

Suzanne Marshall
Ohio Senate Health Committee
May 19, 2021
Senate Bill 55 - Interested Party

Chairman Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio and members of the Senate Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity, once again, to share my testimony regarding Senate Bill 55.

On March 17th, 2021 I testified as a soon-to-be certified Feldenkrais Teacher®, but more specifically—and perhaps more importantly—as a person, as a sexual abuse survivor, that has seen their life transform as a result of this work. I was pleased to be given the opportunity to respond to your many questions regarding the Feldenkrais Method® of somatic education and the specific challenges that Senate Bill 55 could pose for people who use touch in their profession, but are not protected under the exemptions included in this bill.

Senator Antonio has proposed an amendment that would exempt Feldenkrais teachers and trainees from being regulated by the State Medical Board of Ohio.

I'm here today because I support this amendment. The new proposed definition of massage as introduced in Senate Bill 55 is so broad as to include “touch” in its list of massage techniques. Without the proper exemptions, this new definition and the massage therapy licensure requirements could be interpreted to apply to anyone who uses touch in their work with the public, regardless of the scope of their practice, or their certifications and affiliations with professional organizations.

This Saturday, May 22nd, I'll be celebrating my graduation with my colleagues, family, and friends. I've invested over 800 hours of study and thousands of dollars to complete the training needed to become a Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teacher®. For me to obtain a massage license in Ohio would require investing thousands more dollars and hundreds more hours in training that is not only expensive and time-consuming, but counter-productive to the work that I do with the Feldenkrais Method. The body of knowledge and training requirements for massage therapists are completely different than those of Feldenkrais teachers.

The Feldenkrais Method® is about embodied, experiential learning. It's about expanding awareness through moving, sensing, and feeling. Through this work, it's my intention to facilitate my clients in finding better ways of moving so that they can experience more freedom, more power, and more ease—not only in movement—but in life.

Moshe Feldenkrais once said: “Movement is life. Life is a process. Improve the quality of movement and we improve the quality of life itself.”

Thank you for hearing my testimony today.