice. Becoming a Yoga Therapist requires a completely different type of training and has a different governing body (not the Yoga Alliance).

I am the person who made ACPE aware of the YTT programs in Alaska. I had a potential participant ask me to call ACPE to inquire about the possibility of using their GI Bill for the course fee (the answer was no), and I feel a responsibility to clearly state why YTT programs are not vocational schools and are being unfairly targeted by ACPE. Thank you so much for your time!

Sincerely,

Amanda Montavon

8591 Gold Bullion Blvd.

Palmer, AK 99645

From: Rep. Lynn Gattis [<mailto:Rep.Lynn.Gattis@akleg.gov>]
Sent: Tuesday, February 16, 2016 3:32 PM
To: Amanda Montavon
Subject: Re: Vote YES on HB 305!

Great! It's my bill!

Sent from my BlackBerry 10 smartphone.

From: Amanda Montavon

Sent: Monday, February 15, 2016 12:30 PM

To: Rep. Lynn Gattis

Subject: Vote YES on HB 305!

Dear Representative Lynn Gattis,

As your constituent, I am asking for your support on HB 305, an important bill that would protect the rights of yoga studios to operate in Alaska without unnecessary and burdensome regulation by the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE).

HB 305 would prevent the ACPE from requiring advanced yoga programs – known as yoga teacher training programs (YTTs) – around the state to pay expensive fees and to comply with unnecessary requirements in order to continue operation.

ACPE is only supposed to license occupational/vocational schools in Alaska, but YTTs are not occupational/vocational programs. In fact, the vast majority of individuals who attend YTTs do not make a living teaching yoga, but rather, attend class for avocational reasons – like personal growth or practicing yoga with like-minded individuals. HB 305 seeks to protect this activity.

Further, many yoga studios that offer YTTs are small businesses with tight budgets. The fees and administrative requirements imposed by ACPE are hefty and harmful to these small businesses. HB 305 would support and grow Alaska's vibrant yoga community.

There is no need for regulation. YTTs have been around for years, and we are not aware of a single complaint against these programs. As the saying goes, "if it's not broken, why fix it?"

Please support Alaska small business and the yoga community by voting "Yes" on HB 305.

Sincerely,

Amanda Montavon