

**American Massage Therapy Association
Maryland Chapter**

Re: SB 492/HB 975 Health Occupations – Massage Therapy – Advertising

Position: FAVORABLE

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and members of the Committee:

I am a licensed massage therapist in Maryland and currently serve as President of the American Massage Therapy Association – Maryland Chapter, representing professional massage therapists across our state. I am here today in strong support of SB 492 / HB 975.

As licensed massage therapists, we are healthcare professionals dedicated to providing safe and quality care to the public. We complete extensive education, pass national examinations, undergo background checks, and adhere to strict ethical standards. Maintaining the trust of our clients and our communities is foundational to our profession.

Unfortunately, the current statute does not include provisions that protect against the misuse of the word “massage” in the advertisement of prostitution or sexual services. Without clear language in statute, consumers are not protected from harmful advertisements of illicit businesses that aim to undermine the integrity of our profession.

SB 492 / HB 975 establishes clear and enforceable standards for advertising. By prohibiting advertisements that state or imply that prostitution, escort services, sexual services, or sexual activity are part of a massage, this bill provides clarity to the public and law enforcement alike. It draws a firm and necessary line between legitimate massage professions and illicit activity.

Additionally, the requirement that all advertisements include the full licensed name of the massage therapist or registered massage practitioner is a critical transparency measure. This allows consumers to easily verify a practitioner’s credentials through the Maryland State Board of Massage Therapy Examiners’ license lookup system. This simple safeguard empowers the public to confirm they are seeking care from a licensed professional and guards practitioners from inappropriate advances. SB 492 / HB 975 makes it significantly more difficult for unlicensed or illegal operators to conceal their activities.

The AMTA – MD Chapter supports strong, consistent protections to address illicit practices that put practitioners and the public at risk and erode professional credibility. SB 492 / HB 975 is a practical, reasonable, and enforceable step to ensure public safety.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on this bill. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Adams-Cook