

Good afternoon Chairman Crum and Committee Members,

My name is Marla Hieger. I am the Government Relations Chair and Immediate Past President of the American Massage Therapy Association - Kansas Chapter. We have 250 plus active members and we support House Bill 2187.

Thank you for considering the licensure of massage therapists in Kansas through House Bill 2187. Kansas is one of the last 6 states not requiring licensure for our profession.

I live in Wamego and have had an active practice there for 7 years. I have been practicing for 9 years. I am Nationally Certified and believe in high standards for my profession.

I recognize there are other qualified and skilled massage therapists in the room who may not support licensure. I have met with them on this issue and understand their opposition to licensure. However, I believe there is a serious public need for the licensing of massage therapists. Today, in Kansas there are no entry –level standards for our profession. Anyone can offer massage therapy without training or understanding of the need to know contraindications to offer massage therapy.

Currently, there is no avenue for our citizens to file a complaint – except through our court systems. Our local city officials are burdened with the oversight of our profession which is timely and costly when health professions are usually licensed through the state. Licensure of our profession will protect the public from harm or potential harm and offer them an appropriate avenue to file a complaint should that need arise.

Our professional associations require standards and ethical behavior for our continued membership – however they cannot protect our public through a peer review process as their only authority would be to remove our membership - not stop us from practicing.

With licensure there will be a defining of entry level massage therapy education, appropriate continued education for re-licensure, and state required standard of practice and ethics. This will assure protection for our clients and they can then know that they will receive safe and effective massage therapy, and we as therapists – citizens too- will also be protected.

I stand before you today for myself and my membership to ask if you will support our licensure bill, House Bill 2187. In my business I do not want too much state regulation and control. I want to keep the costs low and create a bare minimum of standards to protect both the public and my business.

Thank you for your time. I am available for questions that you may have. I will answer them to the best of my ability.