

AMERICAN TAROT ASSOCIATION

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STATEMENT FROM THE AMERICAN TAROT ASSOCIATION REGARDING CLOSURE OF TAROT AND PSYCHIC PRACTICES IN PHILADELPHIA

The American Tarot Association (ATA) does not condone any illegal practice of Tarot reading, and encourages its members to familiarize themselves with their local laws pertaining to the reading of the Tarot for both paying and non-paying clients. Further, the ATA has an established code of ethics for Tarot readers, designed to protect both consumers and readers.

The American Tarot Association applauds the decision of Philadelphia officials to re-open the businesses abruptly closed down last week. That said, the ATA holds that such sweeping revocation of licenses and closing of businesses without due process deserves investigation. It is a dangerous practice to allow government to eradicate a viable, worthy industry *that the government gave licensure to exist* without a fair hearing. No small business, sole proprietor, or modern cottage industry of any kind is safe in a city where this is allowed to happen. The consequences to the clients and families of those now-closed practices are appalling. Where are the consequences to the government officials who originally allowed those licenses?

The ATA strongly encourages an investigation into the events leading up to the closure of legitimate businesses so the public can be satisfied that no single person with a grudge can abuse public trust by using government officials to change the lives of tax-paying citizens and business owners.

The ATA also calls on other sole proprietorships, small businesses, and modern cottage industries located in Philadelphia to voice their concerns about the sudden closure of licensed businesses. If an antiquated law can be dug up to close down an entire industry this time, it can be done for other industries as well.

The situation in Philadelphia also clearly highlights the need for a change in laws regarding the reading of Tarot. These antiquated laws were presumably written with the intention of protecting consumers from unscrupulous people. Unfortunately, such laws also keep consumers from the excellent services of ethical Tarot readers and psychics.

Although the specific law in this case refers to fortune-tellers, the intent of the law was to address unscrupulous people, and at the time that law was written there were fewer protections for consumers. Today's world is made of savvy consumers with access to the Better Business Bureau and many other resources to protect them. This antiquated law unfairly discriminates against all fortune tellers – painting us all as unscrupulous, when the facts are far otherwise.

A Tarot reader is a person with a gift for helping a client better hear their own inner guides. Tarot readers empower clients to think through their options and come to decisions on their own. They remind clients that, whichever direction the cards may point, the future really lays in the hands of each individual person. Further, readers encourage clients to seek the professional help of doctors, counselors, lawyers – especially in cases where the client's concern is serious.

The majority of Tarot readers are not in this business for the money. They are in it because they have a sincere wish to use their gifts to help people, and often live in very simple circumstances because they frequently prioritize people over money. How many other businesses in Philadelphia are as client-first as these small businesses that have been forced to close? The government has truly not operated in the best interest of its citizens with this decision.

Often when a consumer is experiencing an internal struggle regarding their emotions or weighing their options, they look for some form of spiritual guidance. Some choose prayer. Some choose a psychologist. Some choose a trusted friend or relative. And some choose Tarot readers and psychics. **Such spiritual and internal seeking is a healthy part of the human condition, and should be encouraged, not dismissed.** This country is crying out for spiritual/internal guidance. Consider how fast “The Secret” is flying off bookshelves.

Laws cannot change the fact that consumers will choose to consult the Tarot to help them consider options in their lives. Good laws can help consumers be protected from the unscrupulous yet still protect the consumer's freedom to seek guidance where they see fit. The ATA is willing to collaborate with elected officials to design laws that both protect consumers and protect the free-market system upon which this country was founded.

In a free-market system, there are unscrupulous practitioners in **every** industry: construction; medicine; legal services; investment companies; etc. It is not the government's role to debilitate an entire industry with over-restrictive laws in order to protect the consumer. Such governmental interference can be economically destructive, as modern cottage industries, sole proprietorships, and small businesses are viable contributors to the localities in which they choose to operate.

However, the government *can* play a role in the empowerment of consumers to make the best possible choices. The American Tarot Association stands ready to collaborate with elected officials to redraft pertinent antiquated laws to achieve that goal.

All Tarot readers who have been affected by this situation are encouraged to contact the ATA at VPOutreach@ata-tarot.com.

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