

ALLAN H. KITTLEMAN  
*County Executive*



GARY L. GARDNER  
*Chief of Police*

**HOWARD COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF POLICE**  
3410 Court House Drive, Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

March 2, 2017

Mr. Lonnie Robbins  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Howard County Government

Dear Mr. Robbins,

As you know, the Howard County Police Department continues to receive complaints about disreputable massage establishments which we know have long been a haven for illegal activities including prostitution and human trafficking. In Annapolis last session, enabling legislation was passed to allow us to implement local legislation to better address disreputable establishments operating in our County.

State law requires the licensing of massage therapists and massage practitioners, however the State simply has limited resources available to conduct proactive inspections and enforcement responsive to complaints received from every jurisdiction. We are seeking Howard County legislation to allow for the right of entry into questionable massage establishments and the appropriate enforcement of any criminal or civil violations.

Law enforcement has noticed an increase in the number of massage parlor advertisements in the adult section of websites that cater to adult services. A growing number of complaints from citizens concerning questionable businesses, suspicious activity and other "quality of life" issues demands our attention. In addition, Human trafficking arrests are on the rise in Howard County. This local legislation simply gives the HCPD the right to enter an establishment claiming to be a massage business and verify that State licenses are properly in place. This vital tool will ensure that illegal activities, such as prostitution and human trafficking are curtailed.

We want the citizens of Howard County to feel confident and safe when patronizing legitimate spas and massage-related services and to ensure that no one stumbles into illegitimate businesses.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Gardner  
Chief of Police

GLG:tgb

(410) 313-2203  
(410) 313-2272-FAX  
WWW.HCPD.ORG  
HCPD@HOWARDCOUNTYMD.GOV

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