



Representative Sam Kito

Alaska State Legislature

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House Bill 110 Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to the practice of massage therapy; relating to the Board of Massage Therapists; and providing for an effective date."

The Board of Massage Therapists has requested several changes to their statutes to allow for the better protection of Alaskans.

House Bill 110 seeks to add language for the board to adopt regulations governing massage therapy establishments; increases the number of hours of in-class supervised instruction and clinical work from an approved massage school from 500 hours to 625 hours; reduces the number of hours of safety education covering blood-borne pathogens from four hours to two hours; and allows the board to issue an exemption from the licensure requirements of this chapter to persons who submit an application, pay a registration fee, and submits proof that the person meet the requirements. Exemptions authorized under this section are valid for 10 years or until the person's scope of practice changes. Exemptions may be renewed.

The Board was contacted by the FBI and the Municipality of Anchorage in the first year of licensing concerning Human/Sex Trafficking in the state of Alaska. In Anchorage in 2015 alone, 29 establishments were identified as posing as Massage Establishments where illicit business was being conducted. The board has moved to create statute changes that target these type of businesses and to close loopholes.

Exemption registrations are being created in order to combat the ability for business owners to avoid being contacted by state investigations and federal agencies. With the tightening of the statute, it gives the investigation agencies the increased ability to enter a business and require the owner to show paperwork proving the licensing of each therapist or exemption. The statute changes will help clarify board intent and assist state and federal agencies in their pursuit of decreasing Human Trafficking.

I urge your support of House Bill 110 to strengthen our laws to protect Alaskans.