

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 6181

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As of January 18, 2016

**Title:** An act relating to changing the words "massage practitioner" and "animal massage practitioner" to "massage therapist" and "animal massage therapist".

**Brief Description:** Concerning massage therapists.

**Sponsors:** Senators Becker, Cleveland, Rivers, Hasegawa and McAuliffe.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Health Care: 1/18/16.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

**Staff:** Evan Klein (786-7483)

**Background:** Washington State Board of Massage. The regulation of massage practitioners is overseen by the Washington State Board of Massage (Board). The Board is authorized to adopt administrative rules pertaining to the regulation of the massage profession and is granted specified powers with respect to the following:

- evaluation and approval of massage schools and training programs;
- administration of licensing examinations; and
- establishment of the rules, standards, and procedures regarding the training of practitioners.

Massage Practitioners. Massage practitioners are individuals licensed to practice massage therapy in Washington. Animal massage practitioners are individuals licensed to practice massage therapy in Washington with additional training in animal therapy.

Massage Therapy. Generally, massage therapy is a healthcare service involving the external manipulation or pressure of soft tissue for therapeutic purposes. Massage therapy includes techniques such as tapping, compressions, friction, reflexology, Swedish gymnastics or movements, gliding, kneading, shaking, and facial or connective tissue stretching, with or without the aids of superficial heat, cold, water, lubricants, or salts.

**Summary of Bill:** The titles "animal massage practitioner" and "massage practitioner" are changed to "animal massage therapist" and "massage therapist," respectively. All references in statute are updated to denote the change in title.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Beginning on July 1, 2017, the Department of Health must issue all new licenses and renewals using the terms "animal massage therapist" or "massage therapist" as appropriate. Active licenses using the terms "animal massage practitioner" or "massage practitioner" remain valid until renewed on the licensee's birthday after July 1, 2017.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect on July 1, 2017.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Around the country the profession is referred to as massage therapists. This bill would also align Washington with the American Massage Therapy Association.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Melanie Stewart, American Massage Therapy Association - Washington Chapter; Mark Allen, Washington Massage Envy Owners Co-op.