



amta
american **massage therapy** association®

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House Health and Human Service Committee

Proponent on House Bill 2187

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Joseph Roth and I am Government Relations Manager with the American Massage Therapy Association. AMTA is a non-profit, professional association serving massage therapists, massage students and massage schools. The association is directed by volunteer leadership and fosters ongoing, direct member-involvement through its 51 chapters, including the Kansas Chapter. I am here today to support House Bill 2187 and the efforts of our Kansas Chapter and other massage therapy stakeholders in promoting fair, consistent and appropriate massage therapy regulation.

The need for massage therapy regulation is multifaceted. First and foremost, the licensing process we seek is the least amount of regulation to effectively protect the health, safety and welfare of citizens of Kansas. The potential for harm and client injury is real and identifiable. This potential for harm was acknowledged by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's Health Occupational Credentialing Review Committee when making the recommendation to the legislature to enact a statewide licensing process for massage therapists.

Practitioners also would benefit from a statewide licensure process. They would be assured of a statutory scope of practice that outlines what authority they have. It is only through this process that practitioners have the explicit authority to apply what they have learned and practice massage therapy.

The requirements for licensure established in this legislation are consistent with the entry-level requirements in many of the 44 states that have enacted statewide massage therapy regulation. More specifically, 42 of the 44 states require at least 500 hours of entry-level education, with 17 of these states requiring more than 500 hours of education. Additionally,



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42 of these states also require the successful completion of an approved examination in order to obtain a license. HB 2187 has those same requirements.

HB 2187 also includes very important provisions for the licensing of existing practitioners who may possess years of successful and safe experience, but may be unable to provide documentation of meeting these standards. We believe these grandfathering provisions are appropriate and have been created to ensure qualified practitioners are not put out of work or required to obtain additional education in order to continue their practice.

HB 2187 embodies the principles and values AMTA upholds, and it includes content and practice standards we believe must be part of massage licensing legislation in all states. Passage of this legislation would ensure minimum competency standards and adherence to ethical guidelines. HB 2187 will ensure that individuals have met reasonable eligibility requirements needed to practice massage therapy and that they are qualified to represent themselves to the public as massage therapists.

I would like to thank you for your consideration of this legislation that is vitally important to massage practitioners and those they serve. I would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.