



**BUSINESS OF THE CITY COUNCIL
YAKIMA, WASHINGTON
AGENDA STATEMENT**

Item No. 9.D.
For Meeting of: May 20, 2025

ITEM TITLE: Ordinance relating to Title 5, Licenses and Business Regulations, adding Chapter 5.31, Massage and Reflexology Services

SUBMITTED BY: *Detective Thomas Priestman, Yakima Police Department
Brooke Hargreaves, Senior Assistant City Attorney

SUMMARY EXPLANATION:

To bolster community safety and maintain industry integrity, the City of Yakima has implemented enhanced oversight measures for massage businesses. This ordinance provides law enforcement with the necessary tools to identify establishments engaging in unauthorized sexual services. In addition to addressing these specific violations, the ordinance sets forth a comprehensive framework aimed at detecting and preventing a range of other regulatory breaches. By enforcing these stringent standards, the city seeks to ensure a safe, reputable environment for both consumers and licensed practitioners alike.

If adopted, this ordinance would:

1. Prohibit a massage or reflexology business from operating between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.;
2. Permit the Yakima Police Department (YPD) to inspect a business' common area during business hours to ensure that:
 - a. Each massage therapist or reflexologist is 18 years of age or older;
 - b. Each massage therapist or reflexologist is licensed or certified by the Washington State Department of Health (DOH);
 - c. The business conspicuously displays its massage business license, reflexology business license, copies of each massage therapist license, and/or copies of each reflexology certification at or near the business' entrance so they can easily be read while the business is open;
 - d. Each massage therapist or reflexologist has a government-issued photo identification on his or her person or available for inspection by the DOH, Yakima County Health District, and YPD; and
 - e. The names on each massage therapist license or reflexology certification and government-issued photo identification match;
3. Make it unlawful for a person to practice massage therapy or represent himself or herself as a massage therapist without being licensed as a massage therapist by the DOH;
4. Make it unlawful for a person to practice reflexology or represent himself or herself as a reflexologist without being licensed as a massage therapist or certified as reflexologist by the DOH;
5. Make it unlawful for a business to facilitate or, with knowledge or criminal negligence, permit the underage practice of massage therapy or reflexology within the business;
6. Make it unlawful for a business to facilitate or, with knowledge or criminal negligence, permit the unlicensed practice of massage therapy or reflexology within the business;
7. Make a violation a gross misdemeanor with a maximum sentence of 364 days of jail time and up to a

\$5,000 fine;

8. Allow the City of Yakima to deny or revoke a business license if:

- applicant entered a stipulated order of continuance, deferred sentence, or plea in a human trafficking, prostitution, or unlicensed practice of massage therapy case
- an application omits or misrepresents a material fact
- a licensee or business violates the chapter
- a business' operations constitute a public nuisance

Massage business owners licensed in the City of Yakima were invited to attend an informal meeting regarding the proposed ordinance on March 25, 2025, at city hall, and one person attended. Their questions were answered, and they were informed about the upcoming city council meeting.

ITEM BUDGETED: N/A

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 24-25: A Safe and Healthy Yakima

RECOMMENDATION: Pass Ordinance.

ATTACHMENTS:

[Ord-Ch. 5.31_Massage & Reflexology Srvs.docx](#)