

May 23, 2021

The Honorable Dick Stein, Chair
House Commerce and Labor Committee
Ohio State Legislature
77 South High Street, 12th Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

RE: HB 81 to revise laws governing massage establishments / massage therapy

Dear Chairman Stein and members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of myself and in support of other Certified Trager® Practitioners in the state of Ohio who may be negatively affected by HB 81 as it is currently written. I have had an active *Trager* practice in Ohio for over thirty years, was asked to present this work to medical students studying complimentary care, and have worked with clients who were referred by their physicians.

The *Trager* Approach uses movement education to help individuals re-discover the feeling of inner quiet and self-awareness that empowers them to find greater ease in movement and improved quality of life. Some of the work involves touch and use of a massage table. The most important part of *Trager* is the tool kit the Practitioner provides to the client to discover their own patterns, explore different ways of doing things, and integrate what works well for them individually.

I fully support the intent of this bill to better regulate massage therapy as a profession and curb illegal activities associated with illicit establishments. However, I am very concerned that the broad definition of massage that is proposed could be interpreted to include *Trager* Practitioners as massage therapists.

The *Trager* Approach is not part of massage therapy and is not recognized as such by massage therapy programs. Mandatory massage licensure would mean additional time and expense for the *Trager* Practitioners, and in some cases, travel to an appropriately accredited massage school. The *Trager* certification program includes in person, hands on training as well as supervised and documented practice sessions and tutorials both prior to and after certification. Continuing Education is required for the first ten years of practice.

I am adding my voice to those requesting an amendment to this bill providing appropriate exemptions for non-massage professions. Similar exemption language is used in 14 other states where *Trager* is specifically exempted from massage regulation by name: Colorado, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon and Virginia. Additionally, this language is supported by national American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) policy, as well as the Federation of Therapeutic Massage, Bodywork and Somatic Practices Organizations (federationmbs.org).

For movement-education based practices, such as the *Trager* Approach, Feldenkrais and Somatic Education, I am requesting approval of the proposed amendment below to be placed in Sec. 4731.15 (F):

(F) The following persons are not required to hold a license to practice massage therapy issued under this chapter:

.....

(5) A person who:

(a) uses touch, words, and directed movement to deepen awareness of existing patterns of movement as well as to suggest new possibilities of movement; provided that their services are not designated or implied to be massage or massage therapy.

(b) and is recognized by or meets the established standards of either a professional organization or credentialing body that represents or certifies the respective practice based on a minimum level of training, demonstration of competency, and adherence to ethical standards

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Anna Marie Bowers

cc: Jim Noriega, Chair, USTA Law & Legislation Committee