

Department of Justice Seeks Civil Penalties From Owner of Massage Parlors for R.I.C.O. Violations

Department of Justice attorneys filed suit Friday in New Castle County Superior Court against Da Zhong Wang, 52, of Smyrna, seeking civil penalties for violation of racketeering laws for operating massage parlors in the state as fronts for prostitution.

As stated in the complaint, Wang owned and operated four massage parlors throughout the State of Delaware in Middletown, Dover, Smyrna and Rehoboth Beach. In August 2015, Wang pled guilty to one count of Permitting Prostitution, after undercover officers who paid for massages at three of the four locations were solicited for acts of prostitution.

As a result, the state is seeking \$700,000 in civil penalties for the seven violations of 11 Del. C. § 1503, or incidents of activity constituting a violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations (R.I.C.O.) statute – \$100,000 for each of the seven violations. R.I.C.O. is a statute intended to combat criminal activity by preventing the use of legal and illegal conduct which furthers criminal activities. The statute is intended to apply to conduct beyond what is traditionally regarded as “organized crime.”

The State also asks Wang be permanently enjoined from owning, operating or having any business interest in any massage parlor in the State of Delaware. As part of the suit, DOJ will continue to investigate whether Wang still owns or controls the facilities or any others in Delaware, and will seek to close down and seize assets from any properties he controls.

Deputy Attorney General Oliver Cleary is leading the case for the Department of Justice. Read the complaint filed in court [here](#).