

Sub. HB 81
JOYCE ANNE CAMERON Witness Testimony
Ohio Senate Health Committee
June 1, 2022

Chair Huffman, Vice Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on Sub House Bill 81, a bill to revise laws governing massage establishments and massage therapy.

I am writing as a certified practitioner of the Anat Baniel Method^(R) NeuroMovement^(R) (ABMNM). I have been a student of ABMNM since 2007 and have used the services of highly skilled practitioners trained in this method to help me recover from movement limitations due to cancer surgery and from a fall that resulted in knee, ankle, foot injuries. In the latter case, physical therapy made the condition worse—I went from an injured leg to a leg that became spastic.

ABMNM practitioners work from an educational paradigm, not from a therapeutic paradigm of trying “to fix” something that is wrong. Their highly individualized gentle verbal and tactile guidance helped me regain my ability to walk independently and to maintain my independence as a senior.

I support Sub HB 81, provided that subsection Sec. 4731.15. (F) (5) remains intact. This subsection was added by the House and exempts individuals who:

“(hold) a certification, based on a minimum level of training, competency demonstration, and adherence to ethical standards, from a professional association or other credentialing body to practice movement or somatic education, which includes using touch, words and directed movement, with a fully clothed client, to deepen awareness of existing patterns of movement or suggest new possibilities of movement and does not include massage therapy.”

Massage licensure requirements are not appropriate for ABMNM practitioners because ABMNM is an educational approach and it is not massage. Their training follows a curriculum that is completely different from that used in the training of massage therapists.

I understand that it may be important to update the massage therapy licensure requirements in Ohio to combat criminal activity that is taking place under the guise of legitimate massage therapy. However, if the proposed definition of massage therapy is interpreted to apply to the practice of ABMNM, it would impose unfair and unnecessary requirements on these uniquely skilled practitioners who regularly provide personalized movement education to adults and children with challenging physical and/or neurological conditions in situations where the medical community often has very little to offer.

There has been no allegation of criminal activity taking place in Ohio under the guise of the practice of ABMNM, and without the amendment to Sec. 4731.15. (F) (5), Sub. HB 81 could affect our right to practice our method of movement education.

Similar language to exempt somatic and movement educators, who do not practice massage therapy, has been adopted in other states, with the support of the American Massage Therapy Association and other members of the Federation of Therapeutic Massage, Bodywork and Somatic Practice Organizations.

Thank you for considering this request to support the current amendment to Sub. HB 81, Sec. 4731 (F) of the Ohio Revised Code.

Please feel free to contact me if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

Joyce Cameron, Anat Baniel Method NeuroMovement Practitioner

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