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Tattoo artists face stricter regulation

By [Shannon Colavecchio](#), Times/Herald Tallahassee Bureau

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Flanked by several tattoo artists whose body art peeked through the tops of their three-piece suits, South Florida Rep. Mary Brandenburg on Tuesday unveiled legislation that she said would make tattoos safer for teens and adults.

The tattoo artists say the stricter regulations for licensing and health education would bring more legitimacy to the industry long regarded as underground and renegade.

"This probably will put some people out of business, but we need to protect the public health," said Brandenburg, D-West Palm Beach, adding she doesn't have a tattoo, "and I never plan to get one."

Brandenburg's bill would prohibit tattoos for anyone under 16 except under special medical circumstances, and anyone under 18 would have to be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian while getting inked.

To get an initial license and to renew it, the artist would be required to attend a course on blood-borne pathogens, sanitation and hygiene issues.

Currently, tattoo parlors are registered with the Health Department as biowaste pickup sites, and the supervision of tattoo artists comes under the Board of Medicine, the same board that oversees doctors and dentists. There are no age limits for tattoos, but parental or guardian consent is required for minors.

Joining Brandenburg on Tuesday were representatives from Florida Blood Services and the Florida Society of Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery, which all support the proposal.

J.B. Gaskins of Florida Blood Services said the legislation, if passed, would allow Florida blood banks to take blood from people who have been tattooed recently, thus expanding the pool of potential donors.

The Senate sponsor is Eleanor Sobel, D-Hollywood, who is also sponsoring legislation that cleared its first committee Tuesday to require parental consent for teens using tanning beds.

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