



Business League for Massage Therapy & Bodywork (BLMTB)

PO Box 882 · Roundup, MT 59072
www.blmtb.org email: info@blmtb.org

Agriculture
~~SENATE BUSINESS & INDUSTRY~~
REPORT NO. 49
DATE 1/5/05
BILL NO. SB 22

January 3, 2005

To: Senate Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Committee

Re: SB 22 - Equine Massage Support

Dear Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

We are writing on behalf of the Business League for Massage Therapy and Bodywork, a Montana-based 501(c)(6) non-profit professional advocacy group. Members of our group include human massage therapists as well as equine and animal massage therapists.

We are writing to support SB 22, the Equine Massage Bill, even though our group had nothing to do with the formulation or origination of the original bill.

Although we can support the bill as is, changes should be made to better reflect the profession and the intent of the bill. Those two changes are included at the end of this letter.

We support this bill and its intention to clarify that equine massage should not be limited to nor controlled by the veterinarians for the following reasons:

1. The techniques are non-invasive, and therefore do not require the training nor expertise of veterinarians to perform or supervise - just as human massage is not and should not be controlled by the Board of Medicine.
2. Veterinarians typically do not receive training in these techniques. This could be harmful to the animal massage profession, as these techniques have wide applicability; and due to lack of knowledge, veterinarians could deny access when it should actually be available.
3. The consumer would actually be harmed, not helped, should the veterinarians exert control over equine massage: since few veterinarians perform these services nor have an interest in supervising it, it would be much harder to obtain, and the cost of the service would be dramatically increased.
4. It could put many, if not all, of those currently practicing out of business.
5. Nothing in this bill precludes veterinarians or their agents from performing these services.

Possible changes to the bill:

1. **Eliminate the definition.** Completely Strike Page 1, Lines 16 & 17 AND on Page 3, Line 7: Following: "(9)" Strike: "The activity known and designated as"

The definition is not necessary. In occupational statutes that include an exemption of a profession, that particular profession is not defined in the context of that statute. For example, the practice of massage therapy, nor massage, is defined in the physical therapy statutes, yet this practice is exempted in the physical therapy statute.

The current definition is incomplete. We are very uncomfortable with the inclusion of a definition that is currently limited to human based technique. There are practitioners that have developed animal massage techniques that have never touched a human, nor taken human based courses.

- 2. **Include all animal massage:** on Page 3, Line 7: Strike "equine" and insert: "animal".
 This bill should not be limited to one small area of animal massage. The techniques and principles apply to all. The techniques are non-invasive for other animals as well and the bill should be amended to reflect that.

We understand that the veterinarians might be concerned that the health, safety and welfare of the animal should be protected. If this is of concern, we could also support an amendment that includes a requirement that an owner sign a disclosure form that informs them of the services to be provided and the training of the provider so that the owner is a fully informed consumer. Language for such an amendment has been forwarded to Senator Laible.

We appreciate your time, energy and effort expended on this bill, and would encourage you to support SB 22.

Sincerely,

The BLMTB Board of Directors

Vianna R. Myles

Contact: 406-323-3406

Vianna Rose Myles

Paige Asten

Contact: 406-287-5670

Paige Asten

Deborah A. Kimmet

Contact: 415-585-3656

Deborah A. Kimmet