

1889 INSTITUTE

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MASSAGE THERAPY LICENSING, PASSED IN 2016, NEVER NECESSARY

There are now nearly 20 percent fewer massage therapists in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (August 20, 2019) – The 1889 Institute, an Oklahoma state policy think tank, has published “Massage Therapy Licensure in Oklahoma,” which calls for repealing the 3-year-old law licensing massage therapists. The public health and welfare is not enhanced by massage therapy licensing, making it clear that, like most occupational licensing, its main purpose of the law is to protect those licensed from competition.

This is the latest installment in the 1889 Institute’s Licensing Directory for Oklahoma.

“Some Oklahoma legislators were apparently convinced, in 2016, that licensing massage therapy would constitute a blow against human trafficking. All the law seems to have done is reduce the number of massage therapists in the state by about a fifth while doing nothing to impact human trafficking,” said Luke Tucker, the report’s author and graduate intern at the 1889 Institute. “It was difficult to find examples of where massage caused any harm, and licensing would have made no difference in the few examples I could find,” he said.

“I don’t know how Oklahoma’s legislators, most of whom claim to be supporters of free markets, keep getting talked into passing licensing laws,” said Byron Schlomach, Director of the 1889 Institute. “We have identified a number of occupations in Oklahoma that are unjustifiably licensed, and there seems to be a lot of lip service given to doing something about it, but the biggest accomplishment so far has been to repeal hair braider licensing,” said Schlomach.

The 1889 Institute has produced several longer publications regarding occupational licensing, including “The Need to Review and Reform Occupational Licensing in Oklahoma,” “Policy Maker’s Guide to Evaluating Proposed and Existing Occupational Licensing Laws,” and “A Win-Win for Consumers and Professionals Alike: An Alternative to Occupational Licensing.”

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About the 1889 Institute

The 1889 Institute is an Oklahoma think tank committed to independent, principled state policy fostering limited and responsible government, free enterprise and a robust civil society. The publication, “Massage Licensure in Oklahoma” and other reports on licensing can be found on the nonprofit’s website at <http://www.1889institute.org/licensing>.