

Submitter: Rep. Thuy Tran  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3819

Good afternoon, Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Wallen and Chotzen, and fellow committee members. I am Thuy Tran, the State Rep for House District 45, covering parts of Northeast and Southeast Portland.

I am grateful for the opportunity to talk to you about House Bill 3819 — The Bill to Stop the Proliferation of Illicit Massage Parlors in our state.

#### The Problem

Human trafficking in the massage industry is the second most common type of trafficking reported to the National Human Trafficking Hotline.

An illicit massage business –or, I.M.B.— is an illegal, unlicensed establishment that hides behind the façade of a legitimate massage business in order to facilitate the purchase of commercial sex acts from vulnerable people. They are operated by human traffickers, who are organized, coordinated, and terribly effective. Whether in big cities or small towns, they are enabling and profiting off the exploitation of women all across the country.

Lastly, the hyper-sexualization of Asian women based on offensive and outdated stereotypes is racism. The Illicit Massage Industry systematically exploits Asian women nationwide to meet these racist and sexist demands. Men regularly seeking their “Asian fantasy” at IMBs do so at the expense of the dignity and humanity of the women they believe exist to serve them.

We cannot stand by and let these Human Rights Violations continue unchecked in our neighborhoods. We cannot stand by and let criminals degrade our communities.

#### Urgence

The Network, an anti-human trafficking data collection non-profit, assesses that today there are over 15,000 IMBs operating in all 50 states.

As a whole, this national industry generates over \$5 billion a year in illicit, illegal, and untaxed revenue, while the women who perform the services the industry relies on are unpaid, exploited and face unimaginable conditions.

The Network estimates that as of last year there are over 300 IMBs within the state of Oregon and that this represents an increase of 477% since they began tracking this in 2019, and a 36% increase just over the last year.

#### What HB 3819 Does

These concepts are a four-pronged approach to the ongoing fight against human and labor trafficking in the illicit massage industry:

First, by increasing the potential maximum civil penalty from \$1,000 to \$5,000, we are attempting to cut into the large profit margin these facilities are making in a multi-BILLION-dollar illegal enterprise at the expense of victims being preyed upon by traffickers. Second, by increasing criminal penalties for operating a massage business

without a license. We hope the higher risk for operating illegally will deter individuals and criminal organizations from establishing these businesses in Oregon.

The third prong is public safety. Currently, the Oregon Board of Massage Therapy is powerless to “close a suspected IMB down”. There are no rules or laws that authorize the board to close any IMB facilities. By giving OBMT the ability to place a placard on the exterior of businesses that have been proven to be engaging in criminal activity, we are warning potential victims of the dangers of obtaining services from unlicensed individuals while also deterring persons who are perhaps unwitting consumers of sexual services offered by these illegal facilities.

And lastly, making Licensed Massage Therapists mandatory reporters gives us more tools to help women who are trapped in illegal and harmful conditions.

#### Continuing the Work

This bill is just one step in the ongoing process to combat both the supply and demand that drives traffickers from exploiting our neighborhoods and those most vulnerable in our community. There will need to be a continued effort to go after human traffickers, and support victims and our communities.

In conjunction with HB 3819, I am advocating for funding for the Crime Victim and Survivor Services Division to administer