

HB 81
Senate Health Committee
May 27, 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 as passed by the House, a bill to revise laws governing massage establishments and massage therapy.

I am writing on behalf of the Feldenkrais Guild of North America (FGNA). FGNA has eight Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teachers® in Ohio. Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teachers use movement and attention to bring about increased awareness and improved functioning through experiential learning.

FGNA supports Sub HB 81 as passed by the House. The bill now includes an amendment to subsection 4731.15 (F), adding an exemption for 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 closed client, to deepen awareness of existing patterns of movement or suggest new possibilities of movement and does not include massage therapy.”

It’s important that this exemption remain in the bill. We 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, but there have been no allegations or examples of criminal activity taking place under the guise of the practice of the Feldenkrais Method.

The Feldenkrais Method is an educational system and is not massage or bodywork. It is effective for individuals seeking to improve posture, movement and function. It is held in high regard by professionals in other fields, and has been the subject of extensive research.¹ Feldenkrais® Awareness Through Movement® classes and Functional Integration® 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 promote learning. (See <http://www.feldenkrais.com>)

FGNA and its predecessor have developed and enforced internationally recognized accreditation and certification standards for the Feldenkrais Method since 1977. Only certified teachers and authorized trainees would be eligible for exemption, and eligible to use FGNA’s registered service marks, including Feldenkrais®, Feldenkrais Method® and others.

The Feldenkrais Method does not pose a risk to public safety. Guild Certified Feldenkrais Teachers have undertaken a minimum of 800 hours of specialized training that is completely different from the

curriculum for massage therapy, and Certified Awareness Through Movement Teachers have completed at least 425 training hours. Teachers are required to adhere to FGNA's Standards of Practice, Code of Professional Conduct and Grievance Protocol, and fulfill continuing competency requirements and renew certification annually.

Exemptions for the practice of the Feldenkrais Method are in effect in most states that regulate the practice of massage therapy, including Massachusetts, Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

Exemptions for movement practices similar to the one in HB 81 have 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.

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

Sincerely,



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¹ Hillier S, and Worley A. The Effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method: A Systematic Review of the Evidence. Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine. 2015, Article ID 752160. Retrieved from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1155/2015/752160>