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August 11, 2008

Governor Michael F. Easley
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301
Fax: (919) 733-2120

Dear Governor Easley,
Associated Bodywork & Massage Professionals (ABMP) is a professional membership association founded in 1987 to provide massage, bodywork, and somatic therapies practitioners with professional services, information, and public and regulatory advocacy. ABMP is devoted to promoting ethical practices, protecting the rights of practitioners, and educating the public regarding the benefits of massage and bodywork. Its current membership totals more than 64,000, including more than 1,000 members in North Carolina. Members must meet strict educational requirements and adhere to a published code of ethics.

ABMP strongly encourages you to sign SB 1314, which amends the current Massage and Bodywork Therapy Practice Act, into law. SB 1314 amends the current Act in a few meaningful ways, including one that is critical. Language in the current statute only allows the board to accept an exam that has been approved by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA is an independent organization that accredits only voluntary certification organizations. The only exam currently recognized as meeting a qualification for licensure is a private certification exam offered by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork.

The North Carolina Board of Massage and Bodywork Therapy has been a member of the Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB: www.fsmtb.org) since its inception in 2005. With more states regulating massage therapy, the FSMTB was formed to facilitate communication between regulatory boards. The member boards came to the conclusion early on to adopt the model used by other professions, such as the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, and offer an entry-level competence exam with accountability to the regulatory boards. The regulatory boards have no control over the decisions of a private certification agency.

The FSMTB now offers a licensing exam for the profession, the Massage and Bodywork Licensing Exam (MBLEx). As a member of the FSMTB, the North Carolina board can demand accountability and have direct input to the policies of the MBLEx, as member boards essentially own the exam. It is not surprising that the board would want to change the language in statute to accommodate this new exam that they have control over. The language in SB 1314 does not exclude other exam options, but merely amends the current language to more general criteria, essentially recognized psychometric principles and standards instead of NCCA - accredited.

ABMP encourages you to sign SB 1314 into law. We believe that both the public and massage therapists will be better served by the amendments advocated for by the state regulatory board charged with the

responsibility of oversight of those regulated under this Act. Thank you for your consideration. If you have further questions please contact me at jean@abmp.com, or 800-458-2267 extension 645.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jean Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jean Robinson
Government Relations Director