

March 7, 2024

Representative Joseph J. Solomon, Jr.
Chairman of the House Corporations Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Letter of Support for H7738

Dear Chairman Solomon:

Thank you for hearing my testimony tonight. My name is Cassie Rawcliffe; I am a licensed massage therapist, government relations chair and delegate for the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) RI chapter. Out of over 1,000 massage therapists statewide, the AMTA RI chapter represents over 600 members and we are in strong support of bill H7738.

The massage therapy profession has been licensed and regulated in RI since 1978. It is only appropriate that after decades of numerous placements within the RI general laws, that our statute be placed where it has always belonged; under title 5 *Businesses & Professions*.

The massage therapy profession is part of integrated healthcare and wellness and always has been, alongside many other complimentary therapies. If healthcare professions such as physical therapy, athletic training, chiropractic medicine, osteopathic medicine, acupuncture, and nursing all use massage as a modality within their authorized scope of practice, and their laws reside under title 5, then our statute belongs there too.

In September 2021, our licensing and regulatory authority, RI DOH, sent a letter to all healthcare professionals mandating them to receive a COVID vaccine. Every licensed massage therapist received that letter thereby validating that the profession was part of healthcare. For these reasons, we strongly advocate for our statute to be relocated under title 5.

The proposed amendments within the statute include the following:

- increase to educational hours from 650 to 800 hours as of 09/01/24; grandfathering in all licensees prior to 09/01/24
- amend licensure renewal from annual renewal to every two (2) years
- increase continuing education hours from six (6)/year to twenty-four (24)/every two (2) years
- amend definitions/add definitions
- clear and consistent language throughout statute
- reorganization of statute

These amendments protect the health and welfare of the public, elevates the profession/ identifies it as a healthcare profession and correctly places the statute alongside other professions. Thank you for considering my testimony and feel free to contact me with any further questions.

Sincerely,

Cassie Rawcliffe, LMT
Government Relations Chair/Delegate
AMTA RI Chapter

Cc: All members of the House Corporations Committee