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The Honorable Representative Brenda Landwehr  
Chairperson of the House Committee of  
Health and Human Services  
State Capital  
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I have been a massage therapist in Kansas for 29 years. I am writing to state I strongly oppose the massage therapy licensure bill (HB2564) that has been recently introduced. I believe this bill is unneeded, unwarranted, and lacks support of many massage therapists and their clients. I am particularly concerned, as I have been throughout the history of this bill's making, about the incredible number of therapists who have no idea that this bill, which will impact their businesses and livelihoods, has been presented. The proponents of this bill have yet to have made any good faith efforts to educated practitioners outside the memberships of the three major professional organizations in this state of their intentions or of this bill.

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Massage as a profession has been practiced in this state for well over 40 years and has managed to grow, expand, and become far more sophisticated without regulation. Education opportunities were sparse at best, with only a few classes taught here and there; now there are multiple schools available within the state and no program has been under 500 hours since 2004. All education classes in the state now must be taken through entities accredited by the Board of Regents.

Massage as a profession is a hard task master. In order to succeed, you must be truly good and sound in all aspects of the practice, and have the ability and skills to win the trust, confidence, and approval of clients – or face failure. Massage as a practice tends to regulate itself in this regard. Despite all the excellent training out there to be had, the average professional life of a massage therapist is still only seven years. An increasingly savvy and sophisticated public looks

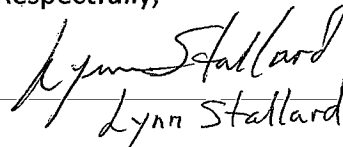
for well trained practitioners as well as those good/strong recommendations and reputations. Right now, you as a citizen have the right to choose a therapist based on your own criteria. I fear that in a few years time, that will not be the case.

The proponents of this bill would have you believe this bill has a generous grandfathering clause. At first read, this appears to be so, but on closer examination, you will find that a board, made up primarily of members of ONE entity's choosing, may establish additional requirements for license renewal which provide evidence of continued competency.

This one sentence opens the door of those of us who are grandfathered in to be denied renewal of our licenses until we pass "additional requirements". I am left to wonder the probable scope and intent of these future requirements, and their impact on the economic lives of the "grandfathered". If I am once deemed competent enough for licensure, complete my CEU's, have my liability insurance in hand, have paid my fees, why then should I have to complete additional requirements after the fact?

This grandfathering clause is a ruse, and a sham. I not only oppose it, I am deeply offended by it. Any massage therapist having an active and established therapy practice is already providing evidence of continued competency. I believe they should be allowed to continue to work without this unnecessary regulation, and I urge you to reject this bill for licensure of massage therapists. I thank you for listening to me and welcome any questions by the committee.

Respectfully,

  
Lynn Stallard