



TO :

James Sklar
Representative Veronica Paiz
Michigan House of Representatives

Date : November 29, 2023

Dear Mr. Sklar:

I am writing to support the efforts made by my constituent Jessica York, Massage Therapist to bring forth a bill during the next legislative session that creates an apprenticeship program for training Massage Therapists in the State of Michigan.

You may know from speaking to Jessica that our association, USOLMT, is working towards improving career opportunities in the field of massage therapy. Many massage therapy schools have shut down across the country since the Covid-19 pandemic, leaving scarce opportunities for potential students in many areas such as rural Michigan. Due to the US Department of Education's new Gainful Employment laws passed recently at the federal level, we expect to see another wave of traditional, vocational massage schools going out of business as new requirements begin mid-year 2024.

The massage industry is already facing a labor shortage across the nation. Consumer demand is rising exponentially as the popularity of massage therapy for health and wellness increases, yet, the number of massage therapists has been decreasing steadily for the last several years. Because of this, I wholly support efforts to create an apprenticeship program in Michigan and the association will stand behind this effort.

Please contact me if you have any questions or I can be of any assistance in creating and/or supporting the legislative process.

**Sincerely,
Stephanie Rodriguez
Chief Executive Officer**