

Hercules Liotard
Vermont Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association
House Ways and Means Committee
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My name is Hercules Liotard. I am a board member of the Vermont Chapter of the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA-VT) and, more importantly I am a 36-year veteran Massage Therapist, practicing in Williston, Vermont. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of AMTA-VT regarding the Office of Professional Regulation fees for massage therapists.

I understand that this committee is not going to adjust OPR fees this year. I appreciate the opportunity to present information for you to have as you consider fee adjustments in the near future.

The level of regulation of Massage Therapists in Vermont is Registration. Note that we had requested that the profession be licensed, but that is a continuing discussion in other committees. I am going to stick to fees in this committee.

Despite massage therapy remaining an unlicensed practice in Vermont, the high annual fees for registration (essentially being placed on a registry) has placed a significant financial strain on professionals in the massage therapy field. As of today, our renewal fee is \$275, which is the same as, or in some instances more than, other professions which are fully licensed

- Social workers - \$180
- Radiologic therapists and technicians - \$175
- Cosmetologists - \$155.

A private investigator or security services unarmed registrant only pays \$95.00.

Records show that approximately 400 massage therapists have allowed their registration to expire, likely due to the rising cost. We have heard many complaints about the fees.

There is a disproportionate financial burden placed on massage therapists. ***The fees do not reflect an equitable fee structure***, given the low level of regulation of registration.

Also of note is that, if all registrants renew their registration, OPR will collect approximately \$350,000 in renewals – for a profession that they do not even license/fully regulate.

We ask that, when this committee considers fee changes, that you support a fee that is more commensurate with the level of regulation of the profession.