

Testimony in support of:
House Bill 81: Revise Laws Governing Massage Establishments/Massage Therapy

Submitted By:
Celia Williamson, Tony Yerks, and Isabelle Matossian
2801 W. Bancroft Street
Toledo, Ohio 43606

Dear Chairman Huffman, Vice-Chair Antani, Ranking Member Antonio, and members of the Senate Health Committee,

Our names are Dr. Celia Williamson, Tony Yerks, and Isabelle Matossian. We represent the Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute in Toledo, Ohio. We are in support of amending the sections listed to remove the “relaxation massage loophole.” We believe that this loophole is hurtful towards human trafficking survivors and should be amended.

At the Human Trafficking and Social Justice Institute, we support survivors of human trafficking who have been through traumatic and devastating situations. Our official opinion, after years of following the most credible and up-to-date research, most of which has been produced in Ohio by the Human Rights Center at the University of Dayton, HB 81 is a critical piece of legislation needed to address the illicit massage business. In Ohio, illicit massage has been consistently reported as one of the most common types of sex trafficking. This business abuses the “loophole” that is currently written into Ohio legislation. By passing HB 81, we can make strides in lowering the amount of spa businesses capitalizing on sex and labor trafficking within the state of Ohio and act as a leading example to the rest of the nation on combatting human trafficking.

We urge you to support House Bill 81 in order to reduce human trafficking in Ohio and continue to combat these abhorrent businesses. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Dr. Celia Williamson, Tony Yerks, and Isabelle Matossian