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National Qigong Association

Attention: Joint Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure Committee

Subject: MA Bills S221 and H350 titled "An Regulating Alternative Healing Therapies"

The National Qigong Association stands in **Opposition** to MA S221 and H350.

Qigong is categorized as Complementary Integrative Medicine by the National Institutes for Health (NIH) and not as *Alternative Medicine* as reflected in the MA bills. Furthermore, the NIH, categorized Qigong along with Tai Chi and Yoga and not massage as part of their breakdown of Complementary Integrative Medicine. This is an important legal determination as it is not in any way, a subset of Massage, Bodywork or Alternative Medicine as noted by the NIH.

Qigong has a history going back some 5,000 years and it is one of the five co-equal branches of Chinese medicine: Qigong, acupuncture, herbs, dietetics and medical massage. Today in China, Chinese and Western medicine are practiced side by side in hospitals.

The exclusion of Yoga within these bills raises questions as to the true purpose of this proposed legislation. Yoga and Reiki were exempted from senate bill S905 filed 19 January 2017 by Senator Montigny. Qigong and Yoga share a historical past along with shared practices and as such, Qigong and Reiki, like Yoga, should be exempted from these bills based on previous track record alone.

Requiring holistic practitioners to answer to massage therapists about a profession they don't know about nor do, has no rational basis. It's like forcing an electrician to join the carpenters' union¹

The implementation of an Advisory Council to represent alternative professions that answers to a board of registration to which they don't have an official say or, are not represented in an equitable basis on said board, is another example of a lack of respect of the professions they want to regulate.

Furthermore, the reference to human trafficking as a catalyst for this 5th attempt at legislating Holistic professions, has no merit what so ever. No data exists supporting that argument, None! Nevertheless, data does exist implicating the massage industry to Human Trafficking. In fact, as reported by the Boston Globe on March 18, 2019, "licensing requirements have not eradicated prostitution and sex trafficking at illicit massage parlors. Still true today in 2021.

"The massage folks are trying to deflect blame by painting all of their perceived competitors with the trafficking brush and then (as a remedy) having massage therapists-of all people-take control of these other complementary/alternative modalities. This is upside down, backwards and totally illogical"¹

The branches of Qigong which include, Preventive, Martial, Religious and Clinical Qigong, have not been taken into consideration in any of these attempts to legislate Qigong and the unintended consequences of licensing these practices should be obvious from a legal perspective.

The NQA **Supports** bills H2343 (16 co-sponsors) and S1380 (12 co-sponsors) and hopes the Joint Committee will again, not allow this attempted power grab to continue. Bills S221 and H350 have a total of 6 co-sponsors combined. The lack of support for S221 and H350, in both chambers, is an indication of the irresponsible and illogical attempt by AG Maura Healy, Sen. Montigny and the massage lobby to affect other professions without cause.

The NQA always welcomes any dialogue which will improve access to the benefits of Qigong.

Sincerely,

Thomas Bowman
NQA Legislation Committee Chair

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