



Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

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January 22, 2016

Senators Stroebel, Lasee and Kapenga  
Representatives Vorpapel, Jarchow, Craig and Hutton  
Members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations and Consumer Protection  
Members of the Assembly Committee on State Affairs and Government Operations  
State Capitol  
Madison, WI 53707-7882

RE: Public Comment regarding SB568 and AB726

Dear Senators and Representatives,

Associated Bodywork and Massage Professionals (ABMP) is a professional membership association founded in 1987 to provide massage and bodywork practitioners with professional services, information, and legislative and regulatory advocacy. Its current membership totals nearly 80,000, including more than 1,900 members in Wisconsin.

I am writing to express our concern about Senate Bill 568 and Assembly Bill 726. These bills propose to consolidate the Massage Therapy and Bodywork Therapy Affiliated Credentialing Board and its functions with those of Physical Therapists, Physical Therapy Assistants, Occupational Therapists and Athletic Trainers into one board. These are professions that have very different approaches to delivering therapy as well as varying relationships with the medical profession and insurance companies.

The purpose and goal of state regulation of the massage therapy profession is public safety. Massage therapists thus must be properly trained, must understand the ethical issues unique to the profession, and must be subject to discipline when they cause harm. There is a vast difference in the training, practice, and ethical considerations between Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, Athletic Trainers, and Massage Therapists.

The current Massage Therapy & Bodywork Therapy Credentialing Board is made up of four massage therapists, a massage therapist representing a private massage therapy school, a massage therapist representing a public massage therapy school, and an individual from the public. Massage Therapists have been licensed in Wisconsin since 1999. The Massage Therapy Board currently licenses approximately 6,700 massage therapists in Wisconsin every other year, and in 2017 will bring in approximately \$500,000 to Wisconsin's state coffers. The board also disciplines license holders, promulgates rules, provides oversight of rules and scope of practice, reviews applications, holds quarterly meetings, hears appeals from massage therapists and gives input regarding potential legislation affecting massage therapists. In addition, Board members work with the Department of Safety and Professional Services on a myriad of issues including where professional expertise is needed. They may also sit on a committee that reviews initial complaints to the Board regarding unprofessional conduct.

The proposed board of three physical therapists, one physical therapist assistant, one occupational therapist, one massage therapist, one athletic trainer and one member from the public would be ill-equipped to make decisions where professional expertise is needed throughout all of these therapy professions. This proposed board would be in charge the licensing of all of these therapy professionals in Wisconsin, despite the vast differences in the professions. The therapists and trainers are so varied, the board members would not have knowledge about the training, techniques, ethical code, histories and specifics of each profession.

In essence, this board would be made up largely of members of public with no expertise in the professions they would oversee. This creates a real and unacceptable risk to public safety.

We urge you to vote against this misguided bill. Please vote no on SB 568 and AB726.

Thank you for your consideration of ABMP's views. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [Laura@abmp.com](mailto:Laura@abmp.com) or 800-458-2267, extension 645.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Laura B. Embleton". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Laura B. Embleton, Government Relations Director