

Deborah Hitt, Executive Director  
Reflexology Certification Institute  
Ohio Senate Health Committee  
Senate Bill 55  
March 3, 2021

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Minority Member Antonio, my name is Debbie Hitt and I am a National Board Certified Reflexologist and reflexology educator. My life's work is sharing reflexology with my clients and students. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 55.

The Reflexology Certification Institute and reflexology industry broadly support the objective of this legislation to combat bad actors using the guise of massage to conduct criminal activity and engage in the horrors of human trafficking. Thank you to the sponsors of the legislation and the stakeholders for finding a balance in vigorously advancing the fight against human trafficking while also providing the legitimate businesses are not unnecessarily forced to close in Ohio.

The scope of reflexology is limited to hands, feet, and outer ears. Our clients are fully clothed with the exception of socks and shoes. No lotions or oils are directly applied to the client's skin in a reflexology session. Reflexologists serve their clients holistically, using focused techniques that many individuals undergoing chemotherapy and hospice treatments find beneficial for relaxation and pain management.

I have been studying reflexology since 2001 and am a National Board Certified Reflexologist through the American Reflexology Certification Board. My colleagues and I invest in reflexology education every year. I began teaching in 2012 as the Executive Director of the Reflexology Certification Institute and have been so excited and amazed at the power of reflexology and the transformation of my students. The Reflexology Certification Institute is registered with the Ohio State Board of Career Colleges and as such, is subject to the state regulations and various renewal processes. Three reflexology schools are currently registered with the Ohio State Board of Career Colleges. At the Reflexology Certification Institute, the goal is to provide the highest quality of reflexology education and to prepare our students to sit for the national exam.

Thank you to Senator Brenner bringing together the stakeholders on this issue going as far back as 2018 to ensure that all voices were heard on this policy proposal. Without the thoughtful consideration of the sponsor and the interested parties, reflexology practitioners and educators would have lost their ability to work in the state. In its current form, the bill clarifies that nationally certified reflexologists and reflexology students may continue to work in Ohio.

I thank the sponsor and the stakeholders for their efforts to hold bad actors accountable and prevent human trafficking while allowing safe and lawful small businesses to continue to operate in Ohio. Thank you to the members of the committee for your consideration and for the opportunity to provide testimony in support for this meaningful legislation.