



BILL FINCH
MAYOR

BRIDGEPORT POLICE DEPARTMENT
300 CONGRESS STREET
BRIDGEPORT, CT 06604



JOSEPH L. GAUDETTE JR.
CHIEF

Let me apologize in advance for not being brief. This is too important of a topic.

I want to begin expressing my appreciation for the efforts of Representative Grogins and her colleagues that helped us shut down every illegal massage parlor in the City of Bridgeport and keep them closed down.

That law, I believe, truly represents what we can achieve when law enforcement and our legislators collaborate on smart, effective legislation that truly improves the quality of people's lives in their neighborhoods.

Six months ago, we had a dozen known brothels operating in the city with no effective way to attack them. We knew what was happening behind closed doors. Neighbors knew. The customers and employees certainly knew.

But there was no easy solution. We could conduct labor-intensive, undercover stings, equipping our informants or officers with audio recording devices, in an effort to get probable cause for a prostitution arrest. We could close down a site for a night. The operators viewed the busts as the price of doing business. They would be open again the next day.

The massage parlor law empowered us to, in two months, eliminate a problem that has plagued us for years -- and the solution was simple.

Barbers shops need to be licensed. Bail bondsmen need to be licensed. Why should massage parlors be any different? And the law provided criminal penalties that provided teeth to enforce requirements that any legitimate massage therapy business already would comply with.

So instead of undercover operations that would lead to a temporary shutdown, police were able to walk into illegal massage parlors, ask for the required permits and shut them down immediately. And again if they reopened. Since then, we have been vigilant to make sure these businesses stay closed but also to monitor any displacement of prostitution onto our street corners or other locations.

Auden, for your efforts, thank you.



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I believe that these successes must be built upon. This law should be used as a blueprint for other laws that help law enforcement improve the lives of residents.

We have establishments in Bridgeport that masquerade as legitimate businesses but serve only as magnets for criminals. We also have legitimate businesses that contribute to our crime problems. This new law would allow us to close down illegitimate businesses but also provide leverage to convince legitimate businesses to work with law enforcement to create a safer environment for our residents. I cannot overstate effectiveness of the massage parlor bill. Working together we can do more.

That is our common goal, to make the lives better for our residents.

Sincerely,

Police Chief Joseph L. Gaudett Jr.