



CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON



Bureau of Police

Charlie Hales, Mayor

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February 11, 2015

Oregon State Legislature
Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
C/O Representative Jeff Baker, Chair
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Support for HB 2205

Dear Chair Barker and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

The Portland Police Bureau expresses its support of HB 2205, which seeks to end the commercial sexual exploitation of children by financing services and treatment for minor victims, in addition to training for investigators and service providers, whom may intervene and advocate on their behalf.

Despite it being a difficult crime to identify, it is safe to state human trafficking is one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises in the world today, and the Portland metropolitan area is no exception. At least 469 children were exploited as commercial sex workers in Portland between 2009 and 2013, according to a recent Portland State University study. The horrific dehumanization of victims affected our teenagers, both girls and boys, spanning every socioeconomic status, education level, and race.

The Portland Police Bureau has joined in this fight, making it a priority at all levels. It is our member's experience that victims of sexual trauma very much need two things: safety and someone to care for them. Absent a safe place, trauma victims will return to their exploiter, finding themselves in even more dangerous circumstances. Beyond shelter services, trauma victims need to be able to talk to caring professionals who will not judge or condemn them.

As a result, the City of Portland has partnered with intergovernmental stakeholders and service providers to take a stand on behalf of the vulnerable and on behalf of the violated. Partnership efforts support prevention education and outreach, emergency services such as a 24-hour crisis line, hospital visits and shelter beds, and longer-term stabilization such as treatment, case management, and support groups. Together, our hard work is helping children out of a life of exploitation, enabling prosecution of exploiters, and allowing victims to reach a place of healing – but more needs to be done.

The Portland Police Bureau remains poised to work with the Oregon Department of Justice, and this advisory committee once established, on the coordination of statewide planning and delivery of services in support of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Thank you for bringing attention to this issue, for standing up for Oregon's children, and in advance for your yes vote on HB 2205.

Respectfully,

LAWRENCE P. O'DEA III
Chief of Police

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