

Konrad Jackson

From: Rep. Kurt Olson
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2014 12:29 AM
To: Konrad Jackson
Subject: Fwd: HB328
Attachments: March 10 message letter.doc; ATT00001.htm

SSent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: leah labar <leahlabar@hotmail.com>
Date: March 12, 2014 at 10:05:34 PM AKDT
To: "Representative.Kurt.Olson@akleg.gov" <representative.kurt.olson@akleg.gov>
Cc: "Representative.Charisse.Millett@akleg.gov" <representative.charisse.millett@akleg.gov>, "Representative.Dan.Saddler@akleg.gov" <representative.dan.saddler@akleg.gov>, "Representative.Lora.Reinbold@akleg.gov" <representative.lora.reinbold@akleg.gov>, "Representative.Bob.Herron@akleg.gov" <representative.bob.herron@akleg.gov>, "Representative.Andy.Josephson@akleg.gov" <representative.andy.josephson@akleg.gov>, "Representative.Cathy.Munoz@akleg.gov" <representative.cathy.munoz@akleg.gov>, "Representative.Mike.Chenault@akleg.gov" <representative.mike.chenault@akleg.gov>
Subject: HB328

Dear Representative Olson and members of the committee,

My name is Leah LaBar. I attended the hearing on Monday for HB328 but was unable to testify due to a lack of time.

Please find attached a letter which I wrote before the hearing on Monday. Since then, my concerns have increased and I would like to address a few more issues. I have tried to keep my comments concise as I understand you are busy.

In introducing the bill, Mary Aparezuk stated that licensing massage therapists would make them network providers. I feel this is an assumption that has no basis. Insurance companies are reducing the services covered rather than increasing them in most fields. It seems likely that a person would still need a referral or prescription from a doctor or chiropractor. Otherwise a massage therapist would be required to make a diagnosis, which is beyond our scope of practice.

I also have serious concerns about the suggestion that the board could add an apprenticeship program after the bill has been passed. The requirements for licensing need to be established before the bill is passed. There is no need to rush a partially written bill. One of the questions asked at the hearing was "who would this bill exclude?" It would exclude future therapists who have the opportunity to learn from a hands-on, mentoring model. It could also exclude therapists who choose, or are only able, to work part time in this field, of which there are many.

I hope that you seriously weigh the benefits versus the cost of this bill. I do not think it has been given the time & study it requires.

Thank you for your consideration,
Leah LaBar

March 10,2014

Dear Representatives,

I am writing in regard to the proposed bill to license massage therapists in the state of Alaska. My name is Leah LaBar and I have been practicing massage therapy in Juneau for the past 17 years. I am the sole proprietor of a small but thriving business, Energy Works.

My training was done in a one year apprenticeship with a local practicing massage therapist, combined with formal education. ie Anatomy & Physiology at the University of Alaska Southeast and other workshops. I have received lots of continuing ed over the years. I feel I received an excellent training.

My concerns about this bill are many. One is that it does not provide for training in the manner I was trained. Going outside to a massage school can be prohibitive for people in many situations for many reasons. Learning from an experienced therapist is an excellent alternative. Our state provides for home schooling which is a similar model.

Another concern is that we are proposing legislation to 'fix' something which is not broken. I am not aware of any problems the state has experienced with unlicensed massage therapists. This bill is being backed by an organization which stands to benefit financially from it becoming law. What problems are we really addressing here?

It is being stated that licensing would give us the ability to bill insurance. Medical and chiropractic offices are currently billing insurance successfully. Without a referral or prescription it is doubtful a massage therapist would be able to bill insurance. I currently have clients who bill for my services with a prescription. If I were to do billing I would need to increase my prices and would lose the bulk of my clients.

Licensing, and all it's added requirements, would be cost prohibitive to many current or prospective therapists. Our state is unique in it's size and diversity. A bill of this sort should have input from all concerned and be given due consideration. I feel this bill has been rushed and is being pushed by outside influences.

Where there is not immediate concern for citizen's safety or rights, let's take the time to make all the laws we pass good laws, laws which benefit everyone. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Leah LaBar
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