



Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals

25188 Genesee Trail Rd, Ste 200
Golden, CO 80401
800-458-2267
fax 800-667-8260
www.abmp.com

February 4, 2021

TO: Senators John A. Polk, Angela Burks Hill, Kevin Blackwell, David Blount, Jennifer B. Branning, Albert Butler, W. Briggs Hopson, Chris McDaniel, Rita Potts Parks, Mike Thompson, and Angela Turner-Ford

RE: House Bill 1315

Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) provides professional liability insurance, business resources, professional publications, and legislative and regulatory advocacy for more than 77,000 members nationwide.

ABMP is opposed to the portion of House Bill 1315 that deregulates massage therapy. Our specific concerns are with Section 10 at line 333, which delineates specific sections of the Mississippi Code of 1972.

The bill states that these sections, “which create the Mississippi Professional Massage Therapy Act and the State Board of Massage Therapy, are repealed.”

Massage therapists in Mississippi have gone through extensive training, passed a national psychometric examination, and are required to complete robust continuing education to renew their licenses. Without the education and training that licensed massage therapists have, severe damage can be done when performing massage techniques on the public. The Massage Practice Act is in place to protect the public. The public can be harmed without licensed massage therapists and their knowledge of anatomy, physiology and kinesiology, contraindications, law, and ethics.

There are only three unregulated states in the country—Minnesota, Kansas, and Wyoming—and bills are being introduced this year that would bring licensure to those states. There is a reason massage therapy is regulated: public protection. Deregulating massage therapy will lead to more injuries for the public, such as overextended hips, torn or overextended muscles, broken ribs, herniated discs, and neck injuries.

Deregulating massage therapy would also lead to more illicit sex businesses in Mississippi communities. Under the proposed revisions, these illicit businesses could only be investigated after an incident was reported. However, victims are often hesitant to report an incident, fearing that it would implicate them as being involved in an illicit sex business. Licensed massage therapists do not engage in illicit sex businesses and are working to root these businesses out of their communities.

We encourage you to remove Section 10 from House Bill 1315. Massage therapy should be regulated and the Mississippi Professional Massage Therapy Act should be maintained.

Sincerely,

Laura B. Embleton, Government Relations Director, Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals