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SENATE BILL 5621

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State of Washington

57th Legislature

2001 Regular Session

By Senators Rasmussen, Sheahan, Shin, Roach, Constantine, Patterson, Prentice, Thibaudeau and Kohl-Welles

Read first time 01/29/2001. Referred to Committee on Agriculture & International Trade.

1 AN ACT Relating to animal therapy; amending RCW 18.92.060 and  
2 18.108.010; and creating new sections.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature recognizes that under  
5 current state law, animal massage therapists and animal massage  
6 practitioners cannot operate independently of licensed veterinarians.  
7 The legislature further recognizes that massage therapists and physical  
8 therapists practicing on people have the legal authority to operate  
9 independently of licensed physicians and these massage and physical  
10 therapists have contributed significantly to our welfare. Therefore,  
11 it is the legislature's intent to give licensed animal massage  
12 therapists and animal massage practitioners, who have specialized in  
13 the massage of animals, the analogous privilege of operating  
14 independently of licensed veterinarians. However, the legislature  
15 recognizes the need for animal massage therapists to be supervised by  
16 an animal massage practitioner or indirectly by a licensed  
17 veterinarian. Furthermore, it is the legislature's intent to have the  
18 Washington state board of massage adopt rules under their current  
19 authority necessary to implement this act. These rules would include

1 educational and examination requirements targeted towards individuals  
2 intending to specialize in the massage of animals.

3 **Sec. 2.** RCW 18.92.060 and 2000 c 93 s 11 are each amended to read  
4 as follows:

5 Nothing in this chapter applies to:

6 (1) Commissioned veterinarians in the United States military  
7 services or veterinarians employed by Washington state and federal  
8 agencies while performing official duties;

9 (2) A person practicing veterinary medicine upon his or her own  
10 animal;

11 (3) A person advising with respect to or performing the castrating  
12 and dehorning of cattle, castrating and docking of sheep, castrating of  
13 swine, caponizing of poultry, or artificial insemination of animals;

14 (4)(a) A person who is a regularly enrolled student in a veterinary  
15 school or training course approved under RCW 18.92.015 and performing  
16 duties or actions assigned by his or her instructors or working under  
17 the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian during a school  
18 vacation period or (b) a person performing assigned duties under the  
19 supervision of a veterinarian within the established framework of an  
20 internship program recognized by the board;

21 (5) A veterinarian regularly licensed in another state consulting  
22 with a licensed veterinarian in this state;

23 (6) A veterinary technician or veterinary medication clerk acting  
24 under the supervision and control of a licensed veterinarian. The  
25 practice of a veterinary technician or veterinary medication clerk is  
26 limited to the performance of services which are authorized by the  
27 board;

28 (7) An owner being assisted in practice by his or her employees  
29 when employed in the conduct of the owner's business;

30 (8) An owner being assisted in practice by some other person  
31 gratuitously;

32 (9) The implanting in their own animals of any electronic device  
33 for identifying animals by established humane societies and animal  
34 control organizations that provide appropriate training, as determined  
35 by the veterinary board of governors, and/or direct or indirect  
36 supervision by a licensed veterinarian;

37 (10) The implanting of any electronic device by a public fish and  
38 wildlife agency for the identification of fish or wildlife;

1       (11) A licensed animal massage practitioner as defined in RCW  
2 18.108.010.

3       **Sec. 3.** RCW 18.108.010 and 1997 c 297 s 2 are each amended to read  
4 as follows:

5       In this chapter, unless the context otherwise requires, the  
6 following meanings shall apply:

7       (1) "Board" means the Washington state board of massage.

8       (2) "Massage" and "massage therapy" mean a health care service  
9 involving the external manipulation or pressure of soft tissue for  
10 therapeutic purposes. Massage therapy includes techniques such as  
11 tapping, compressions, friction, Swedish gymnastics or movements,  
12 gliding, kneading, shaking, and facial or connective tissue stretching,  
13 with or without the aids of superficial heat, cold, water, lubricants,  
14 or salts. Massage therapy does not include diagnosis or attempts to  
15 adjust or manipulate any articulations of the body or spine or  
16 mobilization of these articulations by the use of a thrusting force,  
17 nor does it include genital manipulation.

18       (3) "Massage practitioner" means an individual licensed under this  
19 chapter, other than an animal massage therapist or an animal massage  
20 practitioner.

21       (4) "Secretary" means the secretary of health or the secretary's  
22 designee.

23       (5) "Massage business" means the operation of a business where  
24 massages are given.

25       (6) "Animal massage therapist" means an individual with a minimum  
26 of one hundred hours training in animal massage for the species of  
27 their choice, including massage technique, kinesiology, anatomy and  
28 physiology, first aid care, and proper handling techniques. An animal  
29 massage therapist is required to work under the indirect supervision of  
30 a licensed veterinarian or a comparable nonveterinarian animal health  
31 care professional, including animal massage practitioners.

32       (7) "Animal massage practitioner" means an individual with a  
33 license to practice massage therapy in this state, or a certified or  
34 licensed physical therapist or physical therapist assistant. An animal  
35 massage practitioner must complete one hundred hours of training in  
36 animal massage as set forth for animal massage therapists under  
37 subsection (6) of this section. An animal massage practitioner is a  
38 nonveterinarian animal health care professional and is authorized to

1 work independent of referral or supervision and may act as a mentor or  
2 referral partner for an animal massage therapist.

3 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The secretary of health shall adopt rules as  
4 necessary to implement this act.

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