



"To know, accept and live the love of God and share it with others"

To: The Honorable Ted Lieu, Chairman
Senate Business, Professions and Economic Development Committee
State Capitol, Room 2053
Sacramento, CA 95814

I ask for your support of AB 1147, revising the current laws regarding massage therapy business regulation.

According to the Polaris Project (www.polarisproject.org), one of our nation's largest anti-human trafficking organizations, it is estimated there are more than 5,000 fake massage businesses nationwide. Fake massage businesses use force, fraud, and/or coercion to maintain control over the women and to cause them to believe that they have no other choice but to provide commercial sex. These are often the defining features of a sex trafficking situation.

The current law regulating massage therapy businesses makes it difficult for city officials and law enforcement to monitor these businesses. Even if an employee at a massage business is found to be involved in illegal work, the business owner can go unpunished.

City officials all over California are concerned about the effect of our current law. In an article in the Pasadena Star News, dated March 8, 2014, San Gabriel City Manager Steve Preston said "There are a lot of concerns coming out of local communities, about what has transpired because of the state law. It didn't completely pre-empt local regulation but it so hamstrung it that a lot of the measures cities would normally use to control it have been taken away.'

Several believe the law has encouraged illegal activities such as human trafficking and prostitution."

Kirstin Kolpitke, Legislative Representative of the League of California Cities, stated in this same article that the new bill, AB 1147 will provide harsher restrictions in the state law for massage licensing, including holding business owners accountable for the actions of their employees. In addition, some say the process to get a license should be made more difficult and include requirements like forcing applicants to undergo a criminal background check.

I ask for further regulations of these businesses for the benefit and safety of our communities, and as prevention of force, fraud, and/or coercion of the women who work there. We urge you to vote in favor of AB 1147.

In addition, I ask that this bill contain fair and humane treatment of all those who may be detained as undocumented, trafficked persons. We ask that they will be treated fairly and political asylum considered in each case. Also that those, who are through force and coercion, are soliciting sex at massage businesses, will be treated as victims, not as criminals (Prop 35). We are interested in supporting this bill because it will decrease opportunities to traffic human beings and bring those who traffic humans and those who buy sex to justice.

Sincerely,

Pastor Karla Halvorson
cc: Committee members
