

May 1, 2024

Senators,

My name is Jenelle Goodrich. I am the founder and Executive Director of From Silenced to Saved which is a third-party organization responding on scene with Law enforcement at the federal, state, and local level to recoveries of Human Trafficking and then appointed to helping guide and advocate for the victims as they walk through the criminal justice system for an array of reasons. I was approached regarding HB-1371 and after reading through it my first thought was why is this not already in place? In Denver alone there are over 30 cases in the last 2 years of Massage Parlor raids and results showing the nefarious acts they partake in, and I am being conservative with this number. Massage parlors and the underbelly of this operation is a cliché in most minds of the public, when in reality they are hiding in plain sight. At any given time, you can subscribe to *Rub Maps*, which is merely Yelp for illicit massage businesses; currently showing and rating 157 active illicit massage parlors in Denver alone and 711 Statewide. Time and time again I see those who have been subjected to this life from their homeland and cultural familiarity be brought here and their brainwashed, and trauma bonded service continue across international lines. Cultural or not, we do not have to tolerate it, nor do we simply look away when these human beings are being abused and their traffickers living off the backs of that victimization. Massage parlor trafficking is not like any other form of trafficking, nor is it something you will hear about in large headlines. In 2020 in Denver a case came forward that involved 8 defendants, and 7 locations and a never-ending growing list of victims. In so many cases you will see an establishment raided only to open up 10 blocks away under the very same name and barely miss a day of work, its relentless and because this is more of a cultural operation we are seeing which results in even less women and men taking services for their exploitation we must band together and work even harder to make sure we are standing as a united front for them and saying no to this type of exploitation being paid for and tolerated in our state.

Effective massage regulation is essential for ensuring accountability among operators of criminal enterprises involved in illicit activities within our communities. Legitimate businesses who practice massage likely and should not have any opposition to this.

Without robust regulation mechanisms in place, such as proper identification of the actual operators behind massage businesses, criminal charges for illicit activities often end up unfairly burdening individuals, frequently foreign-born, who are already being exploited for profit by the true operators. This unjust situation fails to address the root problem, as victims of exploitation are wrongly held accountable while the anonymous true operators can continue to establish new locations and exploit new victims without consequence, perpetuating the cycle of harm.

Unchecked massage regulation is a grave injustice that inflicts immense suffering on its victims. These individuals, treated merely as commodities for illicit purposes, endure insurmountable debt imposed by their traffickers, rendering any hope of repayment impossible. Coerced into desperate measures to generate income, victims remain trapped within the confines of illicit massage businesses, deprived of their freedom. Traffickers exert total control, providing basic necessities like clothing and food, and dictating the movements of their victims, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and abuse.

By instituting practical regulations for individuals seeking to open massage businesses in Colorado, we safeguard the integrity of our communities and protect victims of labor and sex trafficking. I urge you to vote yes on HB-1371