

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5718

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, February 27, 2001

**Title:** An act relating to certification of reflexologists.

**Brief Description:** Providing for certification of reflexologists.

**Sponsors:** Senators Thibaudeau and Deccio.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 2/19/01, 2/27/01 [DPS].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5718 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa, Fraser and Winsley.

**Staff:** Chelsea Buchanan (786-7446)

**Background:** Reflexology is a system of massage that uses the hands to apply pressure to the feet and hands. Reflexology is based on the premise that there are zones and reflex points in the hands and feet that correspond to all parts of the body.

At this time, the Washington State Board of Massage certifies massage practitioners, but does not certify reflexologists.

**Summary of Substitute Bill:** A new credential is created within massage law, certified reflexologist.– No person may practice reflexology unless certified to do so, unless otherwise authorized by law in his or her professional scope of practice. Reflexology is defined as being limited to portions of the lower leg, forearms, and external ear. Certified reflexologists are added to those health professions covered under the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

A certified reflexologist is added to the membership of the Board of Massage. The board establishes initial certification standards that meet national standards for reflexology training.

The Department of Health (DOH) must establish an ad hoc committee of reflexologists to advise the board. DOH must review the implementation of this act and make recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2005.

**Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:** The original bill specified the number of hours of training for initial certification standards, and the substitute relies on national standards of training. The substitute requires the Department of Health to form an ad hoc committee rather than a formal advisory committee to advise the Board of Massage. The substitute limits the practice of reflexology to portions of the lower leg, forearms, and external ear, and

amends the Uniform Disciplinary Act to include reflexologists. The effective date is changed to July 1, 2002, and the first report by the Department of Health is not required until 2005, rather than 2004.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2002.

**Testimony For:** Reflexology is currently practiced by persons other than massage practitioners, and they do no harm. Reflexologists were receiving cease and desist orders from massage practitioners, and this bill is the result of a compromise between the massage practitioners and reflexologists. **Concerns:** The Department of Health would like the effective date to be postponed until July 1, 2002, to allow sufficient time for rule making. The bill should be amended so that reflexologists are covered by the Uniform Disciplinary Act.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** Sue Shoblom, Department of Health (concerns); Steve Boruchowitz, Department of Health (concerns); Jeff Larsen, Washington Reflexology Society (pro); Melanie Stewart, American Massage Therapy Association (pro).