



SPONSOR: Rep. B. Short & Rep. Heffernan & Rep. Smyk & Sen. McDowell & Sen. Lavelle
Reps. Briggs King, Hudson, Keeley, Paradee, Ramone, Viola, K. Williams; Sens. Delcollo, Ennis, Poore, Richardson

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
149th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 35

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 24 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO THE BOARD OF MASSAGE AND BODYWORK.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE (Three-fifths of all members elected to each house thereof concurring therein):

1 Section 1. Amend Section 5302, Title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
2 and insertions as shown by underline as follows and redesignating accordingly:

3 § 5302. Definitions.

4 The following words, terms and phrases, when used in this chapter shall have the meanings ascribed to them under
5 this section, ~~except where the context clearly indicates a different meaning:~~

6 (4) "Massage Establishment" means any place of business that offers the practice of massage and bodywork
7 and where the practice of massage and bodywork is conducted on the premises of the business, or that represents itself
8 to the public by any title or description of services incorporating the words "bodywork," "massage," "massage
9 therapy," "massage practitioner," "massagist," "masseur," "masseuse," or other words identified by the Board in
10 regulation. A place of business includes any office, clinic, facility, salon, spa, or other location where a person or
11 persons engage in the practice of massage and bodywork. The residence of a therapist or an out call location which is
12 not owned, rented, or leased by a massage therapist or massage establishment shall not be considered a massage
13 establishment, unless the location is advertised as the therapist's or establishment's place of business. The term
14 "massage establishment" shall not include physician offices, physical therapy facilities, chiropractic offices, or athletic
15 training facilities, whether or not they employ, contract with, or rent to massage therapists, or institutions of secondary
16 or higher education when massage therapy is practiced in connection with employment related to athletic teams or any
17 other business establishment licensed pursuant to another chapter of this title.

18 (8) "Professional-in-charge" means a licensee who is responsible for the operation of a massage establishment,
19 including ensuring that all employees are licensed, where required by law.

20 Section 2. Amend Section 5305, Title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
21 and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

22 § 5305. Records.

23 The Division shall keep a register of all approved applications for license as massage and bodywork therapist and
24 for certification as massage technician, all approved applications for licenses for massage establishments, and complete
25 records relating to meetings of the Board, examinations, rosters, changes and additions to the Board's rules and regulations,
26 complaints, hearings and such other matters as the Board shall determine. Such records shall be prima facie evidence of the
27 proceedings of the Board.

28 Section 3. Amend Section 5306, Title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
29 and insertions as shown by underline as follows and by redesignating accordingly:

30 § 5306. Powers and duties.

31 (a) The Board of Massage and Bodywork shall have authority to:

32 (6) Grant licenses to, and renew licenses and certifications of, all persons who meet the qualifications for
33 licensure and/or renewal of licenses; ~~and grant certificates to persons who meet the qualifications for massage~~
34 technicians; and grant licenses to, and renew licenses for, massage establishments;

35 (15) Adopt rules and regulations setting forth the requirements pertaining to the licensure, maintenance, and
36 standards of massage establishments;

37 (16) Authorize agents of the Division to inspect any massage establishment.

38 Section 4. Amend Section 5307, Title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
39 and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

40 § 5307. License; certification required.

41 (d) Massage establishment license; necessity. No person, firm, corporation, partnership, or other legal entity shall
42 operate, maintain, or use premises as a massage establishment without first having secured a massage establishment license
43 from the Board.

44 (e) Services rendered in unlicensed massage establishment, prohibition; exceptions. No person shall offer or render
45 any of the services encompassed within the definition of massage and bodywork in a place that is not licensed as a massage
46 establishment. This section shall not apply to a duly licensed massage therapist or certified massage technician who
47 practices massage or bodywork outside of a massage establishment.

48 Section 5. Amend Section 5313, title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
49 and insertions as shown by underline as follows and redesignating accordingly:

50 § 5313. Grounds for discipline.

51 (a) A practitioner licensed or certified under this chapter shall be subject to disciplinary actions set forth in § 5315
52 of this title, if, after a hearing, the Board finds that the massage and bodywork therapist or massage technician:

53 (1) Has employed or knowingly cooperated in fraud or material deception in order to acquire a license as a
54 massage and bodywork therapist or certification as a massage technician; has employed or knowingly cooperated in
55 fraud or material deception in order to acquire a massage establishment license; has impersonated another person
56 holding a license or certification, or allowed another person to use the massage or bodywork license or massage
57 technician certification, or aided or abetted a person not licensed as a massage or bodywork therapist or certified as a
58 massage technician to represent that person as a massage or bodywork therapist or massage technician;

59 (8) Has knowingly employed or cooperated in the hiring or contracting for the services of, or, as the
60 professional-in-charge of a massage establishment, leased space or otherwise entered into a contractual relationship
61 with or permitted, any unlicensed person or persons required by this chapter to hold an unrestricted license to practice
62 any of the professions regulated by this chapter; or

63 Section 6. Amend Section 5314, Title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
64 and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

65 § 5314. Complaints.

66 (a) A practitioner or member of the public desiring to file a complaint against a practitioner or licensee, massage
67 establishment, or certificate holder regulated by the Board shall file a written complaint with the Division of Professional
68 Regulation. All complaints shall be received and investigated by the Division in accordance with the procedures as
69 specified in § 8735 of Title 29. The Division shall be responsible for issuing a final written report at the conclusion of the
70 investigation.

71 (b) Those complaints involving unsanitary conditions or other conditions in any massage establishment which may
72 harm the health of any person on the premises shall be investigated by the Division of Public Health.

73 Section 7. Amend Section 5315, Title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
74 and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

75 § 5315. Disciplinary sanctions.

76 (c) In the event of a formal or informal complaint concerning the activity of a licensee, massage establishment, or
77 certificant that presents a clear and immediate danger to the public health, safety or welfare, the Board may temporarily
78 suspend the person's license or certificate, pending a hearing, upon the written order of the Secretary of State or the
79 Secretary's designee, with the concurrence of the Board chair or the Board chair's designee. An order temporarily

80 suspending a license or certificate may not be issued unless the person or the person's attorney received at least 24 hours'
81 written or oral notice before the temporary suspension so that the person or the person's attorney may file a written response
82 to the proposed suspension. The decision as to whether to issue the temporary order of suspension will be decided on the
83 written submissions. An order of temporary suspension pending a hearing may remain in effect for no longer than 60 days
84 from the date of the issuance of the order unless the temporarily suspended person requests a continuance of the hearing
85 date. If the temporarily suspended person requests a continuance, the order of temporary suspension remains in effect until
86 the hearing is convened and a decision is rendered by the Board. A person whose license or certificate has been temporarily
87 suspended pursuant to this section may request an expedited hearing. The Board shall schedule the hearing on an expedited
88 basis, provided that the Board receives the request within 5 calendar days from the date on which the person received
89 notification of the decision to temporarily suspend the person's license or certificate.

90 Section 9. Amend Section 5317, Title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
91 and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

92 § 5317. Penalties.

93 (a) A person not currently licensed as a massage or bodywork therapist or certified as a massage technician under
94 this chapter, when guilty of engaging in the practice of massage or bodywork therapy or of practicing as a massage
95 technician, or using in connection with the practitioner's own name, or otherwise assuming or using any title or description
96 conveying, or tending to convey the impression that the practitioner is qualified to practice massage or bodywork therapy,
97 or to act as a massage technician, such offender shall be guilty of a misdemeanor. Upon the first offense, the practitioner
98 shall be fined not less than \$100, nor more than \$500 for each offense. For a second or subsequent conviction, the fine shall
99 be not less than \$500, nor no more than \$1,000 for each offense. Superior Court shall have jurisdiction over all violations of
100 this chapter.

101 (b) Where a person unlawfully operates, manages, owns, or advertises for any massage establishment or place
102 where massage and bodywork services are rendered, the person shall be guilty of a class A misdemeanor, and be
103 imprisoned not more than one year or fined not more than \$2300, or both. Superior Court shall have jurisdiction over all
104 violations of this chapter.

105 Section 10. Amend Chapter 53, Title 24 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through
106 and insertions as shown by underline as follows:

107 § 5319 Qualifications of applicants for massage establishments.

108 (a) All massage establishments must be licensed pursuant to this chapter. Applications for licensure shall be
109 submitted together with the required fees set by the Division of Professional Regulation. Such fees shall approximate
110 and reasonably reflect the costs of administering this chapter.

111 (b) An application for massage establishment licensure shall identify the professional-in-charge and shall
112 include notarized acknowledgement by the person identified as the professional-in-charge. At all times, the
113 professional-in-charge shall be licensed pursuant to this chapter and shall hold a license in good standing as defined in
114 this title. A licensee may serve as professional-in-charge for only 1 establishment at any given time. The Board shall
115 be notified in writing of any change in the professional-in-charge within 10 business days of such change.

116 (c) Massage establishments shall employ only licensed massage and bodywork therapists or certified
117 massage technicians to practice massage and bodywork. A licensed massage and bodywork therapist or certified
118 massage technician shall be on the premises at all times the massage establishment is open.

119 (d) No massage establishment shall be used as or for a dormitory or place of sleep, nor shall any licensee
120 under this Chapter permit any massage establishment to be so used.

121 (e) No services shall be rendered to the public in any massage establishment except during the time that the
122 establishment is open with free access thereto by the public, during which time all portions of such establishment shall
123 be open to the inspection of any state official and to any law enforcement officer. The Board shall establish by
124 regulation the permissible operating hours of massage establishments, as well as the mechanisms to apply for a waiver
125 of such regulation.

126 (f) No professional-in-charge of a massage establishment may allow, authorize, or tolerate in his or her
127 massage establishment any activity or behavior prohibited by the laws of the State of Delaware including such laws
128 proscribing acts of or promotion of prostitution, indecent exposure, lewdness or obscenity.

129 (g) Any conviction of any crime identified in paragraph (f) of this section occurring on or in connection with
130 the massage establishment shall be grounds for revocation of the license of the establishment and no new license for
131 the operation of a massage establishment on the same premises or to the same professional-in-charge thereafter shall
132 be issued for a period of one year.

133 (h) A massage establishment license issued pursuant to this chapter shall be issued for a single, identified
134 location and is not assignable or transferable.

135 (i) A massage establishment may not advertise for sexually explicit services or engage in any sexually
136 explicit advertising. Any such advertising will be imputed to the professional-in-charge and is grounds for discipline
137 of the massage establishment license and the professional-in-charge's license.

138 (j) The Board may establish by regulation additional requirements and prohibitions regarding the operation of
139 massage establishments.

140 § 5320. Unlicensed practice violations; penalties.

141 (a) A placard, as provided by the Attorney General, shall be prominently displayed at all entrances of
142 establishments that have failed to obtain a valid license or have a license that is suspended, revoked, or expired.

143 (b) Whenever, in the judgment of the Division, any person has engaged in or is about to engage in any acts or
144 practices which constitute or will constitute a violation of any provision of this chapter or any rule, regulation or order
145 issued thereunder, the Division may request the Attorney General to make application to the Court of Chancery for an
146 order enjoining such acts or practices or for an order directing compliance and, upon a showing by the Division that
147 such person has engaged or is about to engage in any such acts or practices, a permanent or temporary injunction,
148 restraining order or other order may be granted.

149 (c) The unlawful operation, management, ownership, or advertisement of any massage establishment or place
150 where massage and bodywork services are rendered is hereby deemed a public nuisance.

151 § 5321 Inspections.

152 (a) An agent of the Division may enter and inspect during business hours, without prior notice, any massage
153 establishment.

154 (b) An agent of the Division acting pursuant to subsection (a) of this section: may inspect and copy records of
155 the establishment; may inspect within reasonable limits and in a reasonable manner the premises and all pertinent
156 equipment; and may inspect other things therein, including records, files, papers, and facilities relating to violation of
157 this chapter.

158 Section 11. Severability Clause. If any section, part, phrase, or provision of this Act or the application thereof be
159 held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall be confined in its operation to the section, part,
160 phrase, provision, or application directly involved in the controversy in which such judgment shall have been rendered and
161 shall not affect or impair the validity of the remainder of this Act or the application thereof.

162 Section 12. This Act shall be effective 180 days after enactment.

SYNOPSIS

This bill sets forth a framework for the licensing, regulation and inspection of business establishments that provide massage and bodywork services. This bill places oversight of any business offering massage services in the hands of the Board of Massage and Bodywork. Specifically, it defines “massage establishment,” and grants authority to the Board of Massage and Bodywork to grant or deny licensure of such establishments and adopt regulations pertaining to the licensure, maintenance and standards to be applied to such establishments. It provides authority for the Division or Professional Regulation to inspect such establishments without any advance notice or concurrent criminal investigation. This bill imposes criminal and civil penalties, including injunctive relief, fines, and imprisonment, for the unlicensed practice of massage and bodywork and the operation of an unlicensed massage establishment.

