



Michelle V. Agins/The New York Times

Jonathon Shaw tattooing the arm of Luis Alfaya at Shaw's studio on St. Marks Place. There are about 50 such specialists in the city, and the City Council yesterday passed a bill legalizing and regulating their work.

City Council Gives Approval to Tattooing

Continued From Page B1

up signs or list his business as a tattoo parlor. Instead, he handed out fliers on the street and placed a one-line advertisement in the back of The Village Voice. "We were afraid," he said. "You'd get bolder a little bit at a time. You do something and nothing happens and then you do a little bit more. Now, a lot of people are listed in the yellow pages."

Councilwoman Kathryn E. Freed, who sponsored the bill, said that body piercing had long been legal in New York but that the ban against tattooing had remained even though the Health Department said it had not documented a single case of hepatitis

B transmitted by tattooing in the city since the ban was enacted.

"Clearly, there are zillions of people out there who are getting tattoos," Ms. Freed said. "So it seemed the height of ridiculousness not to legalize or regulate it."

Under the bill — which passed by a vote of 38 to 7 with one abstention — tattoo artists would be required to be licensed by the city. They would have to be older than 18, with no convictions under state law for criminal tattooing of anyone under 18 years of age. They would have to pass an examination given by the Health Department and would have to pay \$100 every two years for their licenses.

The bill was passed over the objections of Health Department officials,

who said in a hearing earlier this month that the regulations were unnecessary because of the lack of a health threat.

Dr. Benjamin A. Mojica, the Deputy Commissioner for disease intervention, testified that the department was already amending the code to allow tattooing. And he added that the bill, which provides the Health Department with no extra money to enforce the law, amounted to "a clear waste of critical public health resources."

Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani said yesterday that he had not decided whether he would sign the bill, although it appeared that supporters would have enough votes to override a veto.