

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 1082

As Passed House:
March 13, 2019

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, Harris, Cody, Vick and Hoff).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 1/25/19, 2/1/19 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/13/19, 94-2.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires massage therapists and reflexologists to have government-issued photo identification on their person or immediately available for inspection when providing services.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Caldier, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Chambers, Davis, Harris, Jinkins, Maycumber, Riccelli, Robinson, Stonier, Thai and Tharinger.

Staff: Alyssa Patrick (786-7296) and Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

Massage Therapy Licenses.

Massage therapy is a health care service involving the external manipulation or pressure of soft tissue for therapeutic purposes. Massage therapists are required to become licensed.

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.

The Secretary of Health (Secretary) issues the license to applicants who are at least age 18 or older and provide proof of:

- successful completion of a course of study in an approved massage program, transfer program, or approved apprenticeship program; and
- successful completion of an examination administered or approved by the Washington State Board of Massage.

Reflexology Certifications.

Reflexology is a health care service in which a practitioner applies alternate pressure with thumb and finger techniques to reflexive areas of the lower one-third of extremities, feet, hands, and outer ears based on reflex maps. Reflexologists are required to be certified. Certificates are issued by the Secretary to applicants who are at least age 18 or older and provide proof of:

- successful completion of a reflexologist course of study approved by the Secretary; and
- successful completion of an examination administered or approved by the Secretary.

Display of Licenses and Certifications.

Both massage therapists and reflexologists must have their respective licenses or certificates on display at their places of business or wherever they practice.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

A massage therapist or reflexologist must have a government-issued photo identification on his or her person, or available for inspection by law enforcement and Department of Health personnel, at all times he or she practices massage therapy or reflexology. The photo identification must have the same name as the massage therapy license or reflexology certification.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill addresses organizations that appear to be massage or reflexology establishments but are actually part of a sex trafficking operation. This bill will help law enforcement and Department of Health officials better determine whether a massage therapist is a legitimate certified practitioner. The issue of these fraudulent businesses has been raised by street-level police who have often heard about illicit activity community members clearly see taking place at storefronts marked as massage and reflexology businesses. Officers were frustrated that they were not able to adequately address the issue with existing law due to the use of fake licenses and certificates.

This bill will close that loophole and add to other legislation which is helping to shut down the misrepresentation of these businesses for illicit activity. In doing so, the bill also further legitimizes and increases public trust in massage therapy and reflexology. The bill allows law enforcement to have more meaningful contact with business owners and clearly differentiate legitimate from illegitimate places. The more we can do to get prostitution and sex trafficking out of this profession the better.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Kraft, prime sponsor; Jonathan Young and Brian Enslow, City of Vancouver; and Melanie Stewart, American Massage Therapy Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.