

Re: Support of amending the Practice Act in relation to licensure of athletic trainers

Dear (Member of the Legislature),

I am writing in support of the Athletic Training Licensure Act on behalf of athletic trainers and those whom they serve in many arenas throughout New York State. S.942 (Bailey)/A.219 (Solages) will amend and update the current scope of practice to reflect current levels of education and evolving practices, therefore providing much more comprehensive public safety measures.

The current law, passed in 1992, does not reflect the significantly enhanced level of education and clinical training for athletic trainers. It does not reflect many evolving best practices, nor includes state requirements for continuing education. An update for the language related to the identification and management of concussions is necessary as this is a vital component of athletic training practice and the athletic trainer's role is integral in early identification of brain injuries and to protect individuals from further injury. The role of athletic trainers requires clarity in the practice act.

Physicians can't be present for most practices and games and rely heavily on the athletic trainers who work under their supervision to recognize, evaluate, assess and manage injury in physically active people. The physicians count on the expertise of an athletic trainer to evaluate those with injuries and this evaluation warrants management by the athletic trainer who determines return to play or may include physician referral. The athletic trainer is a health care professional who is critical in the decision making of removal from participation, return to play, and referral to physicians. They are important members of the sports medicine team.

Athletic trainers always work under the supervision of a physician regardless of work setting, and this bill does not change this working relationship. Currently, the primary work settings for athletic trainers in NY are in the secondary school, college, and professional sports. However, athletic trainers are trained to work with individuals in the performing arts, police, military, fire organizations, clinical, hospital, or clinical outreach. The scope of the athletic trainer has never included populations or conditions outside of the physically active (such as geriatrics, young pediatrics, pulmonary or cardiac rehab, stroke, Multiple Sclerosis, or ALS), and this legislation does not seek to expand into these populations. Instead, the bill intends to clarify language with respect to the types of injuries/conditions within the athletic trainer's range of practice.

Furthermore, the bill intends to close a dangerous loophole left open from the current bill language. The lack of a mandatory licensure in New York State allows for anyone to claim they are an athletic trainer and provide athletic training services, even if they haven't completed the necessary work to become credentialed. This puts the public at risk. By supporting this bill, it will ensure that all practicing athletic trainers have met the strict licensing requirements.

Adoption of this bill will assist athletic trainers in providing quality health care and much needed services to physically active individuals in NYS, while allowing them to fully utilize their educational preparation. It will protect the public and ensure that all practicing athletic trainers have met strict licensing requirements.

It is for these reasons I am writing to ask for your support in passing the bipartisan legislation sponsored by Senator Bailey and Assembly Member Solages (S.942/A.219).

Thank you for your consideration and for your ongoing support of athletic trainers in the state of New York.

Sincerely,