

Re. HB81 in support of amendment

May 28, 2022

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

I am writing on behalf of the United States *Trager*® Association (USTA) and our 13 Certified *Trager*® Practitioners in Ohio. We support the passage of HB81 **as amended by the House Commerce and Labor Committee to include:**

Sec. 4731.15.

(F) The following persons are not required to hold a license to practice massage therapy issued under this chapter:

(4) A person who holds 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.

This Amendment addresses the serious concerns we originally had with HB81 (and SB55). We have always supported the massage therapy community and the intent of this bill to better regulate their profession and curb illegal activities associated with illicit establishments. However, we found ourselves in the unfortunate position of having to speak out against this bill, as it was originally introduced, because it could have been interpreted to incorrectly include Practitioners of The *Trager* Approach as massage therapists. This amendment clarifies that legitimate practitioners of movement or somatic education may practice without massage licensing, if they meet the appropriate conditions, without creating an easily exploitable “loophole”.

Our thanks to the legislators who heard our concerns, understood the issues and crafted a better bill.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to this bill passing from your Committee with this amendment. Please feel free to call on me for any information or assistance I can give.

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About the USTA and the reasons for supporting this amendment.

The *Trager*® Approach is a method of movement education that helps people find greater ease and freedom as they move through daily life. We invite you to visit our website for more information: <http://www.tragerapproach.us> The USTA is the 501(c)(6) professional membership organization that trains and certifies practitioners of the Trager Approach in the U.S. We enforce the professional and educational standards, and code of ethics for Certified Trager Practitioners and serve the professional needs of our members.

The Trager Approach is not part of massage therapy and is not recognized as such by massage therapy programs. The Trager Approach is based on an educational model and we do not use the term “massage” to describe or advertise our work. Because training in massage therapy is not relevant to or necessary for the practice of the Trager Approach, mandatory massage therapy licensing would place a burden of unnecessary training and expenses on our Practitioners. This could prevent them from practicing, stop new Practitioners from training or moving to Ohio and deprive the public of their services.

State licensing for *Trager* Practitioners is not needed or appropriate. We have successfully regulated our Practitioners by enforcing our code of ethics, professional standards and educational requirements for more than 30 years. There is no record of harm from the practice of the *Trager* Approach and there has never been a case of our Practitioners being involved in illegal activities in Ohio or any other state. Certified *Trager* Practitioners doing The *Trager* Approach are simply not a part of the problems HB81 addresses. Also, unlike the massage therapy profession, we have never asked for state licensing for our Practitioners and it is inappropriate to impose it unilaterally – especially if that license is not for what we actually practice.