

**Jada Thompson, American Massage Therapy Association
Vermont Chapter Testimony on H.472 - Senate Finance Committee
May 8, 2025**

My name is Jada Thompson. I am the Program Manager for AMTA Government Relations. I am testifying on behalf of the Vermont chapter of AMTA. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on H.472 regarding the Office of Professional Regulation fees for massage therapists.

As some of you may remember, a few years ago, the Legislature passed a regulatory bill for massage therapists and bodyworkers. We strongly advocated for licensure, which was included in the bill that Senator Hardy originally introduced. Unfortunately, as the bill made its way through the legislative process, at the request of OPR, the level of regulation changed to registration, instead of licensure there were no educational requirements or background checks, just registry.

The initial fee of \$90 in the bill was quite manageable, and reasonable, given the level of regulation. The biannual renewal fee made a significant leap to \$275. Despite massage therapy not being licensed in Vermont, the high annual fees for registration has placed a significant financial strain on professionals in the massage therapy field. This fee of \$275 fee is the same, or in some instances more, than other professions *which are fully licensed*

- Social workers - \$180
- Radiologic therapists and technicians - \$175
- Cosmetologists - \$155.
- Private investigator or security services unarmed *registrant* only pays **\$95.00**.

We have heard many complaints about the fees. Records show that approximately 400 massage therapists have allowed their registration to expire, which is likely due to the rising cost in fees. In one instance, after attempting to register this year, a massage therapist was fined \$1,155 for not registering after the initial registration period. Although the profession is not licensed, their fees are mirroring that of a fully regulated profession.

There is a disproportionate financial burden placed on massage therapists. If all registrants renew their registration, OPR will collect approximately \$350,000 in biannual renewals for an unlicensed profession. *The fees for registration do not reflect an equitable fee structure*, given the low level of regulation.

OPR has stated many times that they do not believe that licensure is necessary for the safety of the public. While also stating that these staggering fees are essential to the many investigations that they are doing to address potential wrongdoing or criminal activity. The two positions contradict one another—devaluing the need for licensure for public safety, while using public safety investigations as a justification for the fee increase.

We continue to advocate for licensure, as we believe it is the most appropriate level of regulation to ensure public safety. Until such time, we are asking for a reduction in registration fees to better reflect the current regulatory status of the profession.