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Health and Government  
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*Subcommittees*

Government Operations  
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of House Bill 0975: Health Occupations - Massage Therapy - Advertising**

**Health Committee**

**February 25, 2026**

Good afternoon, Madam Chair, Madam Vice Chair, and members of the Health Committee. I'm Delegate Pam Guzzone, representing Howard County's District 13, and I am here in support of House Bill 975, which would establish new guidelines and regulations for massage therapist advertising.

HB975 requires licensed massage therapists to include their full name and license number in all advertisements. It also addresses a gap in current statute which does not explicitly prohibit advertisements that offer or imply prostitution services, escort services or other sexual services as part of massage therapy. This is an important step toward protecting consumers. By requiring clear identification and prohibiting advertisements that suggest sexual services, the bill helps consumers have confidence the services being offered are legitimate and provided by properly licensed professionals.

This bill also protects legitimate massage therapists. Without clear advertising standards, bad actors can misrepresent themselves, operate anonymously, or advertise illegal services. This undermines public trust in the profession. Ethical practitioners should not have to compete with individuals who blur the line between therapeutic services and illegal activity. By prohibiting advertisements that state or imply prostitution, escort services, or sexual activity—including advertisements on websites known for such services—this bill draws a firm and appropriate boundary. It reinforces that massage therapy is a healthcare service, not a cover for unlawful activity.

HB975 strengthens efforts to combat sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Historically "massage parlors" have been a front and have exploited vulnerable individuals. By restricting these advertisements and giving the State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners enforcement authority, the bill helps prevent massage businesses from being used as means of sexual exploitation.

In sum, this bill aims to protect consumers, ensure public trust in massage therapy services, and strengthen efforts to fight sexual exploitation. Thank you for your time, and I respectfully request a favorable report on HB975.