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Massage Therapy Legislation Passes Senate

Passed by the Assembly in May, Assembly Bill 143 now heads to Governor for signature

Madison, Wis. – [2019 Assembly Bill 143](#) passed the Senate yesterday with broad bipartisan support on a voice vote. Introduced by Representative Joe Sanfelippo (R–New Berlin) and Senator Dale Kooyenga (R–Brookfield), the massage therapy bill was passed by the Assembly in May and now heads to Governor Tony Evers for his final approval.

Police in West Allis, New Berlin, Waukesha, and numerous other communities around Wisconsin have uncovered illegal activities taking place at massage parlors, with many serving as fronts for prostitution and human trafficking operations. Under current law, law enforcement officers are limited in what they can do when they discover massage therapy businesses operating without appropriate licenses. Presently, their only recourse is to initiate a complaint to the Department of Safety and Professional Services, which can take a considerable length of time to process. Police and local officials have asked for authority from the state to act more immediately upon discovering violations.

“Prostitution and human trafficking in massage parlors have been a growing problem here in Wisconsin. Working with local law enforcement and local city officials, we’ve authored legislation to give them the tools to be able to take more immediate action to shut down these establishments once they discover illegal activity taking place,” said Sanfelippo.

Assembly Bill 143 authorizes municipalities to pass ordinances that empower law enforcement to issue citations immediately upon discovering unlicensed individuals performing massage therapy. This process would work in conjunction with, rather than in lieu of, any investigations by DSPS into any alleged violations.

“Massage therapy is an important practice that provides countless individuals with pain and stress relief each day. I know that there are many licensed therapists working in legitimate massage therapy practices across Wisconsin. This bill is meant to support them by allowing law enforcement to shut down bad actors that can undermine faith in the legitimacy of the massage therapy profession. That’s why our bill has received broad support from the Wisconsin Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association, in addition to the backing of municipalities and law enforcement from around the state. I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for their help in enacting this important legislation, particularly Sen. Kooyenga for his hard work in seeing this bill through on the Senate side,” Sanfelippo added.

Assembly Bill 143 now heads to Governor Evers’s desk for his signature and enactment into law.

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The [15th Assembly District](#) includes most of West Allis and the Northern half of New Berlin.