



February 23, 2026

Delegate Heather Bagnall, Chair
House Health Committee
House Office Building, Room 240
Annapolis, MD

RE: Comment on House Bill 975 – Advertising

Dear Chair Bagnall and the members of the House Health Committee,

The Federation of State Massage Therapy Boards (FSMTB®) is a not-for-profit organization with membership comprised of 47 massage therapy licensing boards and agencies in the United States and its territories. Our mission is to support our member boards in their work to ensure that the practice of massage therapy is provided to the public safely and competently. We do this by promoting and supporting public protection and regulatory excellence by providing education, best practices, and sharing the collective wisdom of massage therapy regulators from across the country. **The Maryland Board of Massage Therapy Examiners (Board) is a member of the FSMTB.**

The FSMTB supports the purpose and goals of House Bill 975 and urges the Committee to favorably report on this bill.

Prohibiting massage therapists from advertising prostitution, escort, or sexual services would be a beneficial and reasonable requirement mitigating illicit businesses within the massage therapy industry. The provision that would prohibit massage therapy advertisements on websites known for advertising topics of prurient interest, combined with mandating the licensee's full name and license number on advertisements for massage therapy services work together to deter advertising for sexual services and the illicit massage businesses. Such a restriction would also help the consuming public distinguish between illicit sexual services and legitimate massage therapy services.

One proposed amendment or clarification pertains to Sections (E)(2) and (E)(3). Section (E)(2) outlines that each day an **online** advertisement is visible to the public constitutes a separate violation. Section (E)(3) further states that failure to remove non-compliant **physical signs** or billboards is also a violation. However, the daily, separate violation only applies to online advertisements and not physical signage. The legislature may wish to consider an amendment or clarification to make these violations comparable. Different standards for online and physical advertisements may cause confusion and inequitable enforcement without clarification.

Once again, we support efforts to create an inhospitable environment for illicit massage businesses and urge the Committee to support House Bill 975.

February 13, 2026

RE: HB 975

Page 2

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments. Should you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact the undersigned at mlpetrine@fsmtb.org or 913-681-0380.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mai Lin Petrine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mai Lin Petrine, JD

Director of Legal and Regulatory Affairs