

Sub. HB 81  
CHERI ANN HIDY 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 on behalf of Practitioners of the Anat Baniel Method of Neuromovement (ABMNM). I am a certified practitioner of ABMNM along with three others in the state of Ohio. We use movement and attention to bring about increased awareness and improved functioning through experiential learning.

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.”

The Anat Baniel Method of NeuroMovement is effective for those seeking to improve posture, movement, and brain function. ABMNM originated as the method taught by Moshe Feldenkrais, and was evolved by Moshe’s student Anat Baniel, whose work has grown to help many children with special needs. It is held in high regard by professionals in other fields, and has been the subject of extensive research. ABMNM lessons are used by children, seniors, athletes, musicians and people with special needs and neurological conditions. Some lessons include gentle, non-invasive, and non-corrective touch, to guide attention and awareness, and to promote learning. (See [anatbanielmethod.com](http://anatbanielmethod.com))

I am in full support of HB 81 which regulates against sex trafficking within the massage industry. In the early 1990s, my fiancé at the time was attending massage school in Akron, Ohio. He was extremely professional in his practice of massage, yet he had a large uphill battle in overcoming the negative “massage parlor” stereotype within our community. Over time the perception of massage began to

shift to the truly therapeutic practice that it is. I do not wish for those gains in the massage industry to be lost to the illegal acts of sexual trafficking activity, cloaked as “massage”.

That being said, Sub HB 81, needs to pass with the exemption stated within subsection Sec. 4731.15. (F) (5). Massage licensure requirements are not appropriate for ABMNM teachers because it is an educational system and is not massage. It does not pose a risk to public safety. Certified ABMNM teachers have undertaken a minimum of 800 hours of specialized training that is completely different from the curriculum for massage therapy. Annual continuing education credits are also required to retain our certification. As an ABMNM teacher, a certified somatic movement educator, massaging a person’s body would be in violation of my training and certification. I have no desire whatsoever to massage a person’s body, and it would be inappropriate to attend massage school and acquire massage licensure to continue my ABMNM teachings.

We ABMNM practitioners understand that it is 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 our certified teachers, whose training and practice is completely different than that of massage therapists.

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

Cheri Hidy, Anat Baniel Method of NeuroMovement

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