REQUESTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR STUDY THE AUTHORIZATION OF CUPPING THERAPY FOR MASSAGE THERAPISTS.

WHEREAS, during the recent Summer Olympic Games, many of the athletes used cupping therapy; and

WHEREAS, cupping therapy is a medical healing modality that has been applied in Asia, particularly in China, and northern Europe, but is attracting interest due to its use by Olympic athletes; and

WHEREAS, the cups used in cupping therapy can be made of different materials including without limitation bamboo, glass, plastic, or earthenware; and

WHEREAS, during cupping therapy, the air inside the cups contracts to create a partial vacuum and the cups are then applied on the skin over prescribed acupuncture points; and

WHEREAS, cupping therapy creates a suction on the skin that pulls up tissue and actively draws blood and other fluids close to the surface which can be an effective complementary technique when used in conjunction with massage therapy; and

WHEREAS, there are seven (7) major types of cupping therapy with dry cupping being the most commonly used type; and

WHEREAS, several states allow massage therapists to use cupping therapy; and

WHEREAS, under Arkansas law, the practice of massage therapy includes "any hands-on bodywork techniques and procedures rising to the level of the techniques and procedures intended to be regulated under this chapter and not covered under specific licensing laws of other boards"; and
WHEREAS, the practice of acupuncture and related techniques in Arkansas specifically includes cupping therapy in Arkansas Code § 17-102-102(6)(B); and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health has determined that cupping therapy is part of the practice of acupuncture and requires any person interested in performing cupping therapy to attain an acupuncture license; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Health has instructed licensed massage therapists to cease performing cupping therapy and refrain from providing instruction in cupping therapy; and

WHEREAS, limiting cupping therapy to individuals who hold an acupuncture license severely restricts the access to cupping therapy for the citizens of Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, massage therapists across the nation are currently using cupping therapy safely and efficiently with great success and helping patients receive affordable treatment; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly should pursue efforts to improve access to cupping therapy by using the services of existing healthcare professionals, such as massage therapists, to the fullest extent possible,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR OF THE NINETIETH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

THAT the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor study the authorization of cupping therapy for massage therapists.

Respectfully submitted,
Representative Fredrick J. Love
District 29

By: JMB/JMB