



Business League for Massage Therapy & Bodywork (BLMTB)

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE.... February 11, 2009

Dear Colleague,

You may have gotten an email to lobby against SB 287 the Health Freedom bill. Please don't. Here's why:

1. The AMTA is the only group in the Federation that opposes health freedom bills -- because they want licensure. The national associations of Trager, Feldenkrais, Polarity, Movement Therapists, Structural Integration, Alexander Technique, and AOBTA neither actively support or oppose such legislation. When we asked the ABMP how they felt about it over a year ago, they had no position.
2. The AMTA, we believe, is confused. They think that opposing this bill will help their licensure bill pass. It won't. We have always maintained that health freedom and licensure are 2 separate issues.
3. Don't allow the AMTA to harm EVERY SINGLE other profession that is unlicensed in this state. Do Native American healers have a written code of ethics? Do they have a national certification? These are the types of practices that would be harmed if health freedom fails. We've been working closely with Native American legislators to protect the rights of all traditional cultural healers. The AMTA is under the mistaken idea that the BLMTB is the only group behind this bill. The BLMTB got the ball rolling, but the Montana Health Freedom Coalition is the group running the show. This group consists of reps from homeopathy, herbalism, BodyTalk, wellness consultants, reiki, bodywork and others.
4. The Health Freedom bill is not about licensure, it is about creating rules with appropriate public protections for practitioners so that they won't be sanctioned for practicing without a license. So, if this bill doesn't pass and licensure doesn't pass, then massage therapists will continue to be sanctioned by cosmetologists. Even if licensure does pass, there is no guarantee the cosmetologists will share that part of their scope with us. They may not. We think it's a bad idea to limit our options.
5. There are national associations like the music therapists who view this bill as an interim step to licensure. They are too small and an emerging profession that does have standards, etc. (in fact many of the supporting groups do), but can't pursue a licensure agenda at this time. They support this bill because they want their practitioners to be able to practice legally in Montana, and they will pursue licensure when they are ready. It amazes us that the AMTA wouldn't want to do the same thing, given how difficult it is to pass licensure. Please note, that if we can, we are working to amend their bill to make it acceptable to us, rather than kill it outright, which is what they are doing.
6. The AMTA has not been honest with us or with you: they told us that they had no position on the bill. "At this time, the board does not have a position due to the fact that the Montana state legislature does not have anything to compare or contrast the act to." The legislature still has nothing to compare the act to: their bill is not drafted, has not been finalized, has not been introduced. There is nothing in the public record for legislators to have anything to compare or contrast health freedom to. And they did not have the courtesy to inform us of their change in position.

In short, please support SB287 -- it is a "both - and" situation where both health freedom and licensure can exist.

It is not "either - or" as the AMTA would have you believe.

These are different bills that affect different groups of people.

Thanks for your support.

The BLMTB Board of Directors

