



February 11, 2013

Re: Written Testimony regarding House Bill No. 2187 “the massage therapist licensure act”

Chairman Crum and members of the Health and Human Services Committee

In consideration of the proposed legislative bill 2187 I believe it is important for the committee to hear from the largest employer of massage therapists in the state (as well as nationally).

Simply put, Massage Envy wholeheartedly supports the proposed legislation. As a brand, Massage Envy has very well established standards for any potential massage therapist applying to work with our company. Those standards are very much like the standards established in the proposed bill.

As a company, Massage Envy certainly didn't need to take on its own standards for massage therapists and in fact one could argue that we would have been better off, where allowed by the lack of licensing standards, to hire anyone who simply wanted to be a massage therapist. These standards were put in place by the brand founders because they wanted clients of Massage Envy to know that:

1. We employed qualified people to provide therapeutic massage services
2. They would be as safe as we as a company could make it for them (through background check requirements)
3. The only services we provided were for therapeutic benefit
4. To minimize the risk of injury from massage the minimum educational standards for a Massage Envy therapist were set at 500 hours (the same as this legislation contemplates)
5. Our therapists are insured for malpractice to provide an even greater level of protection for the consumer

These standards work – Massage Envy as a brand averages over 1.3 million hours of massage per month and has an incident rate* of less than 0.00016% of all services. *(this is a claim of injury or misconduct)

Kansas consumers deserve this same level of protection no matter where or from whom they receive massage therapy.

Others may argue that regulation of the industry will weaken small business growth at a time when employment and business growth are key focuses for the legislature. I would argue that the lack of state wide licensing has significantly limited our company and others like us from growing in Kansas because finding therapists who meet our standards is difficult in a state where no standards are required.

Current practitioners, who may be great massage therapists due to their years of experience, simply cannot be employed by us because they do not meet our standards. Once state standards are in place, our brand will be far better positioned to serve more people with massage therapy as the pool of qualified therapists in the market grows.

Some statistics for Kansas:

Massage Envy currently has 8 locations open in Kansas with a 9th location opening in Wichita in early April.

In Kansas we currently employ over 200 massage therapists

In January we performed 11, 126 hours of massage in Kansas

Development plans (provided we have therapists) for Kansas includes a minimum of 6 more locations in the next 3 years. Each location will employ about 20 people at startup and grow to around 40 employees in around 18 months. 240 new jobs may not seem like much, but these are stable, real jobs in the state of Kansas.

State licensing of massage therapists will not inhibit the growth of small business. The generous grandfathering in this bill will provide a path to licensing that any current practitioners should be able to achieve. I applaud the writers of the bill for providing that opportunity to currently practicing therapist; we agree that legislation should not have the unintended consequence of causing small businesses to fail. With the provisions built in to this bill, there is no reason current businesses shouldn't be able to easily comply.

Massage therapy has seen a dramatic shift in the last ten to fifteen years toward the legitimate therapeutic service that it is. In 2003 thirty (30) states regulated and licensed massage therapists, today that number stands at forty-five (45) states. State licensing by the state of Kansas will add the legitimacy massage therapy needs to continue that shift in the minds and hearts of the citizens of Kansas.

Thank you for your time and effort on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Les Snyder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Les" and last name "Snyder" clearly distinguishable.

Les Snyder

Massage Envy

Kansas City Regional Developer

402-618-3003