

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5097

As Passed House:
February 27, 2020

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: Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Cleveland, Wilson, L., Keiser and Kuderer).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 2/12/20, 2/21/20 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/27/20, 89-9.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

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

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 14 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Macri, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Chambers, Chopp, Davis, DeBolt, Harris, Maycumber, Riccelli, Robinson, Stonier, Thai and Tharinger.

Staff: Emily Williams (786-7291) 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 must be licensed by the Secretary of Health (Secretary), subject to some exceptions. In order to obtain a license, applicants must:

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- be at least 18 years old;
- complete a course of study in an approved massage program, transfer program, or approved apprenticeship program;
- pass an examination approved by the Washington State Board of Massage;
- pass the Washington State Massage Jurisprudence Examination online;
- complete 4 hours of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) education and training;
- complete first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation training; and
- complete the application provided by the Secretary.

The Secretary runs a background check on an applicant before granting a license. Licensed practitioners must complete 24 hours of continuing education every two years.

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 must be certified by the Secretary, subject to some exceptions. In order to obtain a certification, applicants must:

- be at least 18 years old;
- complete an approved reflexology school, program, or apprenticeship program that has at least 200 hours of instruction;
- pass the American Reflexology Certification Board written examination, subject to some exceptions;
- pass the Washington State Reflexology Jurisprudence Examination online;
- complete 4 hours of AIDS education and training; and
- complete the application provided by the Secretary.

The secretary runs a background check on an applicant before granting a certificate. Certifications must be renewed every year.

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 Bill:

A licensed massage therapist or certified reflexologist must have a government-issued photo identification with him or her, or have it available for inspection by city, county, or state law enforcement, or personnel from the Department of Health, when the person practices massage or reflexology. The name on the identification must match the name on the certification or license.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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) Washington does not require government-issued identification to match the credentials on the massage therapist and reflexologist license. This has proven to be a problem in investigating and prosecuting massage businesses that are a front for sex trafficking. Mandating license holders to have identification on hand will aid law enforcement in shutting down illegitimate businesses while protecting legitimate ones. It is important to note that this only applies to city, county, and state law enforcement agencies. In 2003 Washington became the first state to enact a human trafficking law. This bill would continue the fight against sex and human trafficking. This is the third time this bill has been before this committee and parties believe that the bill has been sufficiently fine-tuned.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Brian Enslow, City of Vancouver; Isabella Privitera, Henrietta Lacks Health and Bioscience High School; Melanie Stewart, American Massage Therapy Association, Washington Chapter; and Mark Allen, Massage Envy Owners Cooperative.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.