

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 2291

As of February 23, 2018

Title: An act relating to the licensure and certification of massage therapists and reflexologists.

Brief Description: Concerning the licensure and certification of massage therapists and reflexologists.

Sponsors: House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Kraft, Wylie, Jinkins and Harris).

Brief History: Passed House: 2/14/18, 96-2.

Committee Activity: Health & Long Term Care: 2/22/18.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Requires licensed massage therapists and certified reflexologists to have a government-issued photo identification that bears the same name as their massage therapy license or reflexology certification whenever they practice massage therapy or reflexology.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG TERM CARE

Staff: LeighBeth Merrick (786-7445)

Background: Massage therapists are licensed by the Department of Health (DOH) to practice massage, which involves the external manipulation or pressure of soft tissue for therapeutic purposes. To be issued a massage therapy license, an applicant must provide proof to DOH that they have successfully completed an approved massage therapy program or apprenticeship, successfully completed an examination approved by the board, and are at least 18 years old.

Massage therapists must clearly display their massage therapy license at their place of business or have a copy of the license available while they are practicing.

Reflexologists are certified to practice reflexology, which is a health care service limited to applying alternating pressure with thumb and finger techniques to reflexive areas of the lower extremities, feet, hands, and outer ears based on reflex maps. To be issued a

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reflexology certification, an applicant must provide proof to DOH that they have successfully completed an approved reflexology program, successfully completed an approved examination, and are at least 18 years old. Reflexologists must clearly display their reflexology certification at their place of business or have a copy of the certification available while they are practicing.

Summary of Bill: A licensed massage therapist or a certified reflexologist must have government-issued photo identification that bears the same name as their massage therapy license or reflexology certification whenever they are practicing massage therapy or reflexology, beginning January 1, 2020.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members: No.

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

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This bill would help crack down on sex trafficking rings. The Attorney General's Office estimates that there are 250 sex trafficking rings operating under the disguise of massage therapy and reflexology businesses. Massage therapy licenses and reflexology certificates don't have photographs of the individual and this can be a barrier to law enforcement taking action. This will help law enforcement and DOH determine if the business is a legitimate business and will have no impact to the industry or costs to the state.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Vicki Kraft, Prime Sponsor; Mark Brown, City of Vancouver Washington; Melanie Stewart, American Massage Therapy Association Washington Chapter

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: No one.