

STATE SENATOR • JOHN J. GLEASON • 27TH DISTRICT

Gleason Press Release

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Gleason Bill to License Body Art Facilities, Increase Blood Donor Access Moves Forward

*Red Cross, Tattoo Parlor Owners Support Legislation to Improve Tattoo and Piercing
Environment*

LANSING—Senate Bill 593, legislation sponsored by Sen. John Gleason (D-Flushing) that will license all state body art facilities, passed favorably out of the State Senate’s Health Policy Committee today. The bill will require all tattooing to be conducted at a tattoo facility licensed by the Michigan Department of Community Health and annually inspected by their local health department.

With the tremendous increase in the number of individuals obtaining the services of body artists to perform branding, tattooing, and body-piercing, there is an increased need to assure the safety of Michigan residents and protect them from unsafe practices. Concern has arisen, by the American Red Cross and others, due to the increasing risk from blood-borne diseases transmitted by this practice.

“They say the body is a temple, but I guess some people just prefer to decorate it more than others,” said Sen. Gleason. “But whatever people do and however they choose to express themselves, their safety should always be paramount, and this bill will make sure of that by licensing every parlor and artist in the state.”

The Red Cross has been a strong proponent of this legislation because they will be able to accept a greater pool of blood donors by exempting them from the one-year deferral period required under federal rules for those donors who provide proof of body art being received by a state licensed facility. This exemption will greatly enhance the blood supply due to the fact that one of the greatest pools of donors are in the same age as those who predominantly obtain body art—from age 18 to their mid-20s. The Red Cross experiences a loss of up to 50% of potential college donors who are turned away due to the one-year Federal deferral period, and this legislation would solve this problem.

“Young people want to help others by donating blood,” said Sharon Jaksa, CEO of the Great Lakes Region of the American Red Cross. “We host a large number of college blood drives around the state, but too large a percentage of our potential donors are being turned away due to the one year deferral period for body art. This legislation is good because it will help the Red Cross meet the needs of hospital patients across Michigan.”

This legislation also benefits established and reputable body art studios by holding all facilities to proper health requirements and precautions. It is supported by the American Red Cross, Great Lakes Blood Region, Michigan Association for Local Public Health, Michigan Association of Counties, I Educators, Inc., Splash of Color Tattoo and Piercing Studio in East Lansing, Michigan Department Community Health and the Genesee County Health Department.

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