Legislative Advocacy Email

We encourage you to use this easy-to-follow advocacy email template to voice your opinion on the potential sunsetting of CAMTC and establishment of statewide massage licensure and a state regulatory board. Below is sample language provided by ABMP that you are free to use as your own. You can include whichever of the following points you are most passionate about. Feel free to alter the writing and make it your own; legislators will be more receptive to letters that do not all look the same.

Make sure to fill in the areas marked in red at the top and bottom of the template with your contact information. There are five fields where you must insert your name, phone number, or email.

We suggest you include brief anecdotes from your personal experiences detailing how CAMTC has failed to serve you as a massage therapist and the industry. Details about slow response times, delays in issuing certifications, and other issues you have had with CAMTC are helpful in illustrating to legislators the issues their constituents experience every day with this organization.

Above all, we urge you to be polite and brief in your communications with legislators. They are trying to help us, so we want to make sure we are respectful of their time and efforts.

Save your letter as a PDF and submit it to the Business and Professions Committee via the position letter portal linked here. You will submit your letter in response to AB 1504. Select the stance labeled "other." Then type in the subject listed below and attach your saved letter after you have edited it to include your contact information and make any other changes you want. There is an FAQ link on the page if you need further instruction on how to submit your letter.

Template

To:

From: Your Name, youremail@youremail.com Subject:

Please vote to sunset and replace CAMTC Dear

Assemblymembers and Senators,

My name is Your Name, and I am a California massage therapist/instructor/school owner. It is time for California to sunset the California Massage Therapy Council (CAMTC) and join the majority of the country in establishing statewide licensure for massage therapy. CAMTC is no longer capable of serving the massage therapy industry, massage professionals, or the people of California. I urge you to vote in favor of a sunset of CAMTC and establishing of a state board of massage therapy.

Here are some of the issues facing the massage therapy industry in California that statewide licensure would help solve:

Law Enforcement and Combating Illegal Activity

CAMTC is currently failing California in its fight against human trafficking and illicit activity in the massage industry. California ranks No. 1 in the country for the number of illicit massage businesses (IMBs), and No. 2 in the country for IMBs per capita. CAMTC's claim that they are the gold standard in fighting human trafficking and IMBs is demonstrably false.

Contrary to what you may have been told, statewide licensure will not impede law enforcement in their efforts to combat criminals using massage therapy as a cover for their illicit businesses. A state massage therapy board would have the same authority to revoke a license and take action against bad actors as CAMTC does. In fact, as a state regulatory agency, this proposed board would have *more* enforcement authority than CAMTC currently has, allowing them to take swifter and harsher action against IMBs and unlicensed practitioners. Licensure dramatically simplifies criminal investigations and law enforcement. It tightens, and in many cases eliminates, the loopholes for bad actors who attempt to opt out of credentialing and oversight. It creates a universal statewide database listing adjudicated cases of massage therapy malpractice and lowers the risk of potential harm to consumers.

Due process

As CAMTC is not a state agency, due process rights are not afforded to certificate holders. A licensing board would, like all other executive agencies, be required to give individuals due process rights in disciplinary cases. Currently, CAMTC can punish certificate holders, schools, and businesses with no oversight or objectivity. This must end. This process leaves the state open to liability and unfairly picks winners and losers in the massage therapy industry. Licensure provides for government oversight which affords legal due process in the licensure, compliance, and disciplinary processes.

Transparency

There would be greater transparency under a state Board. Legal protections such as the APA, Fair Chance Licensing Act, Public Records Act, and State Auditor and Finance investigations would apply to a massage board. As it stands, CAMTC acts with relative impunity, hiding operations and finances behind closed doors. Its boasts of unparalleled transparency are blatant misdirects, with “awards” that in fact come from an organization that requires a simple self-report with no fact-checking to ensure its claims are true.

Patchwork regulation

Since CAMTC’s inception, haphazard local regulation of massage therapy has steadily increased. County and municipal regulation comes in all shapes and sizes. Almost half the state now requires CAMTC certification, making the “voluntary” component to CAMTC certification moot. Some municipalities require superfluous background checks that certified massage therapists already have and charge duplicative fees. Some cities require certification with the city as a massage therapist, others regulate licensure *and* massage establishment permits. Some cities exempt sole practitioners, others require establishment permits for all, even those operating alone out of their house. This creates a confusing meshwork of regulations across the state, making it expensive, complicated, and even impossible for many massage therapists to practice in more than one city or county, which limits their earning potential and client base. Statewide licensure would make all massage therapists practicing in the state subject to the same laws, allowing them to practice across city and county lines without confusion and duplicative fees.

Mandatory licensure would outline a scope of practice and standard of education that all massage therapists across California must adhere to. Currently, some parts of the state require certification and education standards while some require none. This leaves the public guessing at the qualifications of any massage therapist whose services they employ. Under a statewide licensure system, there would be no more patchwork of skill levels across the state, as there is now, which erodes public trust and risks public health.
By statute, no one would be able to call themselves a massage therapist or similar term unless they were licensed, educated, and vetted. Counties and municipalities would retain authority by being able to require

proof of licensure to issue business licenses and being able to shut down businesses that employ “practitioners” without the proper credentials.

Cost

Some California cities charge massage therapists fees of $50 per year, others $800 per year. This is in addition to the egregious $300 certification fee massage therapists must remit to CAMTC every two years. CAMTC has steadily raised prices for certificate holders, despite the fact that CAMTC’s coffers are already overflowing.
Most massage therapists make around $30,000 per year. It is unfairly burdensome for CAMTC to charge one of the highest fees in the country for massage therapists to receive a certification that only has value in half the state and zero value anywhere else in the country. It is insulting for the head of CAMTC to be making $750,000, more than three times the annual salary of the governor, while nickel-and-diming massage therapists who are just trying to keep the lights on.

Reciprocity

The massage therapy boards in other states struggle immensely when trying to help massage therapists who move from California and seek licensure by reciprocity. Since the standards for California certification are lower than those for licensure in almost every other state, many California-certified massage therapists are unable to transfer their credentials to another state when they move. Not only are California education standards lower, certificate holders do not have to pass an exam; a standard among other states to earn a license. This means their chosen profession, their passion for helping others, and their livelihood are in jeopardy if they move to another state. Oftentimes, practitioners are unaware and surprised they do not carry a credential that is not transferable. The outcome is paying for additional education and testing to have a chance of legally practicing elsewhere. Statewide licensure would streamline the licensure by reciprocity process—both for massage therapists moving out of California and those moving into California.

The Request

I support sunsetting CAMTC and suggest a transition to a statewide licensure model, similar to what is in place in 45 other states. California massage therapists and national industry organizations like ABMP and AMTA are willing to work with the legislature to write a massage therapy practice act based on the best practices of massage therapy boards in other states. We want lower fees, a uniform scope of practice, a standardized education and testing model, and true due process and board transparency. These are objectives CAMTC has proven itself unwilling to and incapable of providing to California massage therapists.

I urge you to support massage therapists and protect the California massage therapy industry by voting in favor of sunsetting CAMTC and replacing the current regulatory model with statewide licensure. I am available for further discussion and can be reached by email at youremail@youremail.com or by phone at 555-555-5555.

Regards,

Your name (and home or business address, if you feel so inclined)