From: Rep. Benjamin Nageak
To: Mary Schlosser
Subject: FW: HB328
Date: Monday, March 10, 2014 1:50:08 PM

From: Cheri Zepp [mailto:cherizepp@hotmail.com]
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2014 9:42 AM
To: Rep. Benjamin Nageak
Subject: HB328

Good morning Representative Nageak,

I have not yet had the pleasure to meet you, but I have been working with your amazing staff – Mary Schlosser. I would like to offer my support for House Bill 328.

Thank you for meeting with several members of the coalition several weeks ago, and hearing what we had to say about why it is so important to have licensure for massage therapists in the State of Alaska. We want to thank you again for sponsoring this bill, and we appreciate your time and your staff's time on this bill.

I want to express to you that I, personally, fully understand the implications of fees and requirements of education that will be imposed. I graduated from massage school in Texas, where I received my license after taking the state exam and I kept my license current for 7 years. I paid $250.00 per year (not biennial) to the State of Texas, and this fee did not hurt my business at all. I decided to let my Texas license lapse because I was not considered licensed in my home state, and the constant denials from insurance companies increased year after year -- all the same reason - I am not considered licensed, because we do not have a law here in Alaska that requires a license to operate. Even though I attend massage training and graduated with honors.

I have paid yearly fees, attended continuing education classes and am current with information pertaining to my trade. I do not feel impending fees, nor, the requirement of education will be a burden on my pocketbook. I also am a member of the Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals. That membership allows me Liability Insurance or Medical Malpractice worth millions should I hurt someone in the course of my work.

I currently provide employment for 5-6 therapists at my studio, Chez Sante' Massage Therapy. They are contracted to work at my studio, and I require them to obtain a business license to operate in the State of Alaska. They are also required to obtain liability insurance, and are encouraged to take continuing education.

My first priority is my clients -- their safety is number one, and so I believe once this becomes required in our state we can weed out the sex offenders who are currently slipping through cracks. Currently, anyone can hang a shingle out that allows them to be a "massage therapist" and I'm certain that there are already sex offenders working on innocent people. I question why any professional massage therapist would not want a law that helps to protect their clients.

I feel that the bill in its current state is satisfactory and needs no further amendments, and I am very comfortable with the language.

Thank you again Representative Nageak.

Sincerely,

Cheri Zepp
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