

## **2. Open Public Testimony**

Donald F. Schiff, BS, LMT #23463  
AMTA-OR Government Relations Chair  
10495 SW Walker Rd Apt 42  
Beaverton, OR 97005  
June 16 2025

Re: Gresham Council Bill 04-25

Dear Mayor Stovall and Council members,

AMTA-OR recognizes that Gresham Council and staff are attempting to meaningfully address prostitution and human trafficking masquerading as massage businesses. We appreciate some changes that you have made based on feedback from LMTs. However, we feel that Bill 04-25 strays far from what is achievable through business licensing, expecting code enforcement to take the place of police work. In the process, it duplicates existing laws and Massage Board rules, and it denigrates the massage profession and harms the business interests of massage therapists.

First and foremost, the approach relies on information and recommendations from “the Network,” an anti-trafficking non-profit. This group exaggerates the problem by conflating prostitution arrests with human trafficking in their statistics, which are not the same thing. In addition, their list of purported “Best practices” is nothing of the sort. It is a fanciful list designed to make it easier for law enforcement to make arrests. It assumes a robust law enforcement effort which is not forthcoming.

The stated purpose of the bill, “to regulate the operation of massage businesses in order to address human trafficking and prostitution...” is not consistent with licensing businesses. Code enforcement can

only close non-compliant businesses. It cannot solve crimes or punish them. Attempting to do so only puts city personnel at grave risk from potentially violent criminals. The actual goal of business licensing is to obtain accurate information about the ownership and management of the business, and that only licensed therapists are performing work as LMTs according to the rules of the profession. The goal should be preventive, not reactive. The best we can realistically hope for is to make these businesses move out of Gresham. The city is not going to make a dent in a huge societal problem on its own.

No crimes nor body parts should be mentioned in the bill. The only statement about crimes should be that the violations of state laws and massage board rules will result in the withdrawal of the business license and the closure of the facility. That is really the only thing achievable from code enforcement.

As currently written, Council Bill 04-25

- Defames the massage profession and damages our reputation by linking it to sex crimes.
- Does not treat massage businesses like other healthcare businesses.
- Attempts to micromanage the practice of massage, which is OBMT's job, not Gresham's.
- Requires massage businesses to turn over employees' personal information and ID unnecessarily, in violation of employees' civil rights.
- Puts employees personal data at risk.
- Was created without sufficient input from the profession.

AMTA has a long history of helping craft legislation in the public interest. We laud your good intentions. We trust in your goodwill.

We merely ask that you do not pass the bill as currently written. Please meet with us to amend the bill so that you can protect the public without harming massage therapists' reputation and business interests.

I have attached a list of general principles for business licensing for massage therapists from our national professional organization. (Must Have 2023.pdf) OR law has some additional permutations which will be helpful. Please let us help you craft meaningful legislation which will not adversely affect massage businesses.

Best,

Donald F Schiff, BS, LMT  
AMTA-OR Government Relations Chair

## **Must Have Elements of a City or Municipality Massage Establishment Ordinance**

Ordinances are increasing in frequency across the country as communities attempt to exert control over the practice of massage therapy through the creation of establishment licensing fees and related requirements.

The American Massage Therapy Association does not oppose fair and reasonable establishment licensing. In order for the association (national or chapter) to support massage therapy legislation, however, the following content and conditions are **must have** elements of ordinance language:

- A preamble/statement of intent and purpose of the regulation.
- Definitions of terms to be used within the ordinance. The state's Massage Therapy Practice Act shall serve as the guideline for these terms and definitions for uniformity of language.
- Proof of a current, valid massage therapy license issued by the state.
- Proof of liability insurance coverage for both the establishment as well as therapist.  
Name and address of establishment owners/partners and any associated corporation.
- Municipality chain of command and authority granted in regard to complaints, investigations, and license revocations.
- Reasonable fees that do not place undue financial burden on massage therapy practitioners.

## **Must Not Have:**

- Language will not include mention of adult/erotic entertainment, prostitution, human trafficking, massage parlor or other illicit and/or illegal activities covered under the state's criminal code, as those activities are not associated with licensed, educated and professional massage therapists.

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- There shall not be any language directing the dress or hygiene of the massage therapist that is not consistent with the state rules and regulations.
- There shall not be any requirement for a doctor's examination, health screening or health certificate.
- There shall not be a directive for unlocked doors.
- Shall not require a second, duplicative criminal background check when the state practice act requires.
- Shall not use protected titles or defined scope of practice unless in reference to licensed massage therapists.
- Should not require statements from registered voters as a means of assessing moral character.
- Unreasonable restrictions on hours of operations not consistent with other healthcare professions.

**Should Have/May Have:**

- List of businesses/professions exempted due to possession of an occupational license under a state entity that is not the Massage Therapy Board.
- List of exempted modalities as defined under your state's Practice Act.
- Fair and reasonable inspection requirements occurring at or shortly after the time of application, for the purposes of public protection and sanitation.
- Language inclusive of solo massage practitioners who use their residence as a massage establishment.
- Any language referencing draping requirements shall use appropriate and inoffensive language.
- Record-keeping requirements as outlined by your state's practice act.

**To: Gresham City Council**

**From: Danika Tkacik, LMT**

**Subject: Testimony in Opposition to Proposed Massage Ordinance**

**Date: 06/16/2025**

Dear Council Members,

I'm writing today as a licensed massage therapist, small business owner, and proud healthcare provider here in Gresham to express serious concerns regarding the proposed ordinance targeting massage therapy businesses.

While I share your goal of preventing human trafficking and exploitation in our city, I strongly believe this ordinance—as written—misplaces enforcement and duplicates recent, comprehensive efforts already addressed at the state level through **House Bill 3819**.

**HB 3819, signed into law by Governor Kotek on June 12, 2025**, directly responds to trafficking disguised as massage. It:

- Increases fines for illegal operators from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per violation
  - Elevates repeated violations to felony status
  - Authorizes placards for non-compliant businesses
  - Adds licensed massage therapists to Oregon's list of mandatory reporters
  - Enhances penalties for prostitution-related activity near massage businesses
- Establishes a provisional license system for out-of-state therapists

In short: the state has already taken action. This ordinance adds **redundant and punitive measures** that disproportionately affect those of us operating legally, ethically, and under medical licensure.

Historically, overregulating legitimate massage businesses does **not** stop trafficking—it creates fear, stigma, and burdens without solving the core issue. Similar approaches in

cities like Portland have proven ineffective. Traffickers do not follow regulations. They will simply relocate, rebrand, or go further underground.

**This ordinance does not take a proactive stance**, nor does it support survivors or strengthen existing systems. Instead, it risks casting suspicion on an entire healthcare profession without equipping the city with more effective tools.

I urge the Council to **delay finalizing this ordinance**. Instead, please consider working collaboratively with the massage community to:

- Align enforcement efforts with **HB 3819** and state licensing bodies
- Launch a **community education campaign** about how to recognize trafficking fronts
- Partner with multilingual outreach and victim advocacy programs
- Create anonymous reporting systems that don't rely on law enforcement alone
- Involve licensed massage professionals in advisory roles—we are willing and ready to help

Massage therapy is a recognized healthcare practice, not a loophole for criminal enterprises. Let's address human trafficking at its source—not by increasing the burden on those who are already part of the solution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



**Danielle (Danika) Tkacik, LMT 26808**

Souly Aware Massage & Wellness

(503) 740-6343

Danika@SoulyAware.com



June 13, 2025

TO: City of Gresham City Council and Mayor Travis Stoval

RE: Proposed Massage Business Ordinance

We are writing on behalf of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA), in response to the City of Gresham's proposed massage therapy ordinance which is scheduled to be discussed at the City Council meeting on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

AMTA is the largest non-profit, professional association serving massage therapists, massage students and massage schools. Established in 1943, AMTA represents more than 103,000 members nationwide and works to advance the profession through ethics and standards, the promotion of fair and consistent licensing of massage therapists in all states, and public education on massage therapy health benefits.

AMTA has concerns with the following language in the proposed ordinance:

- **9.11.030 (d)** AMTA wants to ensure that any sensitive information of individual massage therapists is for city government use only and will not be shared.
- **9.11.035 (4)** Unannounced inspections. Clarification needed on boundaries regarding massage therapy sessions in process.

While we commend efforts that communities and states take to rid their communities of illicit businesses operating under the guise of "massage," we oppose any burdensome legislation, regulations, and local ordinances that are at the expense of legally practicing professional, educated and licensed massage therapists. We collaborate with many stakeholder groups nationally to address these issues, and our work with municipalities across the country provides an opportunity to utilize AMTA as a valuable resource.

Sincerely,

James Specker

AMTA Senior Director, Government & Industry Relations

[jspecker@amtamassage.org](mailto:jspecker@amtamassage.org)

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## Christina Still

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**From:** Chuck Par-Due <olbrneyes@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 12, 2025 5:05 PM  
**To:** Christina Still  
**Subject:** Fireworks 2025

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

You don't often get email from olbrneyes@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

**CAUTION:** External Email

Hi Christina,

This is in follow-up to the phone message I left for you regarding the fireworks this year.

My Wife and I own a home here in Gresham.

The last couple of years, we have been concerned with the fireworks usage around us.

It has seemed as though the use of airborne fireworks has increased in our area.

With the wildfire season starting a month early this year, I would ask that City Council would consider a fireworks ban for this summer.

The safety of the Residents and our properties should be paramount!

Thank you,

Charles Pardue  
503-560-6747