

March 6, 2021

To: The Honorable Stephen A. Huffman, Chair, Senate Health Committee
Ohio State Legislature, 1 Capitol Square, Ground Floor
Columbus, OH 43215

Regarding: Please Amend SB 55

Dear Chair Huffman and members of the Committee:

I am concerned that SB 55 could affect my right to practice the Feldenkrais Method® of somatic education (movement education) in Ohio. I have been certified annually by the Feldenkrais Guild of North America since 2001, staying current with continuing education requirements for annual re-certification. It is fundamental to the practice of the Feldenkrais Method that manual contact has the purpose of directing the student's attention to details and to possibilities in their movements. There is some similarity to how touch might be used in teaching dance, although the Feldenkrais Method® is informative, but not corrective.

In most of the states that regulate massage therapy, there are explicit exemptions of Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teachers from massage therapy and bodywork licensure requirements. The Feldenkrais Guild of North America has had and will continue to enforce effective regulation of professional and ethical standards of practice by its members. These apply equally to work done with individual clients and with groups of clients. Working with groups (having 'classes') is a very important part of my work and it is essentially the same as work done with individuals. I think this highlights the fact that massage is something very different.

An important part of my work is a class I've been teaching for 8 years now at The Cleveland Institute of Music. These Awareness Through Movement® lessons help the young musicians enrich their experience of qualities and possibilities in their movement, helping them get more benefit from their instrumental instruction. Increased awareness also helps them to safely maintain their regime of long hours of practice. The school and these students are very clear that the Feldenkrais Method is not massage or therapy, nor is it competing with them. The students learn observational skills that help them both in the practice room and on stage.

I hope you will amend HB 81 to add an exemption for people who practice movement education and who also meet and adhere to the training, competency and ethical standards of their respective professional organizations. I am encouraged by the exemption that is already included for Reflexology and reflexologists. I welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,
Russell Hall, GCFT

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