



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

**HB 1498 – State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners - Aiding or Abetting
Unauthorized Practice - Prohibition**

DATE: March 27, 2024
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

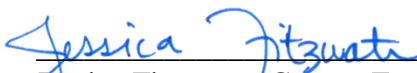
As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give HB 1498 – State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners - Aiding or Abetting Unauthorized Practice - Prohibition a favorable report.

This bill will criminalize the aiding or abetting the unauthorized practice of massage therapy.

Currently, practicing massage therapy without a State license is a criminal. However, there is no State law that penalizes an individual for aiding or abetting the unauthorized practice of massage therapy. This means that although an individual is assisting in the crime, they may not be prosecuted, leaving a loophole for those involved. This can be particularly problematic as some massage therapy businesses are used as a cover for illegal practices such as human trafficking and sex work operations. Often, these illegal practices involve an organized enterprise and prosecuting all individuals involved can more fully address the issue.

HB 1498 is crucial to protecting Marylanders from harmful and illegal practices carried out by unauthorized massage therapy businesses and the illegal activities surrounding them. This bill will ensure that all involved in the illegal activity will be held to account, therefore discouraging others from participating in this crime. Frederick County is currently taking steps to prevent illegal massage therapy businesses, specifically those involved in human trafficking and sex work, from operating in the County. HB1498 will support this work by making sure that all responsible parties are brought to justice to the fullest extent possible under state law.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 1498. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD