

SENATE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5403

As Passed Senate, March 13, 2007

Title: An act relating to certifying animal massage practitioners.

Brief Description: Certifying animal massage practitioners.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Agriculture & Rural Economic Development (originally sponsored by Senators Rasmussen, Brandland and Jacobsen).

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Agriculture & Rural Economic Development: 1/25/07, 1/29/07 [DPS].
Passed Senate: 3/13/07, 48-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5403 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Rasmussen, Chair; Hatfield, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Morton and Shin.

Staff: Bob Lee (786-7404)

Background: In 2001, Washington enacted a program whereby licensed massage practitioners could receive an additional endorsement on their licenses to also perform massage on animals. To receive this license endorsement, a person who is already licensed to perform massage on humans would be required to take an additional 100 hours of training in animal massage. To obtain a license as a human massage practitioner, the State Board of Massage requires 500 hours of training that is to be completed over at least a six month period. Schools that offer these classes are required to receive prior approval from the Department of Health. Graduates are required to pass a written examination and a practical demonstration of massage therapy.

There is an interest in the development of an animal massage certification program that would allow persons to take training in animal massage without first having to be licensed as a human massage therapist.

Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill: Persons who wish to practice massage only on animals may obtain certification from the Department of Health by taking 300 hours of training in either small or large animal massage in courses approved by the Department of Health. Certification and renewal fees to support the program will be adopted by rule. For persons who have had training in animal massage in other states, the department will

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determine whether the training is substantially equivalent to that required in this state and whether additional training is needed before taking the examination.

The Uniform Disciplinary Act applies to this category of certified animal massage practitioner and will be administered by the Department of Health. Nothing in the act prohibits or restricts: (1) the practice of veterinary medicine; (2) the practice of animal massage by persons who have the additional endorsement under their human massage license; (3) students performing massage in the regular course of instruction; (4) animal owners or their employees that perform massage on the owner's animal; or (5) performing massage for free.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Washington and Alabama are the only states that require a person hold a human massage license before obtaining an animal massage license. For a person to perform massage on animals, there should not be a required referral from a licensed veterinarian. This bill opens up the option for a person to receive training in animal massage techniques and to obtain certification to practice massage on animals. Changes to the bill are sought including specifying that 300 hours of training should be required to practice massage on either small or large animals, and addressing needs of persons who receive training in schools outside the state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Senator Dale Brandland; Vaughn Brown; Charlie Brown and Cheryl Gordon, Washington Animal Massage Association; Marnie Black, Rosanne Rynerson, Angela Vanderhoof, citizens; Greg Hanon, Washington State Veterinary Medical Association; and Melanie Stewart, American Message Therapist Association.