

Sonia V. Buhner-Bowen

I'm writing in support of the US Trager Association to oppose legislation that would prevent certified Trager practitioners from practicing without massage licenses in Ohio.

I believe that I am the most recently certified Trager Practitioner in Ohio, having completed a comprehensive training in December 2020. Cumulatively, I have more than ten years of training and experience that prepares me perfectly to do this work, which is quite different from massage.

I have a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Ohio State University (Humanities/Philosophy, 1995). I have also been a yoga teacher for over 15 years. I received all my yoga teacher training at Yoga On High, in Columbus Ohio, which has rightfully earned the highest reputation for excellence in training teachers in well-developed, rigorous programs. I completed a year-long 200hr basic Hatha yoga teacher training program in 2005, a 3-year long 500hr. advanced yoga teacher training in 2012, the Urban Zen Integrative Therapy training in 2015 (ask Congressman Tim Ryan, OH-13 about Urban Zen at Yoga On High) and the Prenatal Yoga Teacher Training shortly thereafter.

In every training program I have ever undertaken, including Trager, and in every moment of my work, ethical practice has played a vital role. I have never caused harm in my work and I have brought benefit to many students over the years.

Both Yoga and the Trager Approach help people connect with their bodies, calm their nervous systems and relieve pain and stress. My reasons for teaching and touching another person in Trager are clear and the exact same as they are in yoga. There are four clear reasons why I would touch someone and it is always with permission and with the lightest amount needed to be successfully informative: I teach and touch to bring awareness to an area that is holding tension (grounding awareness), to indicate direction of movement (elongation), to help a student learn healthy alignment (balancing internal and external rotation, flexion and extension, etc.) and to learn new possibilities for mindful body awareness and movement within a safe range for that specific individual (overcoming habitual holding).

I was a stay-at-home mom from April 1998 until January, 2014. My Trager certification is part of my business plan, doing honorable and meaningful work that truly benefits others, to earn a living for myself and my children beyond my divorce, finalized in 2017. I am not a massage therapist. I do not have (or want) that training. If that licensure were required for me to continue the valuable work that I am well-trained, well-equipped and well-prepared to do, it would be resource-prohibitive for me.

I hope that you will see the value of the Trager Approach independently of the work of Massage therapy and grant an exception from this bill. Thank you for giving your valuable time and attention to this important matter!