

*Shaun Brookhouse explains why*



# The state of the union is now important for American hypnotherapists

**S**uddenly hypnotherapists across the United States are becoming card carrying trade unionists.

To Europeans therapists this may sound odd – but there are good reasons. And it is just possible some of those reasons could cross the Atlantic.

For some states have introduced new laws prohibiting “lay” hypnotherapists from practising.

The response has been COPHO – Council of Professional Hypnosis Organisations – which has teamed up with the American Trade Union Congress to form the National Federation of Hypnotists.

It was an astute political move. For by becoming part of the AFL–CIO, American hypnotherapists have added the voices of 15 million fellow trade unionists to COPHO’s impressive 15,000 membership.

Now the union is setting out to protect its members’ right to practise hypnotherapy in an ethical and open manner.

The AFL–CIO has engaged professional lobbyists in every state in the US – including Washington D.C. – plus a team of lawyers to fight any damaging legislation affecting hypnotherapy.

But of course the big question is – *has unionising hypnotherapists worked?*

**The answer, at least at the moment, seems to be YES.**

For example, in California the Union plus the AFL–CIO halted legislation that would have made it impossible for any therapists apart from clinical psychologists and medical practitioners to practise hypnotherapy.

A further reason for linking with the AFL–CIO is that some states refuse to recognise professional registration bodies which do not have the organisation of a larger political umbrella group behind it. The Union would cover this requirement.



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The big secondary gain to unionising is that hypnotherapy could be included on private Union Health Plans. That would mean 15 million families could potentially benefit from hypnotherapy without having to pay anything extra for it.

American hypnotherapists have apparently put differences aside to fight for the common goal: a legislated profession.

In parts of the European Union some countries have already decided to permit only medical practitioners to practise hypnotherapy although, as last year’s BMA report on Complementary Medicine made clear, the situation varies enormously across the EU.

In Britain over the last 20 years there have been several attempts to introduce legislation covering hypnotherapy.

Now, because the British Government really does not want to tell its citizens who they can or cannot see for therapy, the profession will be responsible for cleaning up its own house.

The problem in Britain is that there seems to be only rivalry between the various schools and associations and not very much consensus.